

The Dangerous New Gospel Flourishing in America

“Knowledge produces arrogance, but love edifies” (1 Cor. 8:1).

- There she was—a young college age girl standing at the altar with her hands raised after having received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Her two friends, giddy with excitement, were about to tap her on the shoulder so they could leave and go have some fun. I immediately stopped them saying, “Don’t touch her; she’s in another world.”

- As I was preaching and ministering in the Spirit at a church meeting, I noticed a tiny woman in the second row who was being touched by God. Once the meeting was over she stayed in her seat. I kept observing her and knew she was in the Spirit. God was working deeply in her. She was in a Holy Ghost bubble and didn’t want to engage in any trivial or carnal conversation with anyone.

- While ministering in the nation of Colombia, I began a meeting by asking who was sick. A young woman raised her hand and came forward. She had burned her arm in a working accident and couldn’t move it. As soon as I laid hands on her in the name of Jesus she was healed—no more pain and mobility restored. She was glowing like a neon sign in the dark. She returned the following night still glowing. She felt the love of God and the nearness of Jesus.

These are all examples of true edification.

Puffed Up

These three examples serve to remind us of what it means to be truly edified and equipped. Love edifies, but knowledge alone puffs us up and makes us proud. There is a harmful level of increased pride I am seeing in Christianity today due to the

availability of so much knowledge. Sermonizing is popular, but moving in the Spirit and speaking forth as an oracle of God is rare. There is more division over doctrine in the church today than any time in recent history. People have gotten puffed up.

Ask yourself, “Why am I wanting to amass knowledge?” Is it really to grow personally and love and serve others, or is it to display it for self-aggrandizement? Why do most preachers love to preach and disburse so much knowledge? Why do so many rejoice more in their gifts and achievements than meeting the true needs of people? Do people really need to hear 1,000 sermons a year that are not producing life change in them? Is it the anointing of the Holy Spirit they are receiving or just words and mere knowledge? Certainly teaching is very important and Jesus did a lot of it, but He taught with wisdom, love, power and authority, and not as the sermonizing scribes. And the common people heard Him gladly. Most of all, He demonstrated what He taught (Acts 1:1).

Remember that knowledge puffs up but love edifies.

Entertained

There is now a dangerous new mind-set being spawned from a “new gospel” that is flourishing in America. Megachurches are being grown from this gospel in virtually every major city in America and other nations as well. It is the “seeker friendly” model of reaching sinners on a natural level with a social gospel lacking substance and power, along with a philosophy of fun and entertainment.

Here’s an example I heard the late David Wilkerson share years ago: During one Sunday night gathering in a seeker-friendly church where thousands attended, the pastor got up and said: “This is a fun night, a David Letterman night.”

Then the youth pastor came out and did a monologue as David Letterman. He showed the top 10 things bored teenagers do during preaching. Three of the ten were throwing spitballs,

yawning and picking their noses. The people in attendance went wild with laughter and great applause. As the church service was closing, the pastor shamelessly announced, "We're not here to offend anyone, but to make church comfortable for everybody."

This methodology of reaching people and increasing our numbers has become popular, but does real edification ever occur? Are people's lives really changed for the long term? Or are we just tickling ears and entertaining minds?

It's time for some serious evaluation: Are we being puffed up, entertained or edified?