

The Rat Race of the Religious System
Joseph Herrin (07-26-2010)



"Christianity started out in Palestine as a fellowship; it moved to Greece and became a philosophy; it moved to Italy and became an institution; it moved to Europe and became a culture; it came to America and became an enterprise." -Sam Pascoe

What I would share with you in this post is extremely important. You will have to be patient for a moment, slow your racing mind down, and focus intently upon the words I am writing. Some concepts are so foreign to the religiously trained mind that they are at first difficult to grasp. If you have spent any significant length of time in the Christian religious system, in denominational, or non-denominational churches, then your mind has been influenced subtly, yet powerfully, in ways you may not have contemplated.

Have you ever considered that the entire system of what passes for Christianity today is a perverse corruption of Yahweh's plan for His people? I am not speaking merely of the many doctrines of demons that have entered into the church, such as that which is called "prosperity doctrine." No, I am referring to the overall system of getting people saved so they can join a church, get involved in its programs, and devote their lives to a corporate entity that is proclaimed to be the body of Christ.

Recently, a brother in Christ forwarded to me the speech given by an 18 year old girl in upstate New York. Erica Goldson was the valedictorian of Coxsackie-Athens High School, and was given the opportunity to address all those gathered at her 2010 class graduation ceremony. What she shared is remarkable in its insight for one so young.

Erica chose to talk about the education system in America. Following is the major portion of her speech. As you read it, please consider how these words spoken of the American education system relate to the Christian Religious System, for they are very similar in purpose and practice.

Here I Stand
Erica Goldson

(Valedictorian Speech 2010 - Delivered Wednesday, July 7, 2010 to the students, parents and faculty gathered at Coxsackie-Athens High School.)

There is a story of a young, but earnest Zen student who approached his teacher, and asked the Master, "If I work very hard and diligently, how long will it take for me to find Zen? The Master thought about this, then replied, "Ten years..." The student then said, "But what if I work very, very hard and really apply myself to learn fast - How long then?" Replied the Master, "Well, twenty years." "But, if I really, really work at it, how long then?" asked the student. "Thirty years," replied the Master. "But, I do not understand," said the disappointed student. "At each time that I say I will work harder, you say it will take me longer. Why do you say that?" Replied the Master, "When you have one eye on the goal, you only have one eye on the path."

This is the dilemma I've faced within the American education system. We are so focused on a goal, whether it be passing a test, or graduating as first in the class. However, in this way, we do not really learn. We do whatever it takes to achieve our original objective.

Some of you may be thinking, "Well, if you pass a test, or become valedictorian, didn't you learn something? Well, yes, you learned something, but not all that you could have. Perhaps, you only learned how to memorize names, places, and dates to later on forget in order to clear your mind for the next test. School is not all that it can be. Right now, it is a place for most people to determine that their goal is to get out as soon as possible.

I am now accomplishing that goal. I am graduating. I should look at this as a positive experience, especially being at the top of my class. However, in retrospect, I cannot say that I am any more intelligent than my peers. I can attest that I am only the best at doing what I am told and working the system. Yet, here I stand, and I am supposed to be proud that I have completed this period of indoctrination. I will leave in the fall to go on to the next phase expected of me, in order to receive a paper document that certifies that I am capable of work. But I contest that I am a human being, a thinker, an adventurer - not a worker. A worker is someone who is trapped within repetition - a slave of the system set up before him. But now, I have successfully shown that I was the best slave. I did what I was told to the extreme. While others sat in class and doodled to later become great artists, I sat in class to take notes and become a great test-taker. While others would come to class without their homework done because they were reading about an interest of theirs, I never missed an assignment. While others were creating music and writing lyrics, I decided to do extra credit, even though I never needed it. So, I wonder, why did I even want this position? Sure, I earned it, but what will come of it? When I leave educational institutionalism, will I be successful or forever lost? I have no clue about what I want to do with my life; I have no interests because I saw every subject of study as work, and I excelled at every subject just for the purpose of excelling, not learning. And quite frankly, now I'm scared.

John Taylor Gatto, a retired school teacher and activist critical of compulsory schooling, asserts, "We could encourage the best qualities of youthfulness – curiosity, adventure, resilience, the capacity for surprising insight simply by being more flexible about time, texts, and tests, by introducing kids into truly competent adults, and by giving each student what autonomy he or she needs in order to take a risk every now and then. But we don't do that." Between these cinderblock walls, we are all expected to be the same. We are trained to ace every standardized test, and those who deviate and see light through a different lens are worthless to the scheme of public education, and therefore viewed with contempt.

H. L. Mencken wrote in The American Mercury for April 1924 that the aim of public education is not to fill the young of the species with knowledge and awaken their intelligence... Nothing could be further from the truth. The aim... is simply to reduce as many individuals as possible to the same safe level, to breed and train a standardized citizenry, to put down dissent and originality. That is its aim in the United States. (Gatto)

To illustrate this idea, doesn't it perturb you to learn about the idea of "critical thinking." Is there really such a thing as "uncritical thinking?" To think is to process information in order to form an opinion. But if we are not critical when processing this information, are we really thinking? Or are we mindlessly accepting other opinions as truth?

This was happening to me, and if it wasn't for the rare occurrence of an avant-garde tenth grade English teacher, Donna Bryan, who allowed me to open my mind and ask questions before accepting textbook doctrine, I would have been doomed. I am now enlightened, but my mind still feels disabled. I must retrain myself and constantly remember how insane this ostensibly sane place really is.

And now here I am in a world guided by fear, a world suppressing the uniqueness that lies inside each of us, a world where we can either acquiesce to the inhuman nonsense of corporatism and materialism, or insist on change. We are not enlivened by an educational system that clandestinely sets us up for jobs that could be automated, for work that need not be done, for enslavement without fervency for meaningful achievement. We have no choices in life when money is our motivational force. Our motivational force ought to be passion, but this is lost from the moment we step into a system that trains us, rather than inspires us.

We are more than robotic bookshelves, conditioned to blurt out facts we were taught in school. We are all very special, every human on this planet is so special, so aren't we all deserving of something better, of using our minds for innovation, rather than memorization, for creativity, rather than futile activity, for rumination rather than stagnation? We are not here to get a degree, to then get a job, so we can consume industry-approved placation after placation. There is more, and more still.

The saddest part is that the majority of students don't have the opportunity to reflect as I did. The majority of students are put through the same brainwashing techniques in order to create a complacent labor force working in the interests of large corporations and secretive government, and worst of all, they are completely unaware of it. I will never be able to turn back these 18 years. I can't run away to another country with an education system meant to enlighten rather than condition. This part of my life is over, and I want to make sure that no other child will have his or her potential suppressed by powers meant to exploit and control. We are human beings.

We are thinkers, dreamers, explorers, artists, writers, engineers. We are anything we want to be - but only if we have an educational system that supports us rather than holds us down. A tree can grow, but only if its roots are given a healthy foundation...

I am now supposed to say farewell to this institution, those who maintain it, and those who stand with me and behind me, but I hope this farewell is more of a "see you later" when we are all working together to rear a pedagogic movement. But first, let's go get those pieces of paper that tell us that we're smart enough to do so!

[S o u r c e :
<http://americaviaerica.blogspot.com/2010/07/coxsackie-athens-valedictorian-speech.html>]

I (Joseph Herrin) attended the public education system for 12 years, graduating from High School, and later going on to earn a college degree. It was what I was conditioned to do. The thought never occurred to me while I was in attendance that the system itself could be an evil thing. I never questioned whether it was preparing me to be a godly person, or considered if the goals of my education were those God would choose. The American education system was training me to be a good corporate citizen. I was a member of the greatest consumer nation on earth, and I was being groomed for a life devoted to consumption.

While in school, the merits of excelling in the system were made known to me. With better grades came the promise of higher pay, and more money being available to spend on my pursuit of "The American Dream." Little did I realize that I was being indoctrinated in the art of consumption. I was fed dreams of materialism, and my pursuit of materialism served the ends of the global corporations. My money would end up in their pockets. My life's labor would further their empire.

II Peter 2:3

And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...

American society promotes covetousness. Advertisements are inescapable. If you watch television, or even go to the movies, you will have to abide a barrage of commercials that are aimed at creating a desire for some company's product. If you drive down the road you will be met with billboards intended

to produce a desire for some service or product. You cannot read a magazine, or listen to the radio, without the constant drone of corporate consumerism invading your mind through sounds and images.

How many Americans ever question whether the endless drive to attain material possessions, and to enjoy one pleasure after another, is actually righteous? How many have considered what type of life God would lead them to if there were not the constant and pervasive influence of society telling them what they should be pursuing? The American education and cultural system has made slaves of an entire population. The citizens of the nation live to acquire material possessions, and then spend the balance of their lives trying to hold onto what they have gained. Is this the will of God?

Luke 12:15

And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

This article is not about the American system of materialism, however. It is about the Christian Religious System. The same blindness that affects the citizens of America, also holds sway in the church.

Isaiah 42:19

"Who is blind but My servant, or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, or so blind as the servant of Yahweh?"

I want to entreat you to consider the goals and practices of the Christian Religious System, particularly in Western nations. Going to church is what people are conditioned to do. Participating in the stereotypical programs of the various denominations is considered both right and proper. A focus on church attendance, supporting the church financially, and living a church-centric life is accepted without any critical thinking.

How many Christians have stopped to question whether the goals and practices of the church are in synch with the desires of God? Christians are conditioned to not ask such questions. They are herded along with everyone else, directed through endlessly repeated sermons that proclaim the virtues of attendance, program participation, and tithing. Being a good corporate citizen of the church is equated with spirituality.

What is Yahweh's desire for His sons and daughters? As I have been sharing everywhere I go, He desires sons (male and female). He wants sons in His image. He is seeking sons who are conformed to the image of Christ so they can rule and reign with Him in the ages to come.

Are the churches producing sons in the image of Christ? Absolutely not! Rather, they are aborting every son that begins to show marks of maturity.

To be conformed to Christ's image, one must be led of the Spirit, not conformed to the pattern of this fallen world system.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Christ did not lead a life centered on the synagogue. He did not live to fulfill the programs and plans of the synagogue's leaders. Christ never equated participation in the life of the local synagogue with spiritual life. He lived to do the will of His Father. The Father's will was not made known to Him by men, but by the Spirit who was given to indwell Him. Those who have been born of the Spirit of Christ have received the same Spirit to serve as their guide.

I Corinthians 2:10-13

For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit...

The Christian Religious System is antithetical to the purposes of God. The system has indoctrinated Christians to believe that they must come to the church building weekly to hear the word of God spoken to them by an appointed minister. The minister will perhaps give them a 15-30 minute message, often including admonitions on attendance, participation in programs, and tithing. Before and after the message of the minister there will be announcements that serve as commercials for all the events, programs and services of the corporation called the church.

The saint is trained to be a good corporate citizen, and his continuance as a

good corporate citizen is assumed to last as long as life is in him. *Do the programs of the church lead to conformity to Christ?* The instrument Yahweh uses to conform sons to the image of Christ is the cross. There is an afflicted path to be walked. There are difficult experiences to be endured. There are trials to be passed through, all the while the saint is to be crucifying the flesh that the Spirit of Christ within him might arise.

The church does not offer this path to conformity to Christ. They are more likely to offer baseball, softball, golf, and excursions to the mall than they are to lead the saints to take up their crosses to follow Christ. The church stands in the way of the believer, for it will not permit any to be led of the Spirit. Being led of the Spirit will interfere with being led by the church leadership. One cannot fulfill the goals of the corporation while being led of the Spirit. If you are led by the Spirit you will not be the model corporate Christian citizen that those building earthly kingdoms desire to populate their congregations. The church leaders are all too willing to usurp the role of the Spirit, telling the saints what the will of God is for their lives. The end is always self-serving, fostering a dependence upon the church leaders, and resulting in a continuance of the church as a corporate entity.

Eighty years ago, a wise Christian minister named T. Austin Sparks wrote the following words:

We realize with intense sorrow of heart that all is not well with that which ostensibly represents the Lord here, and that there is a state of things widely prevailing which does not truly accord with the revealed desire of God.

"We live in a time of more than usual dearth spiritually - the state of things may well remind us of Ezekiel's valley of dry bones - we have not merely to cope with evils which have characterized bygone ages, but also with the matured corruption of a time wherein the varied evils of the Gentile world have become connected with, and covered by the cloak of Christian profession; and when we turn to the state of those whose knowledge of truth and high profession might naturally encourage the expectation of more healthy and vigorous Christian action, we find, alas! in many - yes, in the majority of cases - that the knowledge is but cold and uninfluential theory, and the profession but superficial."

Christianity has become so largely a matter of doctrine and creed. The test of Christian life is very much a matter of subscribing thereto. Christian

experience has become largely limited to a matter of being saved, without the great Eternal and universal relative factors and issues. Christian service is resolved far too much into a matter of enthusiasm in a great enterprise apart from an adequate apprehension of what the Lord is really after and the indispensable energy and equipment of the Holy Ghost. The Christian "church" is very largely reduced to earthly institutions, societies, denominations, buildings, activities and orders, and the spiritual revelation and apprehension of "the One Body" and "One Spirit" is for by far the most part lacking. Christian teaching has very largely become - at best - a matter of giving addresses and preaching sermons with a presentation of "the letter of the Word," a giving forth of truth as truth, but lacking in "revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph. 1:17); that true inwardness of meaning which reaches the heart and meets the deepest spiritual need of the hungry.

The result of all this is that the impact of that which stands for God upon the world, and particularly upon "the world rulers of this darkness" is almost nil, or a minus quantity...

As we get nearer the close of this age the contact with and impact of the forces of Satan is going to be such that only those who know the full testimony of Jesus and stand experimentally in it will be able to go through without being paralyzed. The aspect of things is fast changing. The past twenty years has seen a movement into a realm where the old methods and means no longer prove effectual. We shall soon find a tremendous pressing down of the powers of darkness upon this earth, using the world-powers to such a degree and in such ways as to eclipse anything which has hitherto been. This is in full accord with the Word of God. There will be one, and only one hope for God's people, and that is their knowledge of Him in Christ and the power of His resurrection as a present spiritual reality. Not their activities, enthusiasms, organizations, enterprises, creeds, "churches," orthodoxy, and so on, but HIMSELF. That time, which is now coming upon us - though imperceptible to so many who are preoccupied with plans and programs - will make manifest the principle of the "One Body..."

[Source: "A Witness and A Testimony" magazine, Sep-Oct 1930 Vol. 8-5]

It is no wonder that so many are hearing the Spirit calling to "come out of her, My people, lest you participate in her sins and partake of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). The church has become a place of confusion (Babylon). Not only are her doctrines leavened, but the very system stands in the way of the saints attaining to "the fulness of the stature which belongs to Christ"

(Ephesians 4:13).

It is time for all saints to examine the system itself. Does the system of religion promote a Spirit directed life? Have you been brought to a complete abandonment to go wherever Christ would lead you, and to do whatever He would instruct you to do? Are you comfortable in the church because it assures you that Yahweh is well pleased with those who participate in its programs, while not requiring you to give up everything?

Luke 14:33

“So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all he possesses.”

There is a reason that the Christian Religious System is not under attack by the masses of Christians. There is a reason there is no wide call for reform. The church as a man-made institution is comfortable for those who do not wish to be disturbed. To be led of the Spirit will cost a man or woman everything. Nothing can be held back. Yet the corporate religious system will permit a man or woman to hold onto a significant portion of their property and their life.

People of God, the hour is late. It is time for all believers to question the Christian Religious System in the same way that a young Jewish woman named Erica Goldson has questioned the American educational system. The religious system permits men and women to continue to walk after the desires of the flesh. The Spirit of Christ will not. Do not allow yourself to follow blind guides. There is One who is appointed to lead you. That is the Spirit of Christ who indwells all the saints.

Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.