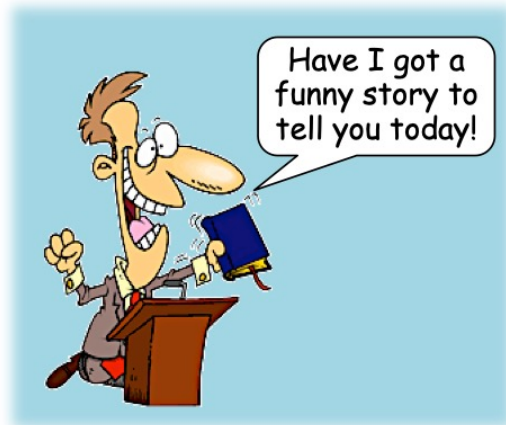


The Gimmick Gospel

By W. F. Bell



“World’s Largest Church” - “World’s Fastest Growing Church” - “America’s Fastest Growing Sunday School” - “Fastest Growing Church In The State.”

These are frequently heard and seen slogans in these modern days. But, isn't it a little silly to brag or boast about numbers (either large or small ones)? Where in all God's Word does it tell us to gimmick people into attending church services or Sunday School, like many "fundamental" churches are doing today? The answers to these questions are obvious to all Bible readers. The modern "gimmick gospel" is a fakery, faulty in its desired results, and foolish in the light of Scripture.

The Fakery of the Gimmick Gospel

That so-called "gospel" which centers around man primarily, and either excludes entirely or partially the glory of God in the saving of men's wretched souls, must of necessity be nothing but a fakery. In other words, the "gimmick gospel" is not a gospel at all. It is an imitation, a counterfeit, and not the glorious gospel (good news) of God's Word. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (Gal. 1:6-7). Note that there is only one gospel and that is the gospel of Christ!

What a perversion of the true gospel is this modern "gimmick gospel." Give-aways, gadgets, and games are weekly emphasized to keep the crowds coming. It's "Balloon Sunday" one week, "Ice Cream Sunday" another week, and "Bo-Zo-the-Clown Sunday" the next week. On and on the "gimmick gospel" goes, going so far as to have "karate preachers" performing their stunts, and "cut-off-your-tie" days. Some churches have such a carnival-like atmosphere about them that now the members no longer talk about going to "church," but to the "circus."

Where such a fleshly show is carried on, the Lord Jesus Christ is not being

honored and it is easily proved. Where are all those Sunday morning throngs on Sunday night? Where are they on Wednesday night? Has there ever been one new church building built yet, that was built to house the Sunday night and Wednesday night crowds of the big churches? Check around for yourself and see!

The Gimmick Gospel is Faulty

Where are the genuine results and the truly changed lives brought about by the “gimmick gospel”? The answer is simple: there are none. There cannot be anyone truly changed by the tactics and techniques of men – that is, changed from sinners into loyal subjects of King Jesus. Only God can change and truly convert poor sinners! How little this is believed in our day!

After getting thousands to attend Sunday School, what is taught them after getting them there? This is the crucial question. We are not against churches busing children and adults to Sunday School and churches, if they give them the pure gospel after getting them to come, and didn't have to gimmick to get them there. But, here lies the whole problem. Seemingly, there are false motives to get people to the church services (so everyone can tell how many were there), and there is a false gospel preached after the people come. How tragic that multitudes of blind people are being led by blind leaders, “And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt. 15:14).

We urge you to weigh carefully these solemn words: “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up” (Matt. 15:13). Do we believe this? Men can get “decisions,” and men can persuade folks to “come forward,” but does that mean that God the Holy Spirit has done a real work in their hearts? Some think so, but not this writer. We “fear and tremble” when we think of being called of God to preach and teach His Word! We consider the greatest of all callings and vocations to be preaching. We take it seriously and care nothing at all if our name is never recorded in the religious journals of our day. We never want to preach a faulty gospel, but always proclaim that true gospel that honors Christ and exalts the sovereignty of God in Salvation.

If the “gimmick gospel” is the answer to all of America's ills and problems today, why is there more deadness and unconcern for God and His glory than ever before? The medicine is not working; and it is not working because it is faulty!

The Gimmick Gospel is Foolish

We cannot ever believe that Christ even once engaged in anything so foolish. Neither can we imagine the apostles of our Lord doing things that are being done today in the name of Christianity. We have read and heard all the arguments for such “gimmicks,” but they have all fallen far short of that “glorious gospel of the blessed God” (I Tim. 1:11). We cannot bring ourselves to see in the Scriptures that Almighty God is engaged in a crash program to

“hurry up and get people saved before it is too late.” God is on the throne. What need has He to worry or fret? What need has God to rush and hurry up? “For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12). What a humbling word this is! We are vain and yet we would be wise! We are depraved and yet we want to help out “little Jesus.” Who is this Jesus — a “beggar”? What a caricature (distorted or inferior view) is being made in this day of the holy Son of God! Alas, our moderns think not of Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Saviour, but as a weak, effeminate, hippie-looking, disappointed founder of another religion.

We declare to you that modern preachers are proving themselves to be fools indeed, when instead of doing things Biblically, they take on the world’s ways and habits of doing things. The world sells their merchandise and sells their sports; but the true gospel is not for sale, never has been nor ever will be. The gospel of grace is not a bargain or something we merely try to get people to accept, but rather a glorious message of good news, the good news of Christ and what He has already done for poor, perishing sinners. Are you a sinner? Have you been laid low by God’s convicting power? Are you guilty and undeserving? If so, there is good news for you: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”; and the great apostle Paul said, “of whom I am chief” (1Tim. 1:15). If the chief of sinners was saved, then there is hope for you — all who feel themselves sinners and in need of a Saviour.

Let us rid this country of the “gimmick gospel,” for is it fakery, faulty, and foolish. And in the words of Charles Spurgeon:

“We can do without modern learning, but we cannot do without the ancient gospel. We can do without oratory and eloquence, but not without Christ crucified. Lord, revive Thy work by giving us the old-fashioned gospel back again in our pulpits.”
