

The Glowing Oracle: LCD Screens, Mesmerism, and the Quiet Return of Sorcery to the Church

Walk into a large contemporary Protestant church today and the first object that asserts authority is not the pulpit, not the altar, not the Word read aloud, but the screen. It hangs above the congregation like a luminous eye, flanked often by its lesser companions, bathing the room in color, motion, and controlled emotional cadence. It is presented as neutral technology, a mere aid to worship, yet its form, function, and psychological effect tell a different story. What modern churches call “visual support” operates in practice as a mechanism of attention capture indistinguishable in effect from the occult instruments Scripture once explicitly condemned.

A crystal ball is not condemned because it is spherical glass. It is condemned because it is used to fix the gaze, suspend discernment, and invite passivity before a mediated source of meaning. The LCD screen differs only in shape and sophistication. Both are instruments of light manipulation. Both demand visual submission. Both bypass reason by overwhelming the senses. Both create an atmosphere in which the subject stops actively seeking truth and begins receiving impressions.

This is not metaphor. It is mechanism.

Liquid Crystal Display technology functions by controlling polarized light through electrically charged crystals. The very name announces the lineage. These crystals do not merely display information; they shape perception through contrast, motion, color temperature, and rhythm. When synchronized with amplified music, emotional lighting, and repetitive lyrical phrasing, the result is a mild but real trance state. Neurology recognizes this. Marketing exploits it. Political propaganda depends on it. The church, astonishingly, has baptized it without discernment.

In such spaces, worship no longer begins with silence or ends with contemplation. It begins with a countdown. It crescendos with visual saturation. It resolves not into stillness, but into applause or transition. The screen sets the tempo, not the Spirit. The congregation learns, slowly and unconsciously, to look up for cues rather than inward for conviction. Attention is trained outward. Reverence is replaced with immersion.

One might object that intention matters. Surely the church does not *intend* sorcery. That is true. But intention does not neutralize effect. Scripture does not warn only against malicious magic, but against practices that *function* as divination regardless of motive. “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times” (Deuteronomy

18:10). The phrase “observer of times” is instructive. It refers not merely to fortune telling, but to ritualized attention control tied to cycles, signals, and visual markers.

The modern worship service, precisely timed, visually cued, emotionally escalated, and technologically mediated, fits this description uncomfortably well.

Historically, image-based manipulation has always accompanied religious decline. Pagan temples relied on spectacle. Mystery cults relied on sensory overload. Even political regimes have understood that images shape belief more efficiently than words. The Reformation itself wrestled with images, sometimes erring in iconoclasm, but always recognizing that what captures the eye eventually governs the heart. The irony is that churches now hostile to “ritual” have embraced the most powerful ritual technology ever devised, one capable of far greater influence than candles or incense ever possessed.

The defense often offered is utility. Screens help people sing. Screens help people follow along. Screens make services accessible. All of this may be partially true. But usefulness is not the same as holiness. Efficiency is not the same as reverence. The question is not whether screens can be used, but what they train the soul to expect. A faith habituated to constant visual stimulation cannot endure silence. A congregation trained to receive truth through spectacle will find stillness intolerable. When the screen goes dark, discomfort follows.

Scripture is blunt about the danger of misdirected sight. “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” (Matthew 6:22). The verse does not celebrate light indiscriminately. It warns that corrupted light produces darkness masquerading as illumination. Paul is even more severe: “For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Light, divorced from truth, becomes deception.

This is why the comparison to witchcraft is not rhetorical excess. Witchcraft is not primarily about costumes or incantations. It is about control through mediated perception. It is about bypassing conscience by overwhelming sensation. It is about outsourcing discernment to an external device. When a congregation is conditioned to receive spiritual meaning from a glowing rectangle rather than from Scripture read aloud, prayer offered in stillness, or silence endured in humility, the functional difference disappears.

Some will protest that this is alarmist. But consider the practical test. If the screens were removed tomorrow, would the service deepen or collapse? Would worship continue or stall? If silence were introduced, would it feel holy or awkward? If the lights remained

steady and the visuals ceased, would attention sharpen or wander? These are not theoretical questions. They are diagnostic ones.

Notably, Catholic churches, often derided by Protestants as outdated, have largely resisted this transformation. Where screens appear, they are peripheral, informational, restrained. The architecture itself refuses to compete with the sacred. The absence of screens is not nostalgia; it is theology. It signals that God is not mediated through entertainment, that truth does not require enhancement, and that reverence begins where manipulation ends.

The modern Protestant sanctuary, by contrast, increasingly resembles a studio. The stage replaces the chancel. The screen replaces the focal point. The atmosphere is engineered. The emotions are guided. The congregation is managed. None of this requires malicious intent. It requires only uncritical adoption.

“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) has become an almost impossible command in these environments. Stillness feels foreign. Knowing feels secondary to feeling. The screen must always be on, because silence might expose something uncomfortable.

This article is not a call to smash technology or retreat into primitivism. It is a call to honesty. To name what is happening. To admit that when churches rely on the same mechanisms used by advertisers, hypnotists, and propagandists, they should not be surprised when worship begins to feel like consumption and faith like a product.

Once seen, this cannot be unseen. The next time the screen flares to life, the question will arise uninvited: *Why must I look there?* When the colors swell and the music lifts on cue, another question will follow: *What is being done to me right now?* And when the service ends without silence, without stillness, without the uncomfortable space where God so often speaks, the absence will be felt.

That unease is not rebellion. It is discernment awakening.

And perhaps the most telling sign of all is this: no witch would ever deny the power of a crystal to shape perception. Only the modern church insists that its glowing crystals are harmless.