

Can You Really Buy a Spiritual Breakthrough?

A newspaper reporter called me the other day to solicit my opinion on an elderly woman's so-called "divinely inspired concoctions." Her little shop of mystic wonderments peddles oils, herbs, sprays and candles that claim to bring love into your life, and even get others to obey your every command.

As the reporter described the woman's mixtures, supposedly potent enough to solve any problem known to man, I couldn't help but see mental images of the Apostle Paul wrestling the beast at Ephesus. But I digress ...

The elderly woman has 10 grandchildren, 10 great-grandchildren and a divination sanctum littered with statues and images of various saints. A necklace adorned with charms of the tools each saint works with dangles from her neck, according to the reporter's observations.

On Tuesdays this oldster fills an aluminum pan with alcohol, lights it ablaze and purports to chant away evil spirits. An incense-filled pot meant to ward off the day's evil guards the back door of her soothsaying studio. Granny acts as trusted advisor to her customers, who

share with
her problems both large and small. Then she meditates about
the issues
for a day before mixing a potion of herbs and oils designed to
fix what
ails them. For this she charges \$75—or more—but she offers a
100
percent guarantee and asserts that she hasn't had an
unsatisfied
customer yet.

If all that is not troubling enough, here is the
clincher. The grandmotherly spiritualist professes a strong
sense of
faith and belief in the Bible and God. (The question is which
bible and
what god?) She admitted that all her knowledge about helping
people is
“in her head” but alleges it is a gift from above.

So what did I
say to the reporter who asked me for my view? I told her what
you would
say: “No Bible-believing Christian would claim a potion could
help
someone find and keep love. This is a form of witchcraft,
essentially,” I
argued in the newspaper article. “It's not unlike the tarot
card reader
who proudly displays an image of Jesus in her front office.
This woman
is merely merchandising lonely people and using a religious
mask to make
them more comfortable with her deception.”

So here I see a
merchandising spirit in operation. I see Jezebel deceiving
people, many

of whom are probably seeking help for hurts and wounds. I see religion attempting to make divination acceptable in the name of the Lord. I see idolatry. I see divination. I see witchcraft. And the world is not the only place I see it ...

As Christians, we are quick to recognize the evil behind the tarot card reader, the aura cleansers, the potion makers—and the diviners with Jamaican accents who pollute the television airwaves with promises they can't keep (even at \$ a minute). It seems utterly ridiculous that anyone would be foolish enough to shell out \$75 a pop for bogus advice and pleasant-smelling concoctions, doesn't it? I thought so too, but apparently this level of deception has spread into the church.

I recently heard a radio commercial on a Christian broadcast. A "prophet" was proclaiming a double blessing and the prosperity oil to bring it into manifestation for anybody who would sow \$ into his traveling ministry. How is this any different from the potion-making granny? OK, the radio prophet charges less for his concoction, but it still wreaks of merchandising.

"Here she goes, slamming false prophets again." I can hear my critics now. But if Jehovah's prophets don't take a stand against this mess—in the world and in the church—then who will? That brings me back to the Apostle Paul and his wrestling

match with the beast at Ephesus.

You remember in Acts 19, a huge ruckus broke out because Paul, as Demetrius the silversmith put it, barged in and discredited those who were manufacturing shrines to the goddess Diana. Demetrius stirred up the whole city against Paul for taking a stand against Jezebel worship.

The Bible says there was great confusion after the people, who were worried about losing profits from selling their idolatrous wares, began to cry out in praise of Diana.

"Some were yelling one thing, some were yelling another. Most of them had no idea what was going on or why they were there" (Acts 19:32, The Message).

We need to know what's going on and why we are here: to take dominion; to invade the kingdoms of this world and make them to become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ; to set the captives free; to take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the Earth.

With all this in mind, who could disagree with the need to break the deception over God-fearing believers who are being sucked in with ambiguous prophetic words that proclaim "the first 100 people to sow \$638 according to Luke 6:38" will get their long-awaited breakthrough?

Don't get mad at me now. I'm not
the only one who has witnessed these things. I hope that you
agree that
we need to wrestle this beast in the church. We need to dispel
this
merchandising spirit from our midst so people are not
hoodwinked into
buying idols named "breakthrough." You can't buy a
breakthrough,
healing or anything else from the Lord any more than you can
buy love
in a bottle sold by a great-grandmother in Florida.

Just as we
can't ignore the devil, we can't ignore these things either.
So how do
we overcome evil? With good. That's why the apostolic-
prophetic is so
important in this hour. As true apostles and prophets rise up
to declare
the uncompromising truth—despite the persecution—we will see
the
deception begin to crumble. We will witness a sea of change in
the church that will have a ripple effect on the world. We
will be one step
closer to a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. Amen.

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