

THE “CHURCH SUCK” PLOY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

UPDATE: This article was posted in 2013, over five years ago. A year to the day that the “Church Sucks” campaign came out it was revealed that the pastor was a charlatan. He was found to be in an extramarital affair with a female church member. His wife desired to save the marriage but the pastor refused to recant and remained with his adulterous whore causing his wife to sue for divorce. The pastor was disfellowshipped from the church and the last time I heard, is working as a layman. Lesson being, you don’t mess around with Yeshua’s sheep and false shepherds will always be revealed and shamed. Please continue reading to see what brought this all about.

I was on the phone talking to my good friend Jim Wilhelmsen the other day. We were talking about how in our current day there seems to be so much heresy out there that it is hard to keep up with it anymore. No sooner did I get off the phone with him did I get onto Facebook and notice that some congregants of a local church here in Eugene had a brand-new way of suckering people into their fellowship.

First off, let me say that I know that there are many reasons to leave a church. Oft times we hope that we will find the church that is tailor made for our needs and we never seem to find that church. One of the problems with that is that we go to churches looking for ways that the church can meet our needs when all along we should be going there to meet the needs of others. We often go to church to find a godly pastor. Believe it or not, there are good men out there who are as godly as one can get and the good ones acknowledge that it is Yahweh that makes them righteous. There are a few pastors who are humble and contrite and who listen to the Ruach Ha Kodesh for guidance and instructions for daily living.

However, on the flipside of the coin, there are many pastors who are into their “calling” for capital gain or to see who can build the biggest church in their town. To put it frankly, many pastors are in their field to build quantity instead of seeking quality. So, there are those who have attended churches like I’ve mentioned above who have faltered for the reasons that I have stated above or for any other number of misguided ways. Most people who have quit going to church are what we call, “once bitten, twice shy,” and they have been disappointed by what they have seen in churches and as far as they are concerned, they don’t want to see more hypocrites. These

people are right in assigning that label to many Christians and churches. I've been burned so many times myself that I have quit numbering the times. I'll have friends from the past call or write and ask me if I remember a particular circumstance or transgression that a particular pastor or church have committed and I am having a hard time remembering them anymore. Perhaps that is a good thing in that I am forgiving and forgetting, or maybe it is because things are getting so much worse that the past things seem trivial?

I was one of those people; the ones that refused to go back to church. I'd seen it all; the lying, cheating, the theft, the adultery and those who are outright false shepherds sent from the enemy of Yahweh. For a period of five years I refused to attend church because I was fifteen times bitten, sixteen times shy, so to speak. I had enough. For those of you who have been burned once or twice, you really are novices. I've been burned numerous times and I've even been kicked out of churches. Believe it or not, I was even excommunicated from the Assemblies of God, simply because I asked questions about improprieties. So if anyone dare say that I don't know what I am talking about I would say that I can bet the whole pot and know that you would lose all of your chips because I am some sort of king when it comes to seeing awful pastors, parishioners and being rejected and written off as dead by supposed "good meaning Christians."

The thing is that after a while Yahweh would show me that I was being unreasonable. He showed me that I was expecting Christians to live up to pure holiness and righteousness when that was impossible. Nobody is completely holy or righteous except Yahweh. I tend to be a perfectionist that realizes that I cannot possibly be perfect, but I often tend to try anyway, realizing my limitations. I expected others to live up to the personal goals that I set up for myself and when they failed, they were to blame. But NO, I was the one to blame because I was looking up to men instead of realizing the frailty of men whereas I should have been keeping my eyes on Yeshua, the author and finisher of MY faith. I was to blame as much, and probably more than the people I was blaming for the folly that I saw in the Church.

Now here's the deal. When you have a genuine conversion in Yahweh through faith in Yeshua you develop the ability to hear from Yahweh. If you are truly His, and He wants you to attend a Church then he will work on you while you are not attending. I had to go through a period of sliding back in order for Him to reveal to me that I needed to fellowship with His believers, no matter what they were like. My period of time away from fellowship wasn't great. Looking in retrospect, I was not a good person; I was miserable. I became self-righteous and thought that I was too good for most churches and my big mistake was that I thought I could

survive alone. But as I mentioned above; Yahweh finally broke through the varnish that I had painted on myself and he led me back to fellowship with Him and with other believers.

So, why did I say all of that. Okay, here it goes. Well, first let me say that I'll sure be glad when Yeshua comes back and bring a right mind to His Church. I am getting soooo (misspelled intentionally) tired of seeing the perversions of His Word; the contortions of Scripture and the blatant lying that goes on between believers. I'm tired of seeing the false shepherds and the false prophets. I know that these people are a sign of the times and such. I think that bothers me the most and really wearies me is when people like me, who try to help people back to the straight path; when we are maligned, called liars, judgmental, lacking love and other number of titles that are bestowed on the watchmen of the current age. My flesh would just love to respond to these people that I just didn't care anymore; that if they want to disobey Yahweh and suffer the consequences, I just release them to that fate. However, when you love people, you just can't do that and when you have a commission as a watchman you have to warn people, even right up to the time when the enemy thrusts the sword. To hear the words, "you're being judgmental, leave me alone," really rends the heart. To watch loved ones fall by the sword because they would not allow you to throw them a shield is truly heartbreaking.

This week I was greeted with the following news from a church that is the church home of some very good friends. Evidentially this church has gone on a new church growth campaign where they proudly proclaim, "Church Sucks." They follow it up with the premise that many people have been hurt by people in churches. They want people to come to their church and just be loved. Here is the advertisement they were sending in the mail:



Okay, there was a time when I would have agreed with this mailing. However, even though I was in a backslidden state I would still have seen through this rouse. I don't know about you readers, but the word "sucks" is not one that I use lightly. I have never used it for good and if I was to ever use the word it would be to describe something that I would not participate in nor would I let anyone I care about participate in. In essence, this is a church saying that church sucks. Do they mean church as a building, or as an assembly of people or do they mean that the Body of Mashiach (the Church) sucks? Well, let's see what they mean via the interview that they did with KVAL, a local television station:

EUGENE, Ore. – Church Sucks!

That's the message one Eugene church has been mailing out to hundreds of homes across Lane County this month.

Tony Crank is the senior pastor of The One Love Church in North Eugene. The church shares a building with Eugene Christian School.

Crank said his church has recently been embracing the philosophy that going to church simply sucks, and One Love wants to become a new church where people who have had bad church experiences in past can go to reconnect to their faith.

Among the changes:

- *Shorter services*
- *Modern and contemporary worship music, at times featuring songs from Maroon 5 and Katie Perry*
- *A pastor, not a preacher. Crank said he doesn't like to preach at people.*

"I just like to have a conversation with everyone, just like I do at the coffee shop if we were talking one on one," he said.

In Sunday's service, Crank used the phrase "don't get your panties in a bunch" and even shared a story about how his dog urinated on his mother when she came to visit him recently. Later, he tied that in to a message about how the church is too quick to shame people for perceived sin.

Crank said his church at times will have sucky moments as well, and that he doesn't want to be seen as judging other churches in the area. Instead, Crank said now is the time for

the church to not focus so much on the sins of people but rather welcome them back in to a church home where they can grow in their faith. [Source: Aired on KVAL on 9/23/2013]

So, church sucks and people can go to One Love to reconnect with their faith? A good question to ask is did they have faith to begin with and who was their faith in? If you have faith in Yahweh then a bad church doesn't necessarily make you leave your faith. Furthermore, did the person who needs to have his or her faith renewed originally have their faith in Yahweh or was their faith in a pastor or a church body? I'm not new at this church thing. I know that a lot of unsaved people go to church to feel better about themselves but hearing the message of the depravity of the human condition "should" cause a person to realize their need for salvation. In many cases they hear the first part and leave the church. Pride takes over right from the start. The person is "offended" causing to leave and never come back.

The interview continued and through it we gained the knowledge that in order to bring more people into the church for a faith boost, the church was going to implement some new changes including:

- *Shorter services*
- *Modern and contemporary worship music, at times featuring songs from Maroon 5 and Katie Perry*
- *A pastor, not a preacher. Crank said he doesn't like to preach at people.*

The average person is awake for 112 hours a week. That is waking up at 6AM and going to bed at 10PM every day. At least that is my schedule and I think that many of you will echo a similar schedule. A person of faith or one who is getting a faith injection, so to speak should be able to fit a couple of hours into their week for a good lesson and worship time. That leaves 110 hours a week for people to work, play, tend to their families and their lives.

Personally, I've been in churches in which the Ruach Ha Kodesh was allowed to minister to people's souls and spirits and some have lasted an hour and others have gone for three or more hours. To put a time limit on what Yahweh would want to do in "His" church is placing limitations on the ministry of the Ruach Ha Kodesh; a charge that I wouldn't want to hear when the books are opened in Heaven on the Last Day.

The news blurb went on to say that modern contemporary worship music would be played by Katie Perry and Maroon V. There have been many contemporary Christian singers over the past twenty or thirty years who would fit the bill better than Katie Perry (who has gone over to the demonic side) and another group that sings in generalities rather than the specific doctrines that have kept the Church “The Church” for so many years. To be fair, this is a problem in many churches, not just One Love. One has to search vast and wide to find a church that sings about being a wretched sinner saved by the Blood of Jesus, or songs of adoration that so many of us have found missing in the modern church.

Next up we have the words of the pastor; “ *“I just like to have a conversation with everyone, just like I do at the coffee shop if we were talking one on one,” he said.*

Okay, let me explain something. I’ve suffered many times sitting under pastors who have God Complexes. It stands to reason that I am averse to that sort of individual. One thing must be understood however; the pastor is a shepherd, and the parishioners are the sheep. This is a biblical principal. Sure, it is okay for a pastor to sit one on one with one of the sheep, but the pastor isn’t one of the sheep in the local churches’ fold. No, he is a defender of the sheep and he reins them in when they go astray. The office of Shepherd is one that comes with an authority given from Yahweh. When a pastor stands behind a pulpit the sheep should be receiving something from the shepherd who in turn has received something that Yahweh wants the sheep to have. The shepherd fights for the sheep too; always watching out for lions and bear; or in the case of the Church, false doctrine and false prophets. This is sore lacking in most of the Church today. The pastor can be like a friend, but should always be like an older brother who has authority over his younger siblings. This is biblical folks, not me ranting.

As the interview progresses, the pastor says:

In Sunday’s service, Crank used the phrase “don’t get your panties in a bunch” and even shared a story about how his dog urinated on his mother when she came to visit him recently. Later, he tied that in to a message about how the church is too quick to shame people for perceived sin.

You know, I’m Jewish and what I find acceptable is sometimes different from what a gentile churchgoer finds acceptable. Jews tend to be off the cuff and painfully honest when it comes to speech. Some people would call us downright rude or crude. Now, having that air about me, why would the words in the paragraph above bother me? Well, it is speech that is uncalled

for. It is speech using modern slang and vernacular in order to reach the unchurched. I tend to believe that Philippians the fourth chapter tells us what to think on and what to say:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8

Here's the deal. The pastor telling the congregation not to get their panties in a knot, and telling them a story about how their dog urinated on his mother is at very best distasteful. The media person says that the pastor used those analogies to talk about the Church being too quick to judge people. There was a much easier way to say that. He could have said, "the church is much too quick to judge people." He could have talked about how the Pharisees judged Yeshua much too quickly or how the religious people judged the Apostles way too easily. There are way too many analogies from scripture that the pastor could have used instead of bringing women's underwear and urinating dogs into the fray. Again, it seems like this pastor is becoming like the world in order to attract the world. Yeshua reminded us constantly that light had no fellowship with darkness, righteousness no fellowship with unrighteousness and that we can not serve two masters. With all of his warnings written in the Bible for us to observe, why do some think that they can somehow circumvent these very simple and very firm commandments.

The article goes on to say; *"Crank said his church at times will have sucky moments as well, and that he doesn't want to be seen as judging other churches in the area."*

Well, I've got news for Pastor Crank; it didn't work, you have offended almost every church in Eugene and probably Springfield. How has this happened you ask? Well, Crank has asserted that the other churches are failing and that he has the method of correcting their failures. He has the method that people want to hear and that people can accept. You can't come out and make the statement that church sucks because you automatically include every fellowship that claims to be a church or has Church in its name. Semantics is everything. Had Crank inserted one word into the title then he could have averted the bad press that this is bound to get him. He could have said, "sometimes church sucks." In saying that he makes it not definitive and denotes that the practice of churchianity sucks, not that all the church's other than his sucks. The fact that he puts a disclaimer on his notion shows clearly that he was aware that he would offend other churches.

At the end, the article quotes Crank as saying the following “Queen Mother of all New Age statements:

Crank said now is the time for the church to not focus so much on the sins of people but rather welcome them back in to a church home where they can grow in their faith.

Yeshua Ha Mashiach was quite emphatic about the importance of speaking about sin and hell. He knew that sin was the problem, hell was the destination; but by listening to Him and having faith in Him is the solution. You CANNOT have a solution without having a problem first; it doesn't work mathematically, socially, morally or any other way. To have a solution without a problem is utterly insane, yet so many pastors and churches attempt to do this. How could a person read their Bible and not come up with the conclusion that you have to show the problem before you can have the solution.

Let's look at math, shall we. If I come to you and say “equals 100” I leave you wondering what I am talking about. There are hundreds of equations that could be used to equal that answer. Now, I have only one problem in mind, but there are many avenues. In the religious world, Yahweh has only one way to Heaven, and that is through the Blood of Yeshua and faith in Yeshua. I know that in my mind, the only problem that works for the value of 100; the problem of $50 + 50$ is the right answer. You can pick $40 + 60$ or $90 + 10$ but those would not be the correct answer because I was the one who thought of the sum and what I wanted for the numbers to equal that sum. You could use one value, that of 50 all by itself and that would not be right. In the same way, you have to have sin in order to know what you are being redeemed from.

Here's another way to look at it. This recently happened to me, by the way. I had someone tell someone else that they forgave me. The message was relayed to me of course. I racked my brain for a whole day trying to think of what this person could have forgiven me of. In the end, I realized that this person had perceived that I had wronged him. His perception was wrong so therefore there was nothing for him to forgive me. Had there been an offense I would have welcomed the forgiveness, but without offense there was no reason to thank him for forgiving me. See, there had to be an offense for the forgiveness. To state that a pastor or church was not going to address sin so much is to explain love, grace and forgiveness without telling them the reason for that love, grace and forgiveness. It makes salvation seem like it is being given by a god who held a grudge but never told humanity what the grudge was. It makes Yahweh cold and impersonal; someone who capricious and downright sarcastic. I know that Yahweh is not such a God.

During his short ministry on Earth, Yeshua talked more about sin and hell than he did any other subject. Yes, he talked about love a lot, but not as much as sin and hell. If Yeshua was so focused on those two things it must mean that those things are very important to Him, and of course it comes to his forgiveness; you have to know the offense that you're being forgiven of.

In conclusion, this world is messed up and so is the Church. Yeshua called us out of the world but the church so quickly forgets that we are to remain outside of the world. We are not to become like them by adopting sales pitches or mimicking their ways to attract them. How can darkness attract darkness? Do moths fly toward darkness? No, they fly toward light. Yeshua made references to His Believers being lights on the bushels, cities on the hill; and he talked about light chasing away darkness. It is time for pastors like Crank and others to stop compromising with the world. It is time for them to trust Yahweh to bring people into the Church. And how does that happen, you ask? It is by being obedient to Yahweh and loving Him and loving each other more than we love ourselves. We can make wrong choices sometimes. It is possible to love someone right into hell. However, it is a faithful father that disciplines his son and it is a faithful brother that tells his fellow brother that he is in error. What I often tell people is that I would rather have them hate me for telling them something that will pluck them from the jaws of hell rather than not warn them out of fear of confrontation and seeing them pointed in the direction of hell on judgement day. Now there's something to chew on for a while.