

The Greatest Show on Earth

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"... make a fair shew in the flesh ..." (Galatians 6:12)

"The Greatest Show on Earth" is the slogan of the *Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus*. If the truth be known, the greatest show on earth would be Christendom's religious institutions called "church."

The idea is not all that far fetched. There actually appears to be an etymological connection between the Sunday morning "church" and the "circus."

One of the most popular Bible dictionaries – a standard for well over one hundred years – reveals an interesting connection between the two. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, originally published in 1884, has a very remarkable observation for us regarding the roots of our English word "church."

"The derivation of the word is generally said to be from the Greek *kuriakon*, 'belonging to the Lord.' But the derivation has been too hastily assumed. It is probably connected with *Kirk*, the Latin *circus* – because the congregations were gathered in circles" (*Smith's Bible Dictionary*).

Interestingly, think of the parallels between the religious system's "church" and *Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey's* "circus."

- They both are a form of entertainment.
- They both have a stage.
- They both have skilled performers.
- They both have a ring master.
- They both have a paying audience.

With all the staging, showmanship, and drama, ultimately they are both a "three ring circus." Between the "circus" and the "church," – obviously, the "church" is in reality – the greatest show on earth.

“As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh ...” (Galatians 6:12).

“Which things have indeed a **show** of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh” (Colossians 2:23).

As Terry Wier has so well stated:

“Where is God in all of this? He has become a bit player, a ‘regular,’ expected to appear on cue and perform a few tricks, give us a few thrills, take a few special requests, and then vanish behind the curtain until... we want to see Him again ...” (*Holy Sex*, page 360).

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