

THE RELIGION MACHINE

In the past ten plus years I have visited and worshiped with scores of different churches. Also different in so many ways, they all seem to depend heavily on organization. In a general sense, they remind me of a great machine that is always in need of gas, oil and grease to keep it up and running.... Which I call the Religion Machine.

This religion machine is all made up of committees, boards, councils, administrators, directors and a host of professional clergy types with various titles. It moves on wheels - big wheels who run in big circles by plane to speak at banquets and conventions, and little wheels who run in smaller circles by car for invocations and benedictions. There are wires for manipulating certain parts to keep them under control. It is powered by a mixture of faith, psychology and politics and held together with the nuts and bolts of conformity and party pressure.

Whether large or small, the usual concern is how to make the machine bigger and prettier to look at, as it is thought that whoever builds the biggest machine is the greatest in the Kingdom of God. Those who are committed to the modern religion machine are, as A. W. Tozer has recently described it... "Caught up in the monstrous heresy that noise, size, activity, and bluster make men dear to God."

When Jesus taught us the beatitudes, was he trying to tell us they weren't important for our day and time? Is this the kind of example that is held up before the 20th century church? Now when the pulpit committee goes on its search for a preacher, is it looking for those who are meek and poor in spirit and mourns over sin in the family as well as the community? Would such a one make a big splash with the boys down at the Rotary or Kiwanis?

When famous entertainers and powerful and wealthy folks fit into the congregation much easier than the penniless widow or the unemployed laborer, the church has become only a religion machine, with a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Promoters of today's religion machine, do hold that the greater the organization, the greater it can serve the community. The fact is that the greater the organization the more demand upon the members to serve it. Untold numbers of men enter the ministry with the good intention of humbly serving God but spend most of their lives in frustration from having to serve the Religion Machine and seeing that it is well oiled.

While its builders remind us that the machine is only a means to an end, it is often hard to keep the end in view, so prominent is the machinery. It would not be too much to say that many idolize the organization. One preacher from this area has well said,... "While we ought to be fishers of men, we have only become keepers of the aquarium." No wonder that, with the churches showing the greatest membership and financial growth in history, they now have the worst crime record in the whole world. Often the machine is guided by some motivational researcher instead of Gods' Spirit. Just remember they didn't put the foam cushions in the plush

pews for our bony knees. We look for plush and comfort rather than experience and discomfort.

The body of Christ is not a Religion Machine nor an Organization, but the people who come to Him in repentance by the call of the gospel. The scriptures do not prohibit organizing the organism and even having a facility in which to meet regularly as well as comfortably, but I believe we have the tail wagging the dog. Today the emphasis is on the earthly plant, rather than the planting and watering in heaven.

After all the expose of bogus Christianity, I call Churchanity, by the media, it just bring to mind more, that the one who died for your sins and mine, would not allow himself to be elevated as those False-Christ Imitators have been doing for low these many years. And the truly marvelous thing about all of this inner cleansing and healing of the true body of Christ, there are still SOME who have not defiled their garment and manage to keep their lives focused on Christ and His purpose, not because of the machinery, but in spite of it!

Let the EKKLESIA of CHRIST reign supreme, upon this earth even today!

Yours for Truth and Freedom.....Horace Hooper