

Has Rampant Sexual Sin Turned the American Church Into the Laodicean Church?

Many of us have read Jesus' letter to the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14-22 and have rightly understood it to describe the end-times church—the church as we see it in the West today. We are rich and seemingly do not need a thing, when in fact, we are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. As a result, we are under the discipline of the Lord but are unable to recognize it. Like the frog being cooked in the slowly heated kettle of water, many are unaware of God's judgment and chastisement because we spend little time pursuing Him, listening to His voice and receiving discernment and wisdom from Him.

Instead we demand to be entertained and flock to superstar leaders who “tickle our ears” (2 Tim. 4:3-4) with false doctrine, unbelief and a grossly misplaced focus of worship. And because of our compromise and complacency, we have become powerless and are in darkness.

It's just as God said to His prophet Ezekiel:

They come to you as people come, and they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words; but they will not do them. For they do the lustful desires in their mouth, and their heart goes after their covetousness. You are to them as a sensual song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument. For they hear your words, but they do not do them (Ezek. 33:31-32).

Part of the problem with God's people both then and now is adultery, both spiritual and physical.

“Thus you shall know that I am the Lord. For you have not walked in My statutes, or executed My judgments, but have done after the customs of the nations all around you” (Ezek. 11:12).

To this, God says, “Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will reprove you” (Jer. 2:19a).

” I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines, and shall break down your high places. ... I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers. ... I will set the judgment before them, and they shall judge you according to their customs. ... Because you have forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, now bear *the punishment of your lewdness and your harlotries*” (Ezek. 16:39; 23:9a, 24c, 35b).

Note that in the verses prior to the one cited in Ephesians 5 in the title of this article, it says that we are in desperate need of hearing, sight, holiness and a willingness to truly repent for our compromise. Materialism, an independent spirit, pride and gross immoralities are typical rather than atypical in a huge swath of those who consider themselves to be a part of the body of Christ.

There is considerably more than a hint of sexual immorality and impurity (Eph. 5:3) inside the church today. This should alarm us, considering verse 5: “no sexually immoral or impure person, or one who is greedy, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” As Solomon said in Proverbs 8:13a: “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.”

The Holy Spirit exhorts believers in Ephesians 5:11-12: “And do not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; instead, expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”

Today, homosexual behavior, the sexual abuse of minors, adultery, promiscuity, the use of pornography and all forms of

fornication are rampant among clergy and other so-called believers. Even among those who do not commit such detestable practices, a huge swath of the shepherds of the flock do little to nothing to call people to holiness or to equip the church to minister to sexually bound and broken people. And what is worse, many wink, nod and even encourage those who practice immorality. In truth, there is no fear of the Lord (Prov. 8:13a, Rom. 3:18). In truth, we have corrupted the biblical understanding of grace in order to excuse lawlessness.

“[Although they] know the righteous requirement of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death. They not only do them, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them” (Rom. 1:32).

It is important to understand that doing nothing in the face of gross immorality in the church is tantamount to tacit approval in the eyes of those who commit such sins. Yet so many ignore God’s command found in 1 Corinthians 5:13b: “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person” lest their blood be on your hands. (Ezek. 3:18c, 33:7-9; Acts 20:26-31).

As Jesus warned the hypocritical shepherds of His day, “

Woe to you, blind guides ... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ... You cleanse the outside ... but inside [you] are full of extortion and greed” (Matt. 23:16a, 23a, 25b).

The most egregious example of this during the last 50 years is those who molest children and teens and those who protect such predators, even sending them out among the flock to practice their evil trade on more victims. This is indeed an unspeakable evil.

For example, recent scandals have uncovered child predators in the Catholic Church as well as prelates who protect them. This should be a wake-up call to us all! And yet, such predators are sometimes elevated to the highest ranks of the clergy by

those who are aware of their crimes. And worse still, many of these known sex criminals are secretly moved to other parts of the country to perpetuate the human carnage by destroying the lives of even more children.

Silence is itself an appalling crime in this matter. When Pope Francis was recently exposed by the highly respected Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano (who had everything to lose and nothing to gain by this exposure), for covering up the sex crimes of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the pope's response was to refuse comment—a response that lost him all credibility among the Catholic faithful and observers worldwide. Pope Benedict had previously imposed sanctions on McCarrick over the same charges but to date, Pope Francis has not scheduled a canonical trial in the matter.

Where is the concern for the victims whose lives have been forever scarred? Even the various dioceses that house records that could corroborate the accusations against McCarrick and other abusers have refused to open their archives for examination.

One impressive exception to the cover-up in the Catholic Church is the Catholic TV network, EWTN, especially the reporting of Raymond Arroyo on *The World Over Live*. Considering the fact that EWTN has since its inception been the most faithful and supportive media voice for the Roman Catholic Church and the Vatican, their honesty in exposing this corruption at the highest levels is most impressive.

Sadly, however, a recent request by Robert Bennett, former head of the highly experienced lay panel, (the bishop's National Review Board), that investigated the last Catholic sex abuse scandal in 2002, asking for the board to be reinstated so that this latest clergy sex abuse crisis can be investigated, has been ignored by this silent pope.

Bennett requested permission from the pope (through Cardinal

DiNardo) to create a "lay independent inquiry board" in light of the bishop's refusal to open up their diocesan records and considering the inability of church clerics to properly respond to any sex abuse crisis. Understandably, there is outrage by Catholic laypeople to the way things have been mishandled by the church, as well as a great sense of betrayal by those who have been sexually abused by clergy.

In a move that shocked and surprised everyone, Pope Francis was recently charged by Archbishop Vigano of defending practicing homosexual clergy who have committed the bulk of the serious sex crimes against minors and adults. It is well-known that Pope Francis reinstated Rev. Julio Grassi in Buenos Aires (after Pope Benedict had removed him from ministry) until Grassi had finally been sent to prison for his sex crimes against minors. The pope also stopped the investigation of sex abuse allegations against Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, which "World Over" host Raymond Arroyo pointed out was tantamount to undercutting mercy and justice for the victims of the abuse.

Cardinal Muller recently pointed out that despite the Vatican's refusal to do so, "the only justice for the victims is that the perpetrator must be dismissed from the clerical state. If you are a good shepherd, you cannot ruin the sheep," he added.

According to numerous reports, the former prefect of the congregation for the doctrine of faith, Cardinal Gerhard Muller, was removed from office in 2017 by the current pope because he was not merciful enough to sexual abusers. Cardinal Muller's response to that charge on a recent broadcast of *The World Over Live* was that such a claim is a misunderstanding of the priorities of biblical mercy, which should first and foremost be extended to the victims.

State attorneys general that have begun investigations into clerical abuses in the Catholic Church have uncovered tens of

thousands of instances of sexual abuse of minors in each state that they have examined. Not surprisingly, tens of thousands of abuse cases have also been discovered in Europe and other continents. And yet the church continues to stonewall those same authorities who are trying to put a stop to these unspeakable crimes and bring justice to the victims.

The focus of the Roman Catholic Church, (as well as Protestant churches found to protect child abusers and to cover up clerical crimes), has been to defend the "machine" at all costs. Empty public spectacles of sorrow and declarations of concern for the victims have been a sham in light of the cover-ups and in light of the priority given to protecting the coffers, the leaders and the business of the church.

Where is the mercy? Where is the justice? Where is the ministry of healing for the victims? Where is the genuine sorrow for them? It is an atrocity that victims have been forced by the church to battle against lawyers for the slightest hint of admission of guilt, and for compensation for the lifetime of pain and therapeutic help produced by the predator priests and cover-up prelates.

The Protestant church is also filled with denials by abusers, cover-ups by churches, resistance by church lawyers to admit guilt and to appropriately compensate victims. They are, in effect, tying millstones around the necks of the victims and throwing them into the sea (see Luke 17:1-2).

Catholic Bishop Robert Morlino recently wrote that one of the problems faced by the church today is that we have lost our hatred of sin. He points out that Proverbs 8:13 says that the fear of the Lord is the hatred of evil, or sin. Morlino added, "Things are seriously wrong, and the church needs to respond and do our part." He then called for a systematic investigation of the files of every Catholic diocese.

The Bible is clear regarding the commission of sexual sin and

those who encourage it. The apostle Peter called such people false prophets and false teachers whose condemnation and destruction has been long hanging over them. He writes:

They shall receive the wages of unrighteousness. They count it a pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes who revel in their own deception while they carouse together with you. They have eyes full of adultery that cannot cease from sin. They entice unstable souls. ... These men are wells without water and clouds that are carried by a storm, for whom the gloom of darkness has been reserved forever. for ... they entice by the lusts of the flesh and by depravity those who barely escaped from those who live in error. Although they promise them freedom, they themselves are slaves of corruption ... if after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then turn back from the holy commandment that was delivered to them (2 Pet. 2:13-14, 17b, 18b, 19a, 20-21).

And to those in the church who tolerate such immorality, Jesus declares,

Look! I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will put her children to death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the hearts and minds. I will give to each one of you according to your deeds. ... To him who overcomes and keeps My works to the end, I will give authority over the nations— (Rev. 2:22-23, 26).

The Laodicean church today does not realize the danger it has put itself in, not only for enabling child abuse, but for all of the sexual immoralities that it harbors within its ranks.

In countless cases of adultery, homosexual behavior and other immoralities committed by influential church leaders, the offenders are quickly returned to their clerical office, sending a clear message to the world and everyone else that the victims are nothing more than collateral damage in the pursuit of power and position.

“Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:7-8).

Truly, our modern “Laodicean” church has lost its fear of God and its hatred of evil.

But what of grace, you may ask? Let’s let the apostle Paul answer that question:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may increase? God forbid! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. ... For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live (Rom. 6:1-2, 23; 8:13-14).

So again I say, “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light” (Eph. 5:14b).{eo}

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