

# Could the Apostasy Be Upon Us?

by Steve Gallagher

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*Steve Gallagher warns that the Church may be in the midst of the Great Apostasy, a falling away from the faith that is characterized by a lack of discernment and a focus on worldly values.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:12, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 1 Timothy 4:1, 2 Timothy 3:1, 2 Peter 2:1

**Topics:** "Moral Decline", "Great Apostasy"

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## Description

Steve Gallagher delivers a powerful sermon reflecting on the film 'Time Changer' and the concept of the Great Apostasy, drawing parallels between the moral decline in the movie's modern America and the current state of society. He challenges Christians to reevaluate their tolerance towards immorality, the influence of media on their values, and the potential signs of the Church being in a state of backsliding and apostasy.

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## Transcript

Although he is better known for his role on The Love Boat, Gavin MacLeod cited his supporting performance in the 2003 film Time Changer as "the most important thing" he had ever done. It's hard to disagree with him.

The storyline occurs in 1890 and revolves around Bible professor Russell Carlisle, who is unwittingly transported by a time machine into modern-day America. For five days, he finds himself trapped in a wicked world to which you and I have become shamefully accustomed.

In his day, the term, "Gay Nineties," referred to the nation's innocence, not to the filthy and lewd behavior reflected in our past decade. Men married their wives for life, with divorce rates hovering around a microscopic 5%. Teenage promiscuity, marital infidelity and abortion were almost nonexistent. Pornography--even if you could find it--was typically an artist's rendering of a topless woman.

Christian filmmaker Rich Christiano's character, Russell Carlisle, is an awkward and unlikely hero who is thrust into the America of our day. This results in the inevitable scenes of him marveling over modern technology and dodging speeding cars. More important, though, are his reactions to the stark contrast in morality between the two eras.

At one point, he is seen watching television. His horrified expression betrays the fact that he is witnessing the kind of blatant immorality which has become standard fare for many of us. But perhaps the most

poignant scene occurs when he is invited by some Christians to attend a movie with them. Suddenly, he is shown running out of the theater screaming at the employees, "You have to stop this movie! That actor took the Lord's name in vain! He blasphemed God!"

If you or I witnessed a fellow believer acting this way, we would quickly distance ourselves from him. And yet this scenario provokes a few pointed questions Christians should ask themselves. Why aren't we more outraged when we hear actors take the Lord's name in vain? How can we look upon scantily-clad girls on television without blushing? Why do we permit TV to indoctrinate our children with the world's values? The Church is obviously backslidden. The greater question it provokes is: Could we be in the Great Apostasy and not be aware of it?

After having spent the last two years studying this subject in Scripture, I was forced to acknowledge that two of my long-held assumptions regarding it have been wrong.

First, I came to realize that this falling away would not primarily be an obvious, outward renunciation of Christianity; it would be much more an issue of what is occurring in people's hearts (e.g., Matt. 24:12).

My second erroneous notion was that the greatest problem in the Church today is that pastors are too busy to effectively disciple their flocks. I thought the sin and carnality running rampant in our midst was the result of harried pastors not holding churchgoers accountable to actually live what they are learning. I now believe that the larger issue is that pastors are burning themselves out trying to lead unconverted people into living the Christian life.

In the end, I arrived at the devastating conclusion that a large segment of the Post-Modern Church--that which has been the subject of our love and efforts--fits all the criteria predicted by Scripture of the Apostate Church. This issue of Unchained! Magazine will highlight a handful of those characteristics.

Yes, I believe that if "Russell Carlisle" stepped into our Christian world today, he would immediately come to the conclusion that we are indeed in the midst of the Great Apostasy. May God help us to discern the times in which we live!

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