

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

#01-0705

by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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Flee These Things

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:10-11 ESV)

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33 NASB)

Elsewhere, I have written on the one foundation, which is Jesus Christ, and that all who are of the household (family) of God are a temple of God, being built together into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling of God *in* spirit. This issue is presented as a contrast to the building work of the Lord. The following are examples of the building work of man according to the flesh and not the spirit of God. These things will be burned up in the spiritual, all-consuming fire of God. These are the types of things from which we must flee, for they stand opposed to the kingdom of God.

Recently, I turned on the radio to listen to a local "Christian" station. There was a time when I would have been shocked by what I heard being said and done in the name of Jesus, but I am no longer shocked, just saddened. One who called himself an apostle and a prophet was on the air. He was not preaching or teaching. Instead, he asked people to call him with an offering, and in return, he would give them a prophecy. While he waited for callers, mysterious, eerie-sounding music played in the background. When someone did call, he or the caller would announce how much they were going to send him. With this promise to send him money, he would offer a personal prophecy over their life. On this occasion, a woman called in and stated that she felt the Lord wanted her to send him \$70. Of course, this pleased the so-called "apostle," so he began to give her a prophecy. He stated that he saw a niece or nephew that was in trouble with drugs and that she was helping the person. The woman responded that she was not involved with a niece or nephew in this way. He then asked her if she had nieces and nephews, to which she replied, "Yes." He then asked if she were close to these ones, to which she indicated that she was not. Then the "prophet" said that he saw something "like" nieces or nephews, and when he realized that his prophecy was going nowhere, he concluded by telling her that she was going to help "someone" by the laying on of hands. Can you imagine that this woman paid \$70 for this? As his air time ended, a woman called in with a \$300 pledge, which brought forth a gleeful response from the so-called "apostle" who made a pretty good haul for being on the air for fifteen minutes. He concluded his time by telling the listeners that they could call any time, and *if* they wanted to sponsor him, *then* they (presumably the ones he has answering the phone) would get *the* apostle on the phone. It was made very clear that anyone calling would only get to speak to him if they had money to give to him.

This reminds me of the story of Simon in the book of Acts. When he saw the apostles bestowing the holy spirit on others through the laying on of hands, Simon offered them money to receive the authority to do likewise. Peter rebuked the man in the most severe way: *For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity* (Acts 8:14-24).

The next day, I turned on the television to watch the morning worship service of a local church. Again, I should have been shocked, but I was not; I was more appalled this time. From the pulpit of this local church, one of the leaders announced who was co-sponsoring their service that day, that is, paying for the airtime. The co-sponsor was a local law firm that advertises quite a bit on television. The leader even gave out the phone numbers for this company if anyone wanted legal help. By the way, this law firm specializes in suing others in man's court. I have no doubt what Paul the apostle would say to such a thing.

Dare any of you, having business with another, be judged before the unjust, and not before the saints? Or are you not aware that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is being judged by you, are you unworthy of the least tribunals? Are you not aware that we shall be judging messengers, not to mention life's affairs? If indeed, then, you should have tribunals for life's affairs, the contemptible in the ecclesia, these you are seating? To abash you am I saying this. Thus is there not among you one wise man who will be able to adjudicate amidst his brethren, but brother is suing brother, and this before unbelievers!" (1 Corinthians 6:1-6 CLV)

This church is very much like the Corinthians that were babes that needed to grow up to be able to spiritually appraise all things (1 Corinthians 2:14-3:3). Instead, they are acting like the natural man of the world and not the spiritual man; they are still fleshly. In case you have missed the point, let me state it clearly. This local church sought the world to support it, which willingly obliged by paying a price. This is the way of the world and not the way of God, being led by the holy spirit.

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NASB)

As if this were not enough, in this same period, we received an email from a missionary friend.

"I'd also like to ask prayer regarding a cult that has arisen among a province in (location not necessary), and includes members of the language group that some friends of mine translated with. A high leader in the area church denomination (which is the primary denomination for much of the province) has started a "cargo cult." This is a term we use when someone is asking others to give them money so they can appease the ancestors and entreat them to send "cargo" to those who are living here on earth. This man and others with him are telling everyone that if they give money, food, etc. to the cause, that in early November their ancestors will return to earth and bring lots of things for them. Basically, life as they know it will change forever. No one in the cult is sending their kids to school because what's the use if everything will change after November? He has gathered 23,000 followers around him! It's sad enough when people are deceived in this way, but even more tragic when Satan is using a church leader to do it. Please pray that God will convict him and change his heart, and that others' eyes will be opened to the truth."

To this could be added what is going on in many "churches" in other nations in which so-called *prophets* (false prophets) are doing all sorts of bizarre things to extract money out of people.

Dear beloved in Christ, the above examples are merely a drop in the ocean of the many worldly and even evil and sinful things that are being done in the name of the Lord. I am sure that you could add to these examples. Don't fall prey to such evil. Flee from such things. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness!