

Why You (Still) Can't 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 adviser 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 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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