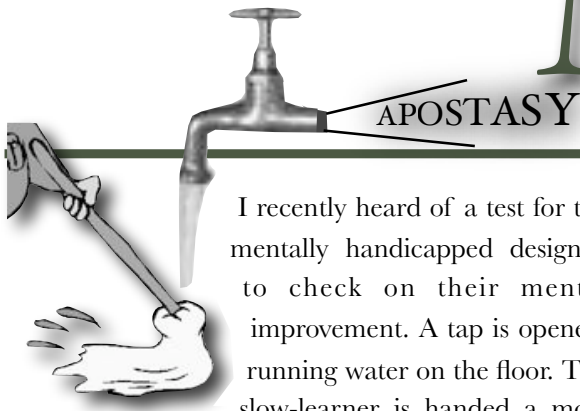


STOPPING OR... Mopping?



I recently heard of a test for the mentally handicapped designed to check on their mental improvement. A tap is opened, running water on the floor. The slow-learner is handed a mop.

If he turned off the water before he began mopping the floor, they know they had made some progress.

In First Timothy Paul begins by telling Timothy (the pastor) to clean up the mess in the church before doing anything else. *“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, **that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.**”* (First Timothy 1:3)

One of the reasons carnality is flooding our churches is because we have left the tap of apostasy running while trying to organize the church.

The first time we find Christ upset about sin it had to do with sin, in His “Father’s house.” This was not a time to design a promotion to increase the attendance, He actually worked at decreasing the attendance. The Bible says, *“He drove them out of the temple.”* He was not concerned about getting money from them either. We read, *“He poured out the changer’s money.”*

Getting a big crowd was never the focus of the Lord. In John 6:28 the followers of Christ asked, *“What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?”* He told them and in verse sixty-six we read, *“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”* Jesus was just as successful in verse sixty-six as He was in verse two when *“a great*

multitude followed him.” If He had soft-peddled the message to keep the multitudes, He would have been a compromiser, as is any pastor who refuses to preach the whole counsel of God today. In verse sixty-seven we read of, *“the twelve.”* The first time they are mentioned this way, the question is asked, *“Will ye also go away?”* It was a question that demanded a choice. We are prone to think that success is having a large number of people in a building and calling it church. God said, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.”* (Isaiah 55:8)

“Working the works of God,” has nothing to do with having a large group of people, sitting in a building on Sunday morning who are not really interested in *“working the works of God.”*

Jesus had “great multitudes,” following and then He had “the twelve.” In the small group eleven out of the twelve were really interested in working the works of God. In the large group the same eleven out of the twelve were really interested in working the works of God.



“Few There Be”

In Matthew seven when Jesus talked about walking “the narrow way,” He was talking to Christians. In verse twelve He said, *“...great is your reward in heaven.”* In previous verses He said, *“Ye are the salt of the earth.”* (v.12) He called them, *“the light of the world.”* (v.13) In verse sixteen He referred to their, *“Father which is in heaven.”*

LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRIES

It was concerning the faithful few that Jesus said, "...narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew.7:14) It has not changed in 2000 years. To preach like Jesus preached is to find that the majority of people who call themselves Christians will walk no more with you.

EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO WITNESS TO THE LOST. Every Christian is COMMANDED to witness for the Lord! This article, however, is not about winning the lost. This article is about God's purpose for His local church. The Bible is plain. God gave pastors, *"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:12)

HAVING A LARGE CROWD IS NOT GOD'S STANDARD OF SUCCESS.

In Revelation 3:8 we read of one of the seven churches that God did not rebuke. He highly commended them saying, *"...for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."* In Revelation 3:14 God wrote to the pastor of the Laodicean church sharply rebuking him for his compromise. They were, *"...increased with goods, and have need of nothing.."* (v.17) They had a crowd, however, the Lord had nothing good to say about this church. In fact, we find Christ outside knocking on the door while the crowd inside goes through their *"order of service."*

WE ARE NOT SAYING ALL BIG CHURCHES ARE FAILURES.

There are some large churches that take a very strong stand and preach the whole council of God and have a large crowd. It is very obvious that God gave the increase. However, for every large church God has hundreds of small churches that Christ can honestly say they have, *"...a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."* That, and that alone, is God's standard for success.

Why is it that when we talk about how things are going in our churches we always talk about how many people were in one of our meetings? the reason we do this is because we have the unscriptural idea that numbers has something to do with success.

As previously mentioned, one of the main reasons carnality is flooding our churches is because we have left the tap of apostasy running while trying to organize the church.

Success is not found in numbers. If the church be large or small, success is found in Christ being able to say, *"...thou hast...kept my word, and hast not denied my name."*



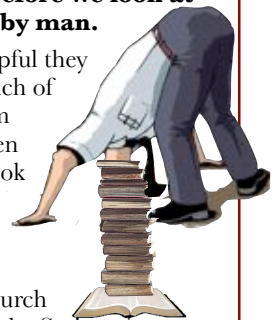
Gipsy Smith

Gipsy Smith said, *"I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into the kingdom or the Church we have lowered the standard. I am afraid that in our zeal to get people into what we call the Church we have been more anxious about heads than hearts. In order to capture, we have compromised and lost. We have been more concerned about filling our Church registers than we have about the kingdom."*

It will be a great day for the cause of Christ when we study the BIBLE before we look at any commentaries written by man.

While commentaries can be helpful they can also be very misleading. Much of the confusion in fundamentalism rests in the fact that we have been too quick to open a favourite book about the Bible before we open the Bible.

You should not believe anything produced by Local Church Ministries before first searching the Scriptures to see if these things be so.



**SEE THE ARTICLE ON OUR WEBSITE
"Commentaries Can Be Misleading"**