

Why hasn't the recession shut down prosperity preaching?

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Small businesses have closed its doors. Unemployment is nearing an all-time high. The government is printing money like its Xerox machine is on steroids. Every company is looking for its stimulus package. And the light at the end of a tunnel is a bank truck ready to run us over.

Erstwhile, there is a noteworthy gaggle of preachers who seem to have cash flowing out of their linen-lined pockets doing just fine.

So much so in fact, the New York Times decided to write a story about their exploits at the most recent KCM Southwest Believers Convention that is as confusing as it is exacerbating.

The preachers barely acknowledged the recession, though they did say it was no excuse to curtail giving. “Fear will make you stingy,” Mr. [Kenneth] Copeland said.

“Stingy?” That’s the best you got for what is going on fiscally across this country? People are looking at their paychecks and flipping a coin to decide whether to pay the mortgage or buy groceries, and you - with your custom-made suits and keys to the personal learjet chiming in your attache - think we’re “stingy.”

Keep it classy, Kenny.

*People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. **For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.** Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. Paul’s Charge to Timothy. But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness (**1 Timothy 6:9-11 NIV**).*

I need money. I don’t love it, but these guys seem to want to take their wallet out on a date.

So, why do so many people flock to witness this collision course of these demagogues smash their face into a retaining wall because they have the nerve to keep some cash in the pocket for gas on the way home?

Simple. Why do people buy cookbooks from famous chefs? Why do people download diets from televised fitness gurus? Why do books go straight to #1 just because Oprah reads it?

Because those people are sheep and if someone is successful in an arena to which they can relate, mimicry will ensue. Preachers are no different. They are loaded, look good and can preach a nice message. They have it going on, so folks will buy whatever they are selling.

And so, these particular preachers get richer and the recession seems to move right on by.

*But mostly the preachers were working mightily to remind the crowd that they are God’s elect. “While everybody else is having a famine,” said Mr. [Jerry] Savelle, a Texas televangelist, “his covenant people will be having the best of times...Any time a worried thought about money pops up in your mind,” Mr. Savelle continued, “the next thing you do is sow”: drop money, like seeds, in “good ground” like the preachers’ ministries. **“Stop worrying, start sowing,” he added, his voice rising. “That’s God’s stimulus package for you.”***

An all-star line up. Cute axioms. Fear mongering. Current news references. Sounds like a perfect storm for a payday to me. Yet, somewhere, there is a devil laughing his fiery tail right off.

How effective of a witness of God’s goodness can you be dusted, busted and disgusted? The calling card for any child of God is, “You want what I have in Jesus.” If that means to look like a beat-down believer with funky breath and always looking for other’s leftovers, then yes, you had me at “I’m broke.”

There are all ministers living the good life. Typically, applause would break out; however, ever met someone who works on staff? I have and let’s just say there is blinding case for the haves and have-nots.

In one corner, we have 15,000-square-foot homes, bling, six-figure rides, fine dining and a constant influx of cash. In the other corner, we have a modest apartment, a WWJD bracelet, a 10-year-old Honda Civic and juggling bills to buy a Big Mac. Oh yeah, and not a medical insurance payment in sight.

God doesn't favor these preachers, so why are they so rich and many of us are not-so-much? We give. They seem to take. When money is only going one way, there is only one result. And you are not on the cushy, lovely end of it. Instead, you are the one being poked.

Listen, there isn't a Jesus Lottery. God Claus doesn't exist. And the Holy Spirit doesn't take layaway. If you really think blessings can be bought, then by all means, give until it hurts because soon these preachers will be smiling and there you are... hurting.

People don't accept your Savior because of the car you drive, the jewels you wear or the places you dine**They fall in love with Jesus because of the witness you possess - ironically, the only offering you can give that money can't buy.** God bless us all. Peace.

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