

How Much of Christ Is in Your Christianity?

That's quite a compelling question, isn't it? It's kind of like asking how much of Christ is in Christmas. I think many of us would agree that Christmas has become so commercialized that among the general populace Christ is hardly noticed, much less celebrated and revered. Easter would be in the same category. How in the world a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ could have ever evolved into an affinity with Easter bunnies and Easter eggs I'll never know. Such is the tenuous nature of idolatry.

Is it possible for Jesus Christ to be lost in Christianity, the very religion whose Name it bears? We know that without a relationship with Christ, just another religion is all that remains. We also know from Scripture that someone can profess to know Christ but in works actually deny Him (Titus 1:16). But isn't it also true that in works many may profess to know Him, but in authentic heart knowledge they do not?

Who knew Jehovah in Old Testament times? That earthly system of Judaism was to point the way to Christ, but in actuality it hid Him from the multitudes who were enmeshed in the works of the law. The external had glossed over the need for the internal. Sin and death reigned in the old order of things.

Isn't the same true today? There is an external order in modern Christianity that seems to rule. Its emphasis on appearance, hype, professionalism, showmanship and production allow us to easily deceive ourselves into thinking that somehow all these things become essential to our success while Christ is glossed over.

Many of our contemporary churches have become echo chambers for the latest trends in pop psychology, marketing, politics,

entertainment and entrepreneurial leadership, while the simple demands of Christ are often overlooked or packaged in a way to make Him palatable to the masses.

We have become all too enamored with our own glory in the kingdoms that we are building, at times totally unaware of receiving that invisible kingdom “that cannot be shaken” (Heb. 12:2).

Judaism with all its external forms, rituals and framework began its removal 2,000 years ago and was replaced with a higher heavenly standard established through the new covenant. Now again in this end time marks the removal of all that is external to bring us to a forcing point, and it is this: After all is said and done, how much of the Christ do you really have? Not what you do, not what you’ve built, not what you have, not even the noble activities that constitute your Christian life. But how much of the Christ Himself do you have?

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8).

Here in this chapter Paul is speaking of the inward life, encouraging the Christ life—to walk in Him and be rooted and built up in Him. Philosophies and empty deceits, based on traditions of men, and the basic principles of the world speak to us of humanistic things, mystical things, outward things that are without real eternal substance.

Much like today and throughout the centuries of time, Christianity can too easily slip into an outward-ness. “Don’t be cheated,” Paul says, from the simplicity and completeness of the inward Christ life. There are many things that seek to rob, steal and plunder our love, affection and holy intimate knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not just the philosophies and empty deceits we need to beware of, but there are even good and acceptable things, which while having their proper place in the Christian life, have a tendency to cheat us from the real person and mind of Christ. Such things as buildings, budgets, programs, projects, meetings, committees or other things that concern the church system apart from the mind of Christ, have the potential to dry up the real heart of the Christ life. Often it's these very things that rob us of the hallowing intimacy that we are meant to experience with Christ. These things are useful but must be kept in their proper perspective lest they dilute our vision of Jesus Himself.

When Christ was born, a hellish opposition immediately arose to kill and destroy Him. Likewise when the corporate counterpart of the Christ, the Man-child Company is brought forth near the end of this age (Rev. 12), there will be yet another most violent release of hellish opposition. "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

Everything of this world order is in direct opposition to the Christ being revealed.

The return of the Lord once again will signal the removal of all that is earthly and temporal and of man, so that only the eternal order of Jesus Christ and His kingdom will remain.

When Christ returns, He is coming for the formation of Christ in us. It is Him in us that He will recognize. His words, "I never knew you," and "I don't know you" were spoken to so-called ministers and foolish virgins who were doing the work of God and who laid claim to His Name. Somehow the Christ was not found in them. Somehow their form of Christianity had replaced Christ Himself.

So once again the question beckons us: How much of Christ is

in your Christianity?

Bert M. Farias, founder of Holy Fire Ministries, is the author of *The Real Gospel* and co-host of the New England Holy Ghost Forum. He is a missionary evangelist carrying a spirit of revival to the church and the nations. Follow him at Bert Farias on Facebook or @Bertfarias1 on Twitter.