



# Steroid-Enhanced Religion

*A parody is a comic caricature, a ludicrous likeness, an absurd analogy, a ridiculous representation which exposes a particular reality by comparing it to another of a different order. Parodies can be a useful literary tool to expose the “red herrings” of diversions which distract attention from real issues. By the use of parody one can be direct yet subtle at the same time.*

A visit to “God’s Gym” reveals that many are actively involved in body-building. It has become a competitive sport to see who can sculpt the biggest and most well-defined body.

Gym regulars almost seem to be obsessed with their physical appearance, and never satisfied unless they are becoming bigger and stronger.

The personal trainer constantly encourages the participants to “get with the program” and “work out.” By “pumping iron” they can “bulk up” and thereby build muscle-mass.

This requires the sweating exertion of many repetitions of weight-lifting with ever increasing weights. It is a disciplined regimen requiring great personal commitment and a lot of work. “No pain; no gain” is their motto.

The body-builders endure these torturous “work-outs” in order to prepare for their next competition where they can display their chiseled bodies.

It is there that they assume their pose and flex the muscles of their shiny, well-oiled bodies. Bulging with muscle definition, they are judged by statistical analysis. Bigger is better!

In their intense desire to win these competitions some body-builders allow the end to justify the means. To gain an advantage over

the others they seek to stimulate growth by taking steroids—growth hormones which alter the metabolic development of the muscle structure.

They do so even when they know that physical consequences such as sterility and heart damage can occur, as well as the psychological consequences of volatility and depression.

When these body-abusing competitors are subjected to random drug-testing in the midst of a competition, it is revealed that they have unfairly bulked up the muscle-mass of their bodies.

They are exceedingly grieved and disgraced when the head judge disqualifies them, having proven them to be unfit.

## Religious Body-Builders

The institutional church has approached “the building up of the Body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12, NASB) in a similar manner as many have approached physical body-building.

Many of the “church-growth techniques” have been but counterfeit procedures to artificially stimulate growth and add statistical bulk to the ecclesiastical Body, believing that “bigger is better.”

The result is a steroid-enhanced religion—sterile and depressing, causing a damaged heart.

The religious body-builders assume their pose and flex their muscles to compete for who has the best form. They have “a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5, KJV).

Only Jesus Christ can “cause the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:16, NASB), as Christians “exercise [themselves] unto godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7, KJV).

May the Judge of all mankind reveal that all the sweating exertion of “salvation by works” in order to build up the Body of Christ is invalid, and it can only result in disqualification from the heavenly awards banquet. □

—Jim Fowler



ILLUSTRATION BY AARON ESKRIDGE