Seeker-Friendly Churches
Code: A255

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John MacArthur

Many in the church today believe that the only way to reach the world is to give the unchurched multitudes what they want. Hundreds of churches have followed precisely that theory, actually surveying unbelievers to learn what it would take to get them to attend.

Subtly the overriding goal is church attendance and worldly acceptability rather than a transformed life. Preaching the Word and boldly confronting sin are seen as archaic, ineffectual means of winning the world. After all, those things actually drive most people away. Why not entice people into the fold by offering what they want, creating a friendly, comfortable environment, and catering to the very desires that constitute their strongest urges? As if we might get them to accept Jesus by somehow making Him more likable or making His message less offensive.

That kind of thinking badly skews the mission of the church. The Great Commission is not a marketing manifesto. Evangelism does not require salesmen, but prophets. It is the Word of God, not any earthly enticement, that plants the seed for the new birth (1 Peter 1:23). We gain nothing but God's displeasure if we seek to remove the offense of the cross.

My complaint is with a philosophy that relegates God and His Word to a subordinate role in the church. I believe it is unbiblical to elevate entertainment over biblical preaching and worship in the church service. And I stand in opposition to those who believe salesmanship can bring people into the kingdom more effectively than a sovereign God. That philosophy has opened the door to worldliness in the church.

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