

Express Care Church

By E. L. Bynum

Let Us Express Our Care for You!

A simple, no frills church service

- 30 minute service
- Friendly family atmosphere
- Upbeat contemporary music
- Teaching straight from the Bible
- No dress code, come as you are

The above one-half page ad appeared in the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, Wednesday, February 3, 2010. May I hasten to say that this ad **WAS NOT** sponsored by the Tabernacle Baptist Church. It was sponsored as “An Outreach Ministry of Indiana Avenue Baptist Church, which is a large Southern Baptist Church in Lubbock. To begin with, these services are not at the main Church location and they only met two times in the month of February. They were to meet on Saturday, February 6th and the 27th. The service is to be held from 11:00 - 11:30 a.m., which makes one wonder how they can have “Upbeat Contemporary Music,” and leave much time for preaching. It is interesting to note that the services are to be held at “8315 Indiana Avenue (Next door to Extreme Car Wash).” They will serve lunch, and may I suggest that they could add a little extra by giving a free Extreme Car Wash to each attendee!

This Church utterly ignores what the Bible has to say about modest apparel. Modest apparel is hard to be found in many churches today. Maybe you will see a few grandmas dressed the Bible way, but many of them have tried to adapt to modern thought. Many men and women go to church today dressed in their play clothes, and they are not even decent for play. It was a sad day in America when people started going to work in the play clothes, and now they go to church in them.

This is just another sad direction that we see modern day Baptists going. Any time you watch the religious scene you should not be amazed at the departure from the Word of God. It is my understanding that 7th Day Adventists meet every Saturday, but these Baptists meet just twice a month. We have instant oatmeal, frozen dinners and many other convenient foods. Now we have 30 minute Church services, drive through car washes, and drive through weddings in Florida.

Perhaps the late Norman H. Wells said it best. In his book the “The Religion Racket,” he wrote a chapter entitled “Hallelujah Hucksters,” and we quote the following statement.

Since the average church-goer is living in pretense and has no appetite for real religion, it has been necessary to make some adjustments. Instead of dedicated worship and sacrificial service, we have what might be called ecclesiastical entertainment. Our religious services are dedicated to the amusement of the assembled adherents.

Today's sophisticated church-goer can shop through the religious page of his Saturday paper and find out what will be playing in the various churches on Sunday. It will be noticed that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the religious page and the amusement page. On the religious page it can be noted what gospel celebrities are in town and where they are appearing. A church is very fortunate to have a guest appearance by a gospel celebrity.

These celebrities usually appear in exchange for the privilege of plugging their latest records, books, or religious trinkets. Broken-down entertainers who couldn't make it in show business have found that by giving their act a religious veneer, they have a ready market in the churches. Everything from magicians to bronco busters is on the church circuit. The pay isn't good but it is getting better. Preachers have retaliated by entering the entertainment field with religious acts.

(“The Religion Racket may be ordered from Tabernacle Baptist Church, P.O. Box 3100, Lubbock, TX 79452)

We Are Living in the Last Days

The sordid conditions found in our day were predicted by the Bible for the last days. *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”* (2 Timothy 3:1-5) This is the tragic hour that we are living in, where men are devoid of the truth and mere merchants of religion — *“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.”* (2 Timothy 3:7-9)

What is our defense against this foolishness? Paul told us to know the doctrine — *“But thou hast fully known my doctrine...”* (2 Timothy 3:10) The average preacher spends more time studying how to fill the church building, and little time learning how to fill the building with the truth — *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

A Dog and Pony Show

Many modern Church services remind us of the old time dog and pony shows that were advertised long ago and could be seen at the cheap circuses. A small pony trotted around an oval ring with a little dog jump on and off of the pony.

What do the following events have to do with the worship of the high and holy God? A motorcycle rider jumping his motorcycle over a number of church buses on the parking lot? An aging movie actor entertains all those who attend the services that day. I remember one fundamentalist (funnymentalist) church used to advertise that Lash LaRue the star of black and white B-grade westerns would perform. Another one has been used extensively is a daring trick roper on his horse in the parking lot. Another big draw was a karate expert breaking a cement block with his bare hand.

My wife was in the Chicago area trying to help find a church for my daughter and her family. After looking in the telephone directory they found a likely church and attended it Sunday morning. The announcements that morning emphasized the service that night. The great attraction was a man cutting a watermelon on another man's stomach with one blow with the sword. At the close of the service a man at the door was urging them back to the night event. My plain spoken wife informed him that if she wanted something like that she would attend a carnival side show. They went to another church that night and strange as it may seem, the pastor actually preached a good Bible message. They went back to the latter church and joined after a few visits.

Another good dog and pony show was to feature the world's tallest man. Curiously my brother-in-law was a patient in the same Oklahoma City hospital with this man. He was so tall that they had to join two hospital beds together for him to lie down on. Later on I heard he died and I do not know if they found a replacement for him. Many other strange methods to draw a crowd could be recounted, but time and space does not allow. Since I couldn't find anything like this in the Bible that settles that for me.

This morning I read about a man from Nepal that is only 22 inches tall. He is coming to England to try to get in the Guinness book of world records. Imagine what the dog and pony show religious entertainers would give to get him to be a so-called Christian. He could really draw a crowd in one of those churches that would make the others to want him to come to their church for a Sunday.

Why Not Try God's Way?

It may seem to be a novel idea, but why not try the Bible method? You may say, "that will not work today," but where in the Bible do we find the authority to go the dog and pony show route?

Why not get Jesus in the house? — *"And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word*

unto them." (Mark 2:1-2) If we would get more of Jesus Christ in the house preach the word, it would be an attraction that might surprise us.

Why not trust the drawing power of Christ? — *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."* (John 12:32) Of course this verse refers to the death of Christ, but Christ and Him crucified is a message that will produce startling results. People will not be saved by religious entertainment, but the preaching of the cross will produce lasting results.

Why not trust the miraculous power of the gospel? — *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* (Romans 1:16) When Paul entered a new city, he did not have a dog and pony show, or a karate expert. He did not because he had something more powerful and that was the power of the gospel.

Why not use the power of God's word? — *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12) *"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"* (Jeremiah 23:29)

Of course you can get quicker artificial results, but they will not last in the light of eternity. You might get them on the church roll, but what does that matter when the thing that really matters is whether their names are written in the Lambs Book of Life. Think of the horror you will feel when artificial "Christians" are cast into the lake of fire. (See Revelation 10:15)

Spurgeon said that the time had come to stop counting converts and start weighing them. Maybe the time has come in the 21st Century for us to take Mr. Spurgeon's advice.