

## MICROWAVE RELIGION

### I. INTRODUCTION:

1. We live in a world where we “let our fingers do the walking” and we can summon nearly anything and everything our heart desires at the “push of a button.” (i.e., instant gratification, short sound bites, short attention spans)

Computers	Internet
Smart phones	On-line pornography & gambling
Drive through (food, pharmacy, etc.)	Robotic milking machines

2. There is nothing inherently evil about modern conveniences (I’m not a luddite!).
3. Modern conveniences help us to take short cuts, save time, etc. in everyday life. However, we must be extremely careful that living in a world of “conveniences” doesn’t lead us into dangerous attitudes spiritually.
  - A. If we’re not careful such can lead us into what may I call: “Micro-wave Religion.”
  - B. “Micro-wave Religion” is a religion that is “Instant”, “Cheap” and “Care-Free.”
4. “Micro-wave Religion” is characterized by...
  - A. The “You deserve a break today!” philosophy,
  - B. “15-minute ‘sound-bite’ sermons,”
  - C. “Food, Folks and Fun”, it is
  - D. “Casual, Informal, Not Serious”
5. It is critical for us to realize that there are no short cuts in true religion. We cannot have...

**Focus is on worshipper, not  
He who is worshipped!**

### II. DISCUSSION:

1. **Salvation without Sacrifice:** Heb. 10:32-33 (1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:5)
  - A. The famous boxer Joe Louis once said, “Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.” He was commenting on the fact that every boxer wants to be champion, but nobody wants to make the sacrifices in training such a goal requires.
  - B. We will never make it to heaven with the “microwave religion” philosophy so prevalent in today’s world (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Lk. 14:26; 9:23-25; “I did it my way.”).
2. **Remission without Repentance:** 2 Cor. 7:10
  - A. Repentance is more than just being sorry! Matt. 21:28-31; Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20
  - B. Repentance is an absolute requirement (Acts 17:30), but it is also the hardest part! Rom. 7:13-20 (esp. 15b); Phil. 4:13; Eph. 3:20; 1 Cor. 10:13
3. **Righteousness without Obedience:** Rom. 6:16
  - A. People are quick to make excuses for not being obedient! 1 Jn. 2:1
  - B. But, obedience is the measure of our “knowledge” of God and our “love” for Him! Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 2:3-6; 5:3
  - C. To whom has Jesus become the “author of eternal salvation”? Heb. 5:9 What about faith? Heb. 11:6 (Jas. 2:22)
4. **Morality without Self-Denial:** Titus 2:11-14 (2 Pet. 1:6; Acts 24:25; 1 Thess. 4:3-5)
  - A. Even the great apostle Paul had to exercise “self-denial”! 1 Cor. 9:24-27

“A feeble translation, and missing the metaphor. The word means “to strike under the eye; to give one a black eye.”” (Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament)

- B. Self-denial requires putting off the old man (Rom. 6:4) AND putting him to death! Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-10; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6

5. **Growth without Diligence:** 2 Pet. 1:5-11

- A. Impossible to repeal or suspend the laws of 'sowing and reaping'; spiritual growth requires work!
- (1) Note how this passage begins (2 Pet. 1:5): "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence," (ASV).
- (2) "The verb occurs only here in the New Testament, and means, literally, "to bring in by the side of: adding" your diligence to the divine promises. So the English Revised Version (1885), "adding on your part."" (Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament)
- B. God does His part through His mercy and grace (i.e., provides the means of salvation). But we also must do our part! We must bring something alongside of what God provides; we have to "supply" some things! Reading the passage filling in what the ellipses have removed:
- "in your faith supply virtue; and in (your) virtue [supply] knowledge; 6 and in (your) knowledge [supply] self-control; and in (your) self-control [supply] patience; and in (your) patience [supply] godliness; 7 and in (your) godliness [supply] brotherly kindness; and in (your) brotherly kindness [supply] love." (2 Peter 1:5-7; ASV)
- C. Not only are we to "supply" these things; we are to exercise "diligence" in "supplying" these characteristics to our faith. "Diligence" requires effort! No pain, no gain!
- (1) "...it [diligence] signifies 'to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself,'" (Vine)
- (2) "...to make effort," (Strong)
- D. There is no one more pitiful than a weak Christian upon whom a tragedy or severe trial befalls and they are crushed by it because their faith is too weak to withstand. If only they had exercised more diligence!

6. **Patience without Perseverance:** 1 Cor. 15:58

- A. The bedrock of patience is perseverance. However, it is remarkably easy to be patient when all is going well!
- B. But what about when difficulties come? Personal problems, family/marriage problems, church problems, money problems, etc.

Extreme patience and persistence are required,  
Yet everybody succeeds at this before being handed  
The surprise box lunch of the rest of his life.

John Ashbery

- C. Patience can only be learned through experience in persevering! Rom. 5:3-4

*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. 4 And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady. (Rom. 5:3-4; **The Living Bible**)*

- D. Patience is not complete without perseverance! Jas. 1:2-4; 5:11; Heb. 10:36

7. **Knowledge without Study:** 2 Tim. 2:15

- A. Cannot suspend the laws of 'sowing and reaping'; study requires work! 2 Pet. 1:5 Can only get out if what you put in! (How I had to learn how to study.)
- B. "I would give the best years of my life to have your knowledge." "That's exactly what I gave."
- C. Lack of knowledge will doom us to spiritual failure! Hos. 4:6; Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Cor. 14:20
- D. God's word is more important to our soul than is food to our body (Matt. 4:4; Job 23:12).

**8. Membership without Responsibility:** Ever heard of the “20/80 rule of organizations”? Eph. 4:16

**Church Member Hitchhikers**

Bob Dickey

With his thumb, a hitchhiker says, “You furnish the car, gas, attend to the repairs and upkeep, supply the insurance, and I’ll ride with you. But you must be going my way, and if you have an accident, I’ll sue for the damages.” Sounds pretty one-sided, doesn’t it?

There are hitchhikers in other places than just along the road ways. Unfortunately, there are sometimes hitchhikers in local churches. These members seem to say “You go to the Bible classes, attend all of the various assemblies, do the visitation and personal work, shoulder the responsibilities, take care of the meeting house and grounds and all of the things that need doing, and I’ll go along for the ride. But if things aren’t done to suit me, I will complain, criticize, and probably get out and hitchhike to another group.”

You’ve seen them too, haven’t you? You’ve seen professing Christians that seem to just be along for the ride. They frustrate the growth and progress of the local church. Because of indifference or lack of total commitment, they add nothing to the furtherance of the Lord’s cause. The only thing they add is more work for the faithful. Preachers and elders are usually at a loss to know how to awaken them to a sense of their personal responsibility. Many times they become so accustomed to riding the coat tails of others that they seem to know of no other way to travel.

What do we say to hitchhiking church members? Shall we let them keep on depending on others without learning to pull their own weight? Shall we stand quietly by while they slip closer to eternity, unprepared to meet the Lord’s judgment? No, someone needs to remind these ‘thumbing’ members that they will never be able to hitch a ride to Heaven. And going along just for the ride hinders and holds back the congregation’s work. If you know of a church member hitchhiker like these we have described, why not lovingly talk to him or her about their soul and the need for their help and cooperation. Hitchhikers are not permitted on the interstate expressways today. Let’s remember that they are not allowed on the Lord’s highway either. Hitchhikers, please read Matthew 25:1-46!

- A. Are you a member of the 20/80 club? Or, the 80/20 club?
- B. Are you a “hitchhiker”? The church is a 100/100 club!

**9. Worship without Reverence:** Heb. 12:28-29 (“good buddy” vs. transcendent God)

- A. Which are you more like?
  - (1) Isaiah: Isa. 6:1-5, or
  - (2) The Jews in the time of Malachi: Mal. 1:6-8, 12-13
- B. Many of today’s worshippers are much too casual, much too informal, and not nearly as serious as they should be! Rev. 4:10-11
  - (1) Reflected in how little people prepare to worship (Mal. 1:13, 10).
  - (2) Reflected in how people groom and dress themselves (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
  - (3) Reflected by the fact that most consider worship as an option, not an obligation (Heb. 10:25-31).
- C. As you stand in line on the judgment day what will be your thoughts concerning how you worshipped God? Will you worry or will you be satisfied that you...
  - (1) Valued and took advantage of every opportunity to worship?
  - (2) Took worship seriously and did not treat it casually or informally?
  - (3) You came to every worship service mentally and physically prepared?

**10. Conviction without “cut to the heart” Preaching:** Acts 2:36; 7:54

- A. Message of apostles to the Jews did not “pull any punches”! Acts 2:23; 3:13-15
- B. “Sermonettes”: besides being short and not much scripture, “sermonettes” (Foy Wallace: “We have preacherettes preaching sermonettes to Christianettes who smoke cigarettes.”)
  - (1) Avoid “issues” (Gal. 2:5; Acts 20:26-27, 31).

- (2) Does not identify error (Gal. 3:1; 5:4); much less those teaching/practicing error (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 4:14-15).
  - (3) Soft and soothing sermons that cater to the “seeker friendly movement” which exalts marketing over the truth. “Be nice, be soft, or people will leave in droves”, is the operative maxim (Jn. 6:26-27; 66).
  - (4) Decorated with cute and clever stories (tripe!); “If we can just make the message palatable so folks will like us and feel good about themselves.” (Jn. 16:8; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16)(experience in Michigan).
- C. **Beware!** “‘Sermonettes’ are preached by ‘preacherettes’ and can produce only ‘christianettes’ that are members of ‘churchettes’!” (Isa. 56:10)

“A church that demands “sermonettes” from “preacherettes” does not understand the difference between a manicure and heart surgery! Such a church will more likely be a “churchette.” A preacher is foolish who sees himself as a representative of Norman Vincent Peale or of the school of those who would “Win Friends and Influence People” or utilize only “The Power of Positive Preaching.” He is foolish when he fails to speak out against sin, dealing only in positive messages.” (*The Foolishness of Preaching*, Tom Roberts)[cf. Jn. 16:8]

- D. We need preachers with the spirit of the OT prophets! Isa. 58:1; Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 6:11; Jer. 23:29 (Story of “Raccoon” John Smith)

“I was brought up under the preaching of men in Texas well known to many of you, who baptized many more people than are being baptized today; men who debated; men who “called names,” whether in the polemics of debate or preaching in the pulpit. They were men of fervor and faith. We should not forget their crusading spirit. I want to see their spirit revived. Like the spirit of Elijah in John the Baptist...I want to see the spirit of the early gospel preachers revived in the young men of today. They put power in their preaching. They moved men. They did not preach sermonettes; they were not preacherettes.

I can remember when preachers wore cuffs attached to the sleeve by a device of some sort, stiffly laundered cuffs. That way the preacher could wear the same shirt the whole meeting, just change the cuffs! In those difficult days of the rationing of laundry it would be rather convenient for that system to be in vogue. But some of the early preachers preached with such force that they would send a stiffly laundered cuff sailing out over the crowd! It is a bold contrast with some of the milquetoast elocution heard in pulpits today.

A young man once came to A. J. McCarty, and asked him how to go about making a preacher. Jack McCarty said, in all bluntness that characterized him, “Young man, get brimful and running over with the word of God and it will come out”! And it will come out. It may be spontaneous combustion, but it will “bust” everything it hits. That is the preaching needed today, rather than this “go away around by the Joneses” sort of a preaching; this speak softly, tread lightly, step careful, kind of preaching. I do not believe in croaking out insults against people, but I do believe in the kind of preaching that draws the issue, and draws the blood when the occasion requires it.” (Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *Bulwarks of Faith*, 1946)

## II. **Truth without Controversy:** Acts 17:6

### A. Consider:

- (1) Elijah: 1 Kgs. 18:17
- (2) John the Baptist: Mk. 6:17-19
- (3) Jesus: Jn. 6:59-61, 66; 8:58-59; 10:30-31; Lk. 23:5
- (4) Apostles:
  - (a) Peter & John: Acts 2:23, 36; 3:13-14; 4:10-11; 5:30
  - (b) Stephen: Acts 7:51-53
  - (c) Paul: Acts 16:20-22; 17:18; 21:28; 22:22-24; 24:5; 1 Cor. 4:13

- B. Truth by its very nature is controversial! I don't mean to be "mean," but it is impossible to preach the truth without being controversial! If our preaching does not create controversy we are not preaching the truth! For example...
- (1) We can't preach Jesus as Savior without creating controversy with Atheists, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, etc.
  - (2) We can't preach on the sin of denominationalism and the fact the Bible teaches that there is only one church without creating controversy among the 30,000+ denominations! (BTW: I was once called "a church-bashing, sheep stealer"!)
  - (3) We can't preach on M-D-R without creating controversy with the millions in this land who live in adulterous marriages!
  - (4) We can't preach concerning the spiritual nature of the church nor the church's scriptural work and worship without creating controversy with those who have turned the church into a community service agency, a social club, or an entertainment and recreation center!
- C. If our preaching and teaching does not "*turn the world upside down*" (Acts 17:6) we had better re-examine what we are preaching and teaching! 2 Tim. 4:1-4
- "I have been stoned, pelted with green walnuts, and with eggs. I have had dynamite put under the pulpit where I was preaching. I have had to be guarded while I preached. I have had them threaten to take me out of the pulpit and 'fix' me so I would never be able to get into another one. I have had them threaten to hang me. I have suffered all this for the cause of the Lord, and yet have not begun to suffer what our Lord suffered, or the apostles." (Joe H. Blue, January 1944)
- D. Gospel preachers, at least in the U.S., are not being subjected to this level of persecution presently. However, I can certainly see such, or even worse, on the horizon (e.g., preaching the sinfulness of homosexuality in many places is now considered "hate speech").

## 12. **Unity without Factions:** 1 Cor. 11:19

### **Necessary Factions**

Larry Ray Hafley

None of us like factions. All who love truth, love peace and unity. Churches have split and brethren have splintered, splattering their vile bile before an unbelieving world and rending the heart of God. However, the Spirit says that some factions are essential—"For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us" (1 Jn. 2:19).

Let us not allow the texts above [to] make us complacent or nonchalant when factions arise. There is no joy in disturbances and divisions, even though the Lord uses them to achieve his purposes. Through eyes blinded by tears, let us acknowledge what has occurred and say, "The will of the Lord be done."

Some think that factions are evidence that all have sinned and that none are innocent. That is not so. Factious men will fracture the faithful. Truth is a purging element. It cleanses the pure in heart and casts out those who will not be molded and conformed to it. Error eventually will manifest itself if the truth is preached. Error cannot tolerate the heat and light of truth. It works best undercover, in darkness. A faction is that which the Spirit of truth has surgically removed from the bowels of the body of Christ.

It is not pretty. It can be messy, hostile, and discouraging. In the end, though, the faithful will be left to carry on the work without having parasites to steal the nourishment of truth. Pray for unity. Pray for fragments to be restored. Accept factionalism as a sign of approval from God, but be no part of it, or of its strife and quarrels. Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:2, 3).

## 13. **Exaltation without Humiliation:** Phil. 2:1-8

- A. I freely admit that I am an absolute "nobody."
- B. But one day I hope to be "exalted" by God and become a "somebody" (i.e., eternal life).

- C. If Jesus had to subject Himself to humiliation in order to be exalted; how can my road to exaltation not be paved by humiliation? Jas. 4:7; Matt. 11:29-30

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

- I. How about the religion you practice? Do you have a religion of...
  - A. Convenience or conviction?
  - B. Dedication or indifference?
  - C. Devotion or apathy?
  - D. Allegiance or negligence?
2. It may not matter to you now, but some day it will! Heb. 12:28b-29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:11a

Based on a sermon by Larry Ray Hafley ([www.biblework.com](http://www.biblework.com)).