

## Swallowing Christianity

If I struggle with church at all it's in the delivery. Do they do what they claim they do? I suppose I could say that with any organization. It's tough! We have had several bad experiences at McDonalds recently. Is McDonalds bad? I ran head-long into bad church right from the beginning. For years I fought the way they did things. In so many ways I was astounded at their lack of compassion. I was beginning to think it was normal church. My new wife told me that my church was soul-less. I knew but I didn't know. It took someone else to open my eyes. Yet, that does not make church bad.

Through the years I have gone to university to be a pastor. They were a fine university except for the money game. Tuition was high. Priority to PK kids was high. It was crazy the little games they played there. Was Christian university bad? Not at all, I loved my time there. I just hate the church games, even at school. On and on I went experiencing bad church. Seriously! Is the church all bad? I wrote a book on how to energize church. Ten years later I looked back on it and it still holds water. I know how to make church better. Yet, my thoughts hit a steel wall in church.

I will admit that many great pastors have done their own thing. Made church the right way in their eyes. Here was my problem. I don't think God has asked me to make my own brand of church. To do it my way. Instead, He has asked me to help fight old church. To point them away from mindless church games. Trust me, that has not been popular. I am an outcast to church born people. I wouldn't dare do church their way. I'm from the world. I want to include the world within church. Houston, we have a problem. Most church bred Christians have issues with those of us born on the outside of church walls. Regardless of the great commission.

What does God have to say? Matthew 28:19-20 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* The problem is brothers and sister’s vs the world. Church has a long-standing history of protecting the inside born Christians. Bringing people inside from the world is not that fun, safe, or comfortable. Plainly, church people just don’t want to do it. Unfortunately, that is not how God rolls. He is calling the outside people in, regardless of the inside Christians feelings on the matter.

This brings me back to McDonalds. There are good McDonalds out there. Each restaurant does give the same menu. It’s all in the delivery. Finding good McDonalds is another issue. It’s the same with church. Why are there people that church hop? Pastors would claim they are uncommitted. That they want church their way. By and large I will argue that, yes, they want things their way. Church hoppers want church to sell the proper menu and not a bad rendition of the menu. This menu is pretty simple too. Love everyone and treat them as the Father in heaven would. It’s not rocket science. The brand does not mean your entitled. Oh no, it means you have to give the right menu to honor the brand. It must taste right every time to be that brand.

We have been going to a small family run church for three years now. Do they have cracks and warts? Oh yes, they do! However, the brand is intact. They are heaven bent on giving the right menu. They give away money to the needy. They reach the community as servers. Church is fun and engaging with the gospel message. What do they do well? They want to build up people. They want to help the city build up the city. To build their church up on a pedestal? You see, I don’t think so. Making the God brand look good is the goal. Sometimes that means

church must look reckless and dirty. My church has no problem taking a (perception) hit for Gods great commission.

Are we at this church because it makes “me” happy? Are we there because they do things “my” way? It’s a yes and no answer. Yes, they do church my way. They make me feel wanted and useful. I suppose that makes me happy. Yet, I know when I go to church that the menu is being honored. That makes me happy too. We are reaching the world. We are serving the world. My church wants me to submit to Gods authority and fulfill the great commission. Warts and little church mice games are not that big a deal if the main thing is keeping the brand honest. Doing what you said you will do. With all it’s minor faults my church does it the right way. For them and for me? Honestly, I think they do it for God. It’s a serving from these Christians I can swallow.