

“CONSUMER REPORTS” ON CHURCHES

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Several decades ago the phrase, “Two Million Frenchmen Can’t Be Wrong,” was often heard as an affirmation to a particular viewpoint. It meant simply, “everybody’s doing it, so it must be okay, or all right.” Public opinion was—and to a degree still is—determined by the opinions of the majority. If the majority thinks an activity or a viewpoint is acceptable, then it must be “right.” It was about then that powerful and respected individuals “took over” the thoughts and opinions of a large portion of modern societies. Why do we buy certain goods in a certain store? “Well, the nation’s *majority* decided this is the best” may be the response that is implied or stated.

Such a procedure may not always be the best way to determine the quality of a product, but if a lot of people have tried it and have been pleased, that becomes a significant “plus” for that item. “Consumer Reports” is often consulted prior to making a major purchase, from kitchen utensils to the brand of flour used in a cake recipe. Even the miles you can expect to get with a new set of tires for your car could be seen in light of individual experience and/or popular opinion.

If you can check out an automobile’s record of needed repair and expenses, why not discover the best doctors and lawyers? While you are at it, why not find out what church is the biggest and the most popular in a community? Many are doing that very thing today by various means. America has become a very selective nation, and if you expect to be successful, to draw a crowd, you had better have something to bring them in. If not, you may have plenty of spare parking spaces and empty pews.

Perhaps the most serious mistake made with the previously described situation is that, while following the crowd may make sense when buying an automobile or a refrigerator, that same method for finding the “best” church, or especially the church of the Bible, will likely take you down the wrong path to an eternal disappointment to you.

Why do you say that, preacher? Do you believe your opinion on this subject to be the only valid opinion in today’s world, and that of others’ is worth nothing at all?

We will accomplish nothing if we merely ask for opinions from man, because man’s opinions may be based upon opinion only, without a valid source of authority. When it comes to the subject of the church, God’s opinion is the only one that counts.

By reading the Bible, man finds that nowhere are we given the right to choose our favorite church. If you recall, Jesus said to the apostle Peter and the others present, “Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Note, Jesus said the church to be built would be His church—Jesus’ church, of which He would be “Head,” the builder and the one who purchased it with His blood.

If we go back to the first paragraph of this discussion, we are again faced with man’s desire to do things his way, to worship his way, to be converted his way—to please God in man’s own way. If God wants me to be His man, He will have to take what I give Him, be happy with what I want to give Him. Therefore, man stands in the place of God, deciding for himself what kind of worship, what kind of church, what kind of service man gives to God, and God must be pleased with whatever man decides to do with his life.

If we determine in our own mind what and how we will serve Him—regardless of His instruction—we are telling God to “butt out,” that we are going to do things our way, and what He wants is of no value for us. Intentional or not, our actions are “saying” it that way.

A very plain statement is found in 2 Peter 1:3 that touches upon this very subject, whether or not God has given us His church, His way: “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:13).

Since God “hath given us all things” on this subject, should we not give our attention to Him, to His Word, and none to man’s “consumer reports on churches” on any matter pertaining to our relationship with God.