

## Consumerism—Enemy of the Church

I recently read of a religious group in Minnesota that was building a new church building. In their design, there would be theater-type seating—with cup holders. One staff member commented that coffee is such a part of our culture, that people are going to bring it in, and therefore “we” (the church) must provide a place to put it (story in *Preaching Now*, August 1, 2006).

I know there are expedients (things helpful to accomplish a purpose, but not necessary for its accomplishment) involved in many aspects of Christianity, but expedients are not to be the major factor in how we serve God. Too much emphasis on expedients can cause a person or group to become focused on the means (place, time, comfort, etc.) rather than the goal (worship and service to God).

Preachers have been accused of “answering questions no one is asking”—that they are dwelling on things that are not relevant. However, today, I don’t believe it is because preachers are irrelevant. Instead, I think it is because the average culture-driven person-in-the-pew is *asking* the wrong questions. Today, people seem to be asking:

Not, “*Will it save souls?*” but, “*Will it fill seats?*”

Not, “*What does the Bible say?*” but, “*Do I like it?*”

Not, “*What would Jesus do?*” but, “*What are my friends doing?*”

Not, “*Where will I spend eternity?*” but, “*Where can I go this week- end?*”

Not, “*Who, as friend or mate will help me get to heaven?*” but, “*Who will please me and help me get more pleasure?*”

Not, “*How do I get to heaven?*” but, “*How can I be satisfied?*”

Not, “*Do I need this?*” but, “*Do I want this?*”

Not, “*Will God be pleased?*” but “*Will I be pleased?*”

Not, “*What can I do for God?*” but, “*What is God going to do for me, if I do this?*”

Not, “*What can I do to help the church?*” but, “*What has the church done for me (lately)?*”

We cannot be God-centered and self-centered at the same time (Matthew 16: 21-23). We must seek the Lord through his word, not our own self-centered wants and wishes.

—Lance Cordle