

A Divine Institution

It has been my conviction for the past 65 years that the church was divinely instituted. The last year or so I have seen more evidence of it in a different way than I had noted in the previous 65. The evidence to which I refer now is this fact: If it were merely a human institution, it probably would have sunk into oblivion under the weight of its apparent lack of leadership, knowledge and concern.

Try to imagine the Reynolds Tobacco Company sales meeting. Visualize them gathering each week, occasionally with RJR himself present. They sing a few verses of "Winston Tastes Good, Like a Cigarette Should" and repeat in chorus, "I'd Walk a Mile for A Camel." Then they blow a few smoke rings to show their special talents, and have a fellowship meal in the reception room and go home for the week. When the board of directors meets, most of their time is taken up with whether they should have disposable towels or automatic blowers in the rest rooms for drying hands, and such other pressing matters. If they have a sales meeting, they see a moving filmstrip of Zig Ziglar and go home. I knocked on Mr. R.J. Reynolds' door on one occasion and discussed the Bible with him, and I know this was not the usual agenda for their meetings.

Is there any preacher among us who has not had many sessions of "business meetings" and other church meetings where the leaders (?) in the Lord's church proceeded in about the fashion described above? An actual event took place about like this: A man had been out studying the Bible with a person who decided to obey the Gospel. He took him to the nearest church building that was open, and there was a class on Personal Evangelism going on. He asked permission to use the baptistery. He was told to wait until the class had finished its discussion. The teacher did not even have enough concern about the class or the person who was ready to obey the Gospel to have a live demonstration of the results of successful personal evangelism! He was more concerned with his talking than he was with a sinner's obedience.

The gates of hell did not prevail against the establishment of the Lord's church, and they will not prevail against its triumph. That did not prevent blind and ignorant people from leading a large portion of it into apostasy more than once. And it will not prevent thousands from being lost because of the selfishness and lethargy with regard to actually carrying out the Great Commission of our Lord. Are **you** doing anything specific about winning souls for the Lord, either in your own community, or throughout the world? If not, will you, like Saul while he was bringing back King Agag in direct disobedience to God, say, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord?"

By: T. Pierce Brown