

God Gone Virtual!

Back in the day, a desperate wayward, lost soul hungering for God, when finally arriving at the end of his road, would historically seek out a place of worship. That sacred symbol in society reflects the highest and most noble of all locations, the house of God. They identified cathedrals, synagogues, temples, and church houses as decontaminated places of solemnity and sacredness. To them, it was a house of prayer. A place to repent. A spiritual lighthouse in a storm. A set aside place like no other real estate in town. A holy place where God could be found. A spiritual refuge where a new beginning could be discovered.

Sadly today, what he may discover is the platform transformed into a stage. Gone are the altars. Gone are the pulpits. Gone is hellfire and brimstone preaching. Lecture stands and dry, canned presentations, or else amped up high octane humanistic sermonettes are the rule of the day. Oh, and I would be remiss, not to mention all of the singing. Can somebody give me a witness! Dancing with the real stars of the show, the praise team.

One hour of dancing and singing with a 20-minute homily to send you home refreshed. You will surely feel good even if you aren't any better off. Next day? What did he preach? I don't know, but you should have seen them gals dancing up on that stage, bubba. I couldn't see all of them cause it was kinda dark towards the back of the stage. Different color lights flashing didn't help much either, and it was louder than a ball game, but I can't tell you a lot about the sermon. Went to a good Mexican restaurant with everybody afterward, too.

But what may be gone? As in missing gone? God! Yep. God. Where did God go? God Has Gone Virtual. The big-screen God. The Apple iPad exalted God. Where is He at? On a screen, you big dummy. Any old high-tech screen will do; make sure you get connected right. There are screens everywhere now for your convenience, of course. What good is a digital or virtual God without a screen? Where have you been hiding? Quit looking for Him in the church house. He isn't there anymore unless they have a screen, of course. One-click... That's it.

Religious people create venues of convenience for worship. They have, after all, a monopoly of special insight into God. A secret revelation of a media promoted God. A virtual God. They are privileged. They can make God conform to their image. After all, they possess some inalienable right to the throne room because they are people of the name. Just call it all evangelism so it will appear legal and doable for any old fogey still hanging around from the '90s. 🙄

Religious voyeurism, as experienced through religious television and internet live stream services, is, in reality, a form of escapism from God. They aren't looking for God; they are moving away from God towards a virtual God. The big-screen God. God is in a new secret place. You have to have a passcode to get in—cause God has gone virtual. The viewer is escaping from any real responsibility to the local church and away from anything concretely spiritual by supplanting accountability to the pulpit, and the Holy One, to connect alongside the multitudes and masses. Loving God and esteeming truth above all things is reduced, if not completely replaced, with the new theme, which was intended to be secondary on our list of moral priorities. Loving God is now being trumped by a loving thy neighbor religion. Neighbor loving religion masquerading as evangelism. Well done, boys. How many poor lost souls were viewing you today? That's right. There is no way to truly determine if it's another man's saint or a backslider from another church or a poor lost soul you're reaching for.

We don't pull demographic polls on those we are entertaining God to. Just do the numbers is all we need. Essentially, it doesn't matter. How many connected today is all we ask. Ethics? Sure. How many connected today? What were the big numbers for the year? The higher the number of neighbors viewing indicates success to the religious host and the interested if not excited religious voyeur.

The viewer becomes a spectator rather than the traditional participant viewing a spiritual product in the most impersonal fashion. One great advantage of celebrating a digital God is you don't need much substance. A digital God only requires a digital response. Never mind the glaring fact that the medium that provides the surreal images of man's visage and religious programs overshadows the content of an attempted message towards truth. Hard to sanctify the internet. Like an old-washed pig. No matter how clean she gets, we know her nature. She loves to wallow in the filthiest of places. And she will eat anything. She may look good on the breakfast plate once dressed up but not in church.

So yep. It's a challenge to overcome the medium they're promoting the holy things through. But by George, why be concerned with any old details like that. But the fact remains as one author, philosopher, and the renowned thinking man stated some things (like the sacred and holy) are not televisable. The setting God is being viewed in is not sacred and sanctified. But the production managers that host their programs and who frenzy feed off the responses from the voyeurs are thirsting for the approval and acceptance of men. More men, please. You're invited to connect. Help me get my numbers up to be justified in this unproven armor I'm attempting to wear.

The televised church has been aptly defined by some as the sanitizing of Apostolic preaching. The styles of red-faced, high-volume voices with decibels far beyond the natural tones of speaking and the pulpit pounding days of yesteryear are under a mandatory evacuation by the religious voyeurs today. Confrontation doesn't sell. Conciliatory and encouraging tones from distinguished and polished speakers are the rage of the age. Fewer will be the sermons on the perversion of homosexuality and Sodomites or the eternal place of the damned for all who sin. Sin? Oops. Eternal judgment? Yikes. I think I just got de-friended. How dare you articulate specifics like divorce and remarriage—the filthiness of premarital sex and the brokenness that ensues.

The devastation and ruination in the home because of the spirit of adultery. Abortion? Nope. Mention all of it as benignly as possible if you feel you have to but never in a harsh, judgmental way. No specifics on sin, please. Very generalized. Clean, neatly little packaged chicken soup for the soul preaching as we walk and talk with Jesus every day all along the way, having coffee with Dr. Jesus every morning. After all, He loves us “no matter what we do.” Just call Him up and tell Him what you want. Better yet. Just click on it. He isn't answering landlines these days. Just satellite-driven devices only, please.

Why? Cause God has gone virtual. So wow us with swelling words. Soothe us with harmonious contemporary melodies of the day, and present God in the most loving way possible. After all, multitudes are watching, and that is paramount to electronic church. They need to see your pretty face even if they don't hear your sweet little message. Audio won't work. It has to be visual. That's how faith comes now. You, sir, are the star of the show, not that you will forget that. That's why you chose the visual over antiquated audio. They can't see you on the radio. Internet TV for all them lost folks instead of radio. You want them to see your face. That award-winning face. You da man. Da big screen man. You go, boy.

The poor shut-ins need to see you too. Hearing you isn't good enough. Prisoners in jail must listen to you too. The drug addict in a back alley with a needle shoved in his arm might be googling you right now. The child rapist and sex predator could find your link while riding the streets in a red-light district.

Drunks on a bar stool may pull their tablet out and link up with you between sips. YouTube church will naturally spring forth in all of their minds as they run to their devices and fall on their knees to your well polished and state-of-the-art website. The one with your picture plastered on it. Facial recognition is important to the digital preacher.

So... Shout shout shout all night... all night. Dance dance dance... All night, all night. They're about to connect even now all over the world, and don't forget, connecting is what counts. Amazing how we can track how many connected, but never an account of how many were legitimately converted from the program. Why? Connecting is the end game. Connecting IS the result anticipated. Viewership numbers reflect spiritual success to the hosts of religious TV.

Poor viewing numbers is a sign of spiritual failure. I need to pray and fast more to get you to count up. High numbers are a success. Digital God is pleased with the telecast when the numbers are up. Bigger is better in the internet TV business. So amp it up, boys. Show God off real good. Show off the treasure house to sinners real good. Pump it up and give them more bang for the buck.

Pretty it up. Lights, camera, action. BTW... remember it's all for a worthy cause. THE LOST!

There is More good news for the Entertainment Tonight Broadcast teams. Internet church TV is here to stay. It will be here until the end of time. Unfortunately, the church won't be here that long, but internet TV will be. The antichrist can be assured that his old buddy, the false prophet, will utilize that same digital platform to celebrate his cause. These boys today are working the kinks out for both of them. Nothing like pioneers and trailblazers. Thank you, boys. Well done. Good job.

Evangelism lovers, they claim to be. Many of them never ran buses for Sunday School. They never were consistent at knocking on doors. Never hardly ran ads in the local papers. No radio broadcast. No routine local mail-outs. No jail services. No nursing home church services. No street services. No tent meetings in town. No billboards. No ongoing home Bible study programs in the church. They're aggressively reaching globally and worldwide through internet TV churches, while the locals have hardly ever historically known who the pastor might be at the Apostolic church. But it's somehow all about evangelism now. A great burden has suddenly come upon them all.

Yes, questions concerning honesty towards evangelism motives do arise. If live stream internet church is such a righteous tool as you claim it to be to reach the lost, and since you claim to have this red hot passion to reach the lost, what took you years to get on board? It's been utilized by worldly Pentecostal organizations and fellowships for years now. This venue is not new to any of us. So? Where have you been? Where was your burden then? Perhaps live stream is not as righteous as you pretend it to be, or maybe it isn't about souls after all. Maybe it's just politically expedient now. Maybe this "new fad" implemented since the virus has made it easier for you to come out of the closet now.

Hmm? Thankfully this new brand of TV and video producing Pentecostals can be bailed out now after years of laziness in evangelism. Cause...

God Gone Virtual Now.

Pastor Bill Pitman