

MICROWAVE RELIGION

I. INTRODUCTION: I

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, with correspondingly short attention spans)

Computers (remember floppy drives!)	Internet (remember “dial-up”!)
Smart phones	On-line pornography & gambling
Drive through (food, pharmacy, etc.)	Robotic milking machines

2. There is nothing inherently evil about many modern conveniences (I’m not a luddite!).
3. Modern conveniences help us to take short cuts, save time, save labor, 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. **2** If we are not careful such can lead us into what one may call: “Micro-wave Religion.”
 - B. ****** “Micro-wave Religion” is a religion that is “Instant, Cheap and Care-Free.”
 - C. It’s the “You deserve a break today!” philosophy, “15-minute ‘sound-bite’ sermons,”
 - D. ****** Some “churches” even offer “drive-through” communion; ****** “ashes to go!”
4. **3** “Micro-wave Religion” promotes the “Have it your way” philosophy; the church is nothing more than a glorified “fast food” (“fast religion”) joint.
 - A. It offers a version of “Christianity” where you can order from the “menu” only what suits you; if you don’t like something, no worries, you don’t have to take that; after all you’re the customer and the Lord is your waiter.
 - B. **4** The church is akin to a theme park and the Lord is your ****** “best friend dude” in a T-shirt and blue jeans.
 - C. **5** It is “Food, Folks and Fun.”
 - D. It is “Casual, Informal, Not Serious”
5. It is critical for us to realize there are no short cuts in true religion. We cannot have...

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

II. DISCUSSION:

Microwave religion is characterized by...

I. **6** Salvation without Sacrifice:

Heb. 10:32-33: “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;” (1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:5; They suffered for the kingdom of God.)

- A. The famous boxer Joe Louis once said, “Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die to get there.” He was commenting on the fact that every boxer wants to be a champion, but nobody wants to make the sacrifices in training such a goal requires.
- B. We will never make it to heaven w/the “microwave religion” philosophy prevalent today:

Rom. 12:1-2a: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

1 Cor. 6:19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (cf. Lk. 14:26; 9:23-25; “I did it my way.”).

Microwave religion is characterized by...

2. **7 Remission without Repentance: 2 Cor. 7:10:** “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”
 - A. Repentance is more than just being sorry! Matt. 21:28-31 (“Which of the two did the will of his father?”); Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20 (“...that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”)
 - 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

Microwave religion is characterized by...

3. **8 Righteousness without Obedience:**

Rom. 6:16: “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

- A. People are quick to make excuses for not being obedient! **1 Jn. 2:1:** “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin...”
- B. Obedience is the measure of our “knowledge” of God and our “love” for Him! 1 Jn. 2:3-6; Jn. 14:15; 5:3
- C. To whom has Jesus become the “author of eternal salvation”? Heb. 5:9 What about faith? Heb. 11:6 (Jas. 2:22-24; faith is belief-based action!!)
- D. We cannot excuse sin by saying, “Well, God just made me that way.” No way! Eccl. 7:29

Microwave religion is characterized by...

4. **9 Morality without Self-Denial:**

Titus 2:11-14: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” (2 Pet. 1:6; Acts 24:25; 1 Thess. 4:3-5: “abstain from sexual immorality...possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor...”)

- A. Even the apostle Paul had to exercise “self-denial”! 1 Cor. 9:24-27 (“I discipline my body...”)
“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:** “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”)

Microwave religion is characterized by...

5. **10 Growth without Diligence:** 2 Pet. 1:5-11

- A. Impossible to repeal/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 strong temptation, personal 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! **2 Pet. 1:10**: “...be even more diligent to make your call and election sure...”

Microwave religion is characterized by...

6. II Patience without Perseverance:

1 Cor. 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

- 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: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

Jas. 5:11: “Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”; Heb. 10:36

Microwave religion is characterized by...

7. I2 Knowledge without Study: 2 Tim. 2:15

- A. Cannot suspend the laws of 'sowing and reaping'; study requires work! 2 Pet. 1:5 You can only get out 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; **I Cor. 14:20:** "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." (KJV)
- D. God's word is more important to our soul than is food to our body (Matt. 4:4; Job 23:12).

8. I3 Membership without Responsibility: The "80/20 rule of organizations"? Eph. 4:16

I4 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? Eph. 4:16
- B. Are you a "hitchhiker"? The church is a 100/100 club! Eph. 4:16

Microwave religion is characterized by...

9. I5 Worship without Reverence: Heb. 12:28-29 ("good buddy" vs. transcendent God)

A. Which are you more like?

(1) Isaiah: **Isa. 6:1-5**

(2) The Jews in the time of Malachi: Mal. 1:6-8 (“*offered defiled*” sacrifices; said “*The table of the LORD is contemptible*”; offered “*blind...lame...sick*”, 12-13 (“*Oh, what a weariness...*”)

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: “*the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

*I I ‘You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.’”*

(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:** “*holy priesthood...chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...*”).

(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?

Microwave religion is characterized by...

10. **16 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: “*Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;*”

Acts 3:13-15: “*whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life...*”

B. “Sermonettes”: besides being short and not much scripture, “sermonettes” (Foy Wallace: “We have preacherettes preaching sermonettes to Christianettes who smoke cigarettes.”). How do you identify a “sermonette”?

(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: “*Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*”; **2 Tim. 2:16-18:** “*Hymenaeus and Philetus...who have strayed from the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past...*”; **4:14-15:** “*Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm...At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them.*”).

- (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 they will like us and feel good about themselves.” (Jn. 16:8; 2 Tim. 4:2; Rom. 1:16).
- C. **Beware!** “‘Sermonettes’ are preached by ‘preacherettes’ and can produce only ‘christianettes’ that are members of ‘churchettes!’” (**Isa. 56:10:** “*His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, They cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.*”)
- **“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 Old Testament prophets!

Isa. 58:1: “*Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*”

Jer. 1:10: “*See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.*”

Ezek. 6:11: “*Pound your fists and stamp your feet...*”

Jer. 23:29: “*Is not My word like a fire?*” says the LORD, *‘And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’*”

“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)

Microwave religion is characterized by...

11. 17 Truth without Controversy:

Acts 16:19-21: “...when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. 20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, ‘These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.’”

Acts 17:5-7: “But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, ‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’”

A. Consider:

- (1) Elijah: **1 Kgs. 18:17:** “...when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, ‘Is that you, O troubler of Israel?’”
- (2) John the Baptist: **Mk. 6:17-19:** “Because John had said to Herod, ‘It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.’”
- (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 intend 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 w/out creating controversy w/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.”).

Microwave religion is characterized by...

12. 18 Unity without Factions:

1 Cor. 11:19: “For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.”

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).

Microwave religion is characterized by...

13. 19 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. 4:10:** “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”; **Lk. 14:11:** “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”; **Psa. 147:6:** “The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.”

III. CONCLUSION: 20

- 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).