

Churches are Not Businesses and Preachers are Not Salesmen

- I. I love business and sales.
 1. But our church is not a business.
 2. And as a preacher, I'm not a salesman.

- II. There is nothing wrong with honest business.
 1. Businesses provide needed goods and services to consumers.
 2. Businesses that operate in the free market must satisfy their customers to stay in business.
 3. They compete with each other to create the highest quality goods and services at the lowest price.
 4. They provide jobs for the majority of the population who are not entrepreneurs.
 5. Consider the men in the Bible that conducted business to make a living.
 - A. Jesus was a carpenter (**Mar 6:3**).
 - B. Paul was a tentmaker (**Act 18:3**).
 - C. Peter, Andrew, John, and James were fishermen (**Mat 4:18-22**).
 - D. The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 worked from her home to produce girdles that she sold to a merchant (**Pro 31:24**).
 - E. Lydia was a seller of purple (**Act 16:14**).

- III. But a true church is not a business. The following are the reasons for this.
 1. Businesses exist to make profits.
 - A. True churches are not profit-seeking corporations.
 - i. God's people are required to support the church financially to support its God-ordained functions (**Pro 3:9-10**).
 - ii. But churches are not supposed to be enriching themselves or their leaders.
 - B. God's house is not a house of merchandise (**Mat 21:12; Joh 2:16**).
 - C. Merchandise *n.* - 1. The action or business of buying and selling goods or commodities for profit; the exchange of commodities for other commodities or for money.
 2. Corporations are created by the State which is their head.
 - A. Whoever creates a thing owns it and controls it.
 - i. The State has power to regulate corporations because it legally created them.
 - ii. "Churches" that are incorporated (501c3 nonprofit corporations) are creations of the State and are under its rule and jurisdiction.
 - iii. The following are some excerpts from Dr. Ben Townsend's book *Approved By God*.
 - a. "This case of *Leyman v. PigglyWiggly* is one of a multitude of cases which define the true nature of a corporation. The case hinged on whether or not the H.S. Leyman Company had been formally dissolved. The opinion of the court defined the existence and creator of the corporation and whether or not the court could "resurrect" the corporate "life" to continue the action. The Court stated:

"A corporation exists by force of legislative enactment. Its inception and the duration of its power are determined by law,

and these laws have fluctuated in time and place. There is no uniformity now among the states on the subject. When the time approaches for its dissolution, whether it shall be struck down and divested instantly of all power, or shall be permitted to linger with diminished or diminishing powers until it sinks into innocuous desuetude is dependent on the will of its creator as expressed in legislative enactment. And who shall have the right to question its existence and the measure of its powers is likewise determined by the Author of its being. In Ohio, that Sovereign Will is expressed in the General Corporation Act." (Dr. Ben Townsend, *Approved By God*, p. 91)

- b. "The case of the *Syrian Antiochean St. George's Orthodox Church v. Ghize* in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts sustains this reasoning when applied to a church. The Court said:

"In its nature an act of incorporation is not a contract between the corporate body and the individuals composing it. It is a compact between the creating government on the one side and the created corporation on the other side. The corporation can come to an end only by some act of the sovereign power by which it was established. It can be extinguished under our laws only by the General Court acting within the appropriate scope of the legislative power, by the judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction, or by proceedings for surrender of charter or dissolution under some statute." (Dr. Ben Townsend, *Approved By God*, p. 92)

- iv. Here are some quotes from court cases proving that incorporated churches are under the jurisdiction of the State.
 - a. "Having elected to incorporate under the laws of the state, they should be required to conform to the consequences of their voluntary act." (*Gibson v. Munson*, 296 Ark. 160 (1988))
 - b. "When the members of the church decided to incorporate their body under the laws of the state of Florida they submitted themselves to the jurisdiction of the state courts in all matters of a corporate nature, such as accounting for funds." (*Mathews v. Adams*, 520 So.2d 334, at 335, (1988))
 - c. "...Where there is no incorporation, those who deal with the church must trust for the performance of civil obligations to the honor and good faith of the members." (*Methodist Church of Newark v. Clark* (41 Mich. 730, 737))

B. True churches are created by Jesus Christ (**Mat 16:18**) Who is their head (**Col 1:18**).

- i. True churches are only under the rule and jurisdiction of Jesus Christ.
- ii. A church isn't some two-headed freak-show.

- iii. It cannot have two creators, two heads, and two masters.
- 3. Corporations (both for-profit and non-profit) have a boards of directors.
 - A. A true church does not have a board of directors.
 - i. You will search the scriptures in vain to find such a thing.
 - ii. There are no church boards in the Bible.
 - iii. There are no trustees in the Bible.
 - B. A true church has a bishop/pastor/elder/overseer/steward who oversees and rules it under the authority of Jesus Christ (**Heb 13:7, 17; 1Ti 5:17; Act 20:28**).
- 4. Businesses exists to satisfy their customers' demands.
 - A. But a church exists to satisfy *God's* demands (**Col 1:18; Mat 28:20**).
 - B. Preachers must often preach the opposite of what the congregation wants (**2Ti 4:2-4**).
 - C. In business, the customer is always right as the old saying goes.
 - D. In church, members and visitors are not always right and need rebuked and corrected from time to time.
- 5. Businesses operate according to the rules dictated by the State (this is not the way that it should be, but it's the way it is).
 - A. Churches are not under the authority of the State (**Act 5:29; Mat 22:21**).
 - B. The local church belongs to Jesus Christ and operates only according to His rules (**Mat 16:18; Mat 28:20**).
- 6. Businesses thrive on innovation.
 - A. Churches must avoid innovation.
 - B. Churches must keep the ordinances as they were delivered (**1Co 11:1-2**).
 - C. Churches must strive for the faith "once delivered" unto the saints and never alter or update it (**Jud 1:3**).
 - D. Churches must never adopt traditions of men into their services (**Mar 7:6-13**).
- 7. Businesses must adapt to changing tastes of the public and be "seeker friendly."
 - A. Churches must be steadfast and unmovable when it comes to their faith and practice and never capitulate to men's desires (**1Co 15:58**).
 - B. Churches must never change with the times.
 - C. Churches must only seek those whom God is seeking: those who desire to worship Him in spirit and in truth (**Joh 4:23-24**).
- 8. Businesses measure their success by how large they are and how fast they are growing.
 - A. Churches do not make themselves "of the number" (**2Co 10:12**).
 - B. Jesus' church was a "little flock" (**Luk 12:32**).
 - C. The size of a church has nothing to do with it's success (**Zec 4:10; Rev 3:8**).
 - D. A small church with righteousness is better than a huge church without it (**Pro 16:8**).

IV. There is nothing wrong with being an honest salesman.

- 1. The role of a salesman is to uncover a need of a prospect and provide a solution to it.
- 2. A good salesman doesn't try to trick a prospect into buying something.
- 3. A good salesman helps another person or company do their job better and be more successful at it.

V. But a preacher is not a salesman.

1. Salesmen have something to sell.
 - A. Preachers have nothing to sell.
 - B. Sell v. - 3. (The chief current sense.) a. To give up or hand over (something) to another person for money (or something that is reckoned as money); esp. to dispose of (merchandise, possessions, etc.) to a buyer for a price; to vend.
 - C. There is no price tag on the gospel.
 - D. True preachers are not in it for the money (**1Ti 3:3; Tit 1:7; 1Pe 5:2**).
 - i. Lucre n. - 1. Gain, profit, pecuniary advantage. Now only with unfavourable implication: Gain viewed as a low motive for action; 'pelf' . *filthy lucre*:
 - ii. Pecuniary adj. - 1. Consisting of money; exacted in money.
 - E. False teachers who are covetous *make merchandise* of the sheep (**2Pe 2:3**).
 - F. False ministers are in it for the money (**1Sa 8:3**).
 - G. A preacher cannot serve God and mammon (money) (**Mat 6:24**).
2. Salesmen chase after prospects and follow up with them.
 - A. Preachers don't chase after people (or at least they shouldn't).
 - B. I act completely differently as preacher than I do as a salesman.
 - i. As a salesman I contact prospects; as a preacher I let prospects contact me.
 - ii. As a salesman, if a prospect doesn't return my call, I follow up with him again; as a preacher if a person doesn't call back or come back, I let him go.
 - iii. If the gospel I preach doesn't attract them, I don't try to attract them with worldly methods.
 - C. When the gospel offends someone, a true man of God lets him go (**Mat 15:12-14; Hos 4:17; Hos 5:15; Jer 15:19**).
 - D. Heretics are to be rejected, not chased after (**Tit 3:10**).
 - E. I never chase after people who have been excluded from the church.
3. Salesmen try to persuade prospects to buy what they're selling using psychology.
 - A. Preachers don't use enticing words of man's wisdom (**1Co 2:4**).
 - B. Preachers do not give sales pitches; they declare the truth boldly (**Eph 6:19; Act 4:11-13**).
 - C. I never try to persuade people to visit or join the church.
 - i. I let them know that they are welcome to visit.
 - ii. I preach from the pulpit what seekers should do, but I don't try to personally convince them.
 - iii. Seekers should be asking me what they should do in response to hearing and believing the gospel (**Act 2:37; Act 8:36**).
 - iv. I should not be asking them if they want to get baptized and join the church.
4. Salesmen would never say anything offensive to a prospect.
 - A. The gospel pastors preach is offensive to sinners (**Gal 5:11; 1Pe 2:8**).
 - B. Preachers call names and condemn wickedness, which is offensive (**Mat 15:1-14**).
5. Salesmen would never rebuke a prospect and tell him that he is wrong.
 - A. Preachers often rebuke church members and tell them that they are wrong (**Tit 2:15; 1Ti 5:20**).
 - B. Rebuke v. - 1. trans. To beat down or force back; to repress or check (a person); to repulse. *Obs.* 2. To reprove, reprimand, chide severely.
6. Salesmen are always nice.
 - A. Preachers are not always nice.

- B. Sometimes preachers come across mean (**Mat 23:13-15; Mat 23:25-28**).
 - C. Fake, hireling pastors are nice and walk softly (**Jer 23:32**).
 - D. Lightness - 1. The quality or fact of having little weight. Of a vessel: The fact of being lightly laden.
 - E. Real pastors are not soft and light (**2Co 1:17**).
7. Salesmen follow a carefully crafted plan as they interact with prospects in order to increase the chance of a sale.
- A. Preachers just preach the word and let God sort it out (**2Ti 4:2**).
 - B. Preachers preach the whole counsel of God (**Act 20:27**) without knowledge of God's grand plan, and then they let God use it to bring the sheep into the church when and how He pleases (**1Co 12:18**).

VI. Churches and preachers should therefore focus on serving and worshiping the Lord correctly and let the results up to God.