

Is the Church a Business?

A few years ago I was sitting in the church office when the phone rang and I greeted the caller and identified the congregation by name. A female voice abruptly said "Is this a business?" I said, "No, this is a church." She hung up. In that moment I realized the problem afflicting so many churches. Far too many churches have indeed become businesses and have left God.

First, the gospel is not a marketable product. This is not the same as saying that the gospel should not be delivered to a lost and dying world. We are commanded to "preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). More over, we are to carry this message to the entire world (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16).

In my years in retail I spent a great deal of time designing shelves in order to induce the consumer to purchase the product. In the publishing world, book and magazine covers sell more copies than the names of authors.

The gospel should not be reshaped and repackaged so it is more palatable to the consumer. If we do, we begin to view the Bible as a marketing firm would and begin to ask the wrong questions. Instead of asking how we can better deliver the message, we ask which parts of the message will be accepted by the consumer?

Our doctrine becomes a theological buffet table where the "customer is always right". If a department store has a policy, price, or procedure customers dislike, they consider changing it. From this idea comes the Community Church concept where instead of going chapter to chapter they go door to door to determine doctrine and worship practices. Psalm 119:89 says, "Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven." Isaiah 66:5 says we should "tremble" rather than tinker with His word.

We never have the right to presume that scripture is no longer relevant. Hebrews 4:12 says it is "living and powerful" and 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 says it is "profitable and complete".

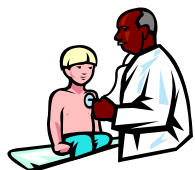
Second, profit is not our motive. In the business world the only thing that ultimately matters is profit and everything is designed to attain that goal. In a store the colors, designs, layout and sounds are all market tested in order to please the consumer. Our worship cannot be market driven so that it touches the senses rather than the mind and soul. In other words, people are stimulated but not saved.

Third, we cannot have two sets of rules. For example, some businesses will have one set of rules for their biggest customers and another for everyone else. They will bend the rules for big spenders. Churches do this far too often. We will look at those who contribute the most and cater to their whims—no matter how silly—and overlook their sins so they will keep writing checks.

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Continue to remember in prayer:

Sick



Margaret Kratz, Miriam Majors, Betty & Walter Jenkins, Jim Dorsett, Martha Keith, Al Furrow, Marguerite Charles, Jo Musgrove, Evelyn Scott, Ruth Stanton, Willard Campbell, WJ Wood, EV Wimmer, Jo Hartman, Lynn Anderson, Josh Van Ravenstien, Jackie Dixon, Collin Gregory, WJ Wood

Sympathy is extended to the family of Robert Hill who passed away last week after battling cancer. He was a friend of Lori Whitlow.

Happy Birthday this week to:



- Susan Mountcastle—3/28
- Connor Jearls—3/29
- Jim Dorsett—3/30
- Ron White—3/31
- Dee House—4/1
- Tiffany Gibson—4/2
- Olivia Valentine—4/3
- Esther Green—4/3
- Garrett Durham—4/4

MARCH ITEMS FOR THE STAFFORDS: Ink pens (Grip, medium Pilot, and fine Zebra) and Tic Tacs (lime). Give your items to Jeanny and she will ship them over!



Is the Church a Business? Continued

Then everyone else knows they will be held to a different standard because they can't buy their privileges. No doubt God is disgusted that this practiced in the Lord's church. God shows no "partiality" and neither should we. (Acts. 10:34; James 2:1-4).

No doubt this is hard to listen to for many people. Yet, God did not send his Son here to be popular, but to save souls. We are to love all men and change the attitudes and doctrine that we have which are contrary to God's will. But, our motivation better never be to make the gospel more palatable to the tastes of men. (1 Cor. 10:31).

- the elders

Teens

March Events

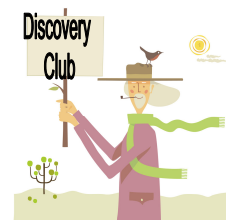


April 9,10—Making Music Weekend—FHU
April 18—TBS

Ryan Davis, Contact Office



The Discovery Club's next meeting is scheduled for April 11 at 4:30 in the large class-



room.

Upcoming Events:



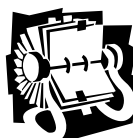
Team 3 (Valentine) will be having a lunch after services today at the K&W Restaurant.

WOW

The next regular meeting will be on April 13 at 10:30. Special guest speaker!

Sunday, April 18, everyone is invited to join the WOW group at the Harbor Inn Restaurant for lunch. Sign up sheet is on the board!

Big Thanks to Ed Mickens who cleaned up the dead brush beside the building! It looks GREAT!!!



Please update your directories and send him a note!

Daniel Hodges: Contact Office

First 100 Days

“The Lord Hath Kept Thee Back from Honor”

Mar. 28 (Romans 7)

- Read Romans 7 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 7
 - Freedom from the law of Moses
 - Memorize Rom. 7:4
- Write a note or card this week
- *Increase your contribution by \$1 today

Mar. 29 (Romans 8)

- Read Romans 8 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 8
 - Spiritual nature of the new life in Christ
 - Memorize Rom. 8:1

Mar. 30 (Romans 9)

- Read Romans 9 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 9
 - Why the Jews were rejected and the Gentiles accepted
 - Memorize Rom. 9:33

Mar. 31 (Romans 10)

- Read Romans 10 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 10
 - Israel's only hope - the gospel
 - Memorize Rom. 10:17

Apr. 1 (Romans 11)

- Read Romans 11 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 11
 - Jewish rejection is not irrevocable
 - Memorize Rom. 11:22

Apr. 2 (Romans 12)

- Read Romans 12 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 12
 - Practical matters of Christianity
 - Memorize Rom. 12:2

Apr. 3 (Romans 13)

- Read Romans 13 three times today
- Pray today
- Memorize contents of Romans 13
 - The Christian and the state (1-7)
 - The law of love (8-10)
 - Spiritual awakening (11-14)
 - Memorize Rom. 13:1

The story of Balaam is a sad one indeed (Num. 22-24). He could have been an influence for good and have likely accomplished so much, but he threw it all away because he “loved the wages of unrighteousness” (II Pet. 2:15). He gave some good replies initially when Balak came calling (cf. Num. 22:38; 23:8, 10; 24:13). However, he eventually gave in to his demands and succumbed to his offers (cf. Jude 11; Rev. 2:14). On one of the occasions when Balaam blessed God’s people instead of cursing them (as Balak wanted him to do), Balak made a statement that has significant application to Christians today. He said, “Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour” (Num. 24:11).

If we stand for what is right in this world that is bent on doing wrong, we will suffer some consequences (II Tim. 3:12). If adults stand for the truths of God’s word in the workplace, social gatherings and every other situation in life, we will be ridiculed by someone. If we refuse to compromise our principles in order to get a promotion or raise, such promotions and raises may not be forthcoming. If we refuse to drink socially and join in with the vulgar language and questionable actions of others, we may not be on too many party guests’ lists. As the world would see it, “the Lord hath kept thee back from honor.” But, if we hold fast our morals, integrity, values and principles, we will receive the honor of the Lord.

If we teach our children to do what is right in every situation, there will be some times when it will cost them. If we teach them that God’s kingdom takes precedence (Mt. 6:33) over playing ball, piano recitals, school gatherings, homework and other such affairs, they will not be as popular with as many people as they might otherwise have been. If we teach them that modern dancing is sinful and that modern beach attire is immodest, and that Christians do not participate in such things, they may suffer some ridicule from their classmates. They may not be selected Homecoming Queen or class president. Because of their convictions, in the eyes of the world, Balak’s argument will at least be implied: “The Lord hath kept thee back from honor.” But, if we instill in those children those values, morals and priorities, and they grow up strong spiritually and are rewarded a home in heaven eternally, what greater honor could they attain? Indeed, the world may see it as the Lord keeping us back from honor, but if we keep His word and follow His will, we will receive His honor. Which would you rather have?

-Eddy