

News and Current Events :: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable

Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/2/8 22:26

Comfortable is a theme that's becoming common among churches taking advantage of new, non-traditional spaces. Across the country, churches are springing up in unexpected locations — movie theaters, skating rinks, strip malls and old warehouses, among others — in an effort to welcome people who may not feel comfortable in more traditional settings.

Aaron Coe, vice president for mobilization for the North America Missions Board, said there are several factors contributing to these new churches, including a move away from traditionalism and the economic advantages of leasing space instead of building a church.

"We've seen everything from art galleries to schools," he said. "Schools and movie theaters are probably the most common. There is definitely a trend, and I think it's one that's here to stay." ...

read more: <http://www.usatoday.com/news/religion/story/2012-02-08/informal-churches/53002212/1>

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable, on: 2012/2/8 23:56

It's called "USER FRIENDLY", and basically it's all about increasing numbers, with the idea that numbers mean success...and in a way, they do...if you can get them to tithe, support the Priest-Class, and the agenda. Consider Joel Olsteen, Mark Driscoll, the Saddle-Back of Rick Warren or any Mega-Church for that matter.

Some have went so far as to add ashtrays in the "sanctuary", many have a Starbucks type Kiosk right outside the foyer, that you can take your java inside as you lounge listening to the sermon. I have seen the circus brought in on Sunday mornings with real high-slide acts with skateboarders, and gorgeous Nubian ladies in tights dancing, Greek style to Gospel tunes.

There are those who encourage the bare-feet, the grunged out, the punked out and the rocked out, as a means to "reach" youth....on "their level. This is all about non-offense, but alas, nothing about the gospel, and the power to save...and the holy conviction that causes a man or a woman to REPENT.

Jesus made a lot of people very uncomfortable, and this is what he said about those, like Him, who did also.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice!" and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

Holiness and Salt go together, and truth be told, the world hates holiness, and those who carry it.

If the focus of the gospel message becomes the enhancement of the Bride, rather than Worship of the Groom, then everything focuses upon her, and she becomes narcissistic. Then, her success must stand on worldly standards...which really mean nothing in the eyes of God, but grief.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. "

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wr etched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be cloth ed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

"REPENT FROM YOUR SINFULL SELFISH LIVES, DENY YOURSELF, AND FOLLOW ME!REPENT!"

THIS CAN MAKE SOME VERY INCOMFORTABLE.

Re: - posted by KyleJBritt (), on: 2012/2/16 14:21

There are many ways to worship in a church setting that may be questionable to some, but people and culture are forever changing, that does not mean the gospel and the Word of God change. More traditional members of the church time after time get upset by many new "hip, modern, contemporary, etc" methods of worship.

The Church (capital C) as a whole CAN change with culture, as far as music, dress, etc. WITHOUT changing doctrine. It is important for people to realize the Gospel is the most relevant and real thing to all people and all nations, and when traditions and culture have influenced our doctrine and church, we are in a bad position and can become irrelevant to the community.

Keeping Scripture as highest authority but at the same time loving people and the community is what needs to happen. We will see!

Re: - posted by Solomon101, on: 2012/2/16 14:40

Timely post Greg. One of the lines in your post quotes Aaron Coe stating-

"including a move away from traditionalism and the economic advantages of leasing space instead of building a church."

THAT is the biggest key I have seen in this area. A group of believers can have a corporate meeting space for several weekly services for only a few hundred dollars per week. That is a far preferable way to go when compared to trying to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for building programs. It seems to me that is being a much better steward as well. They then use home groups, the local coffee shop, library, etc. for small group, Bible Study and fellowship places. The "leased/rented" space is only used when there is a weekly joint /corporate meeting of all the small groups. This lets the church reach into its community through small groups, perhaps growing to a very large number of believers, and yet only have a very small rent fee that allows them to have a weekly time of worshipping together.

I like the trend. It gets far more good for the dollar and allows the majority of finances to be spent on things that further the church's mission rather than just bricks and mortar that sit empty most all week. In addition it also gets the church "out of the 4 walls" of itself and much more proactively engages the community they live in. Evangelism in the coffee shop, library, around people's kitchen tables over a cup of coffee, etc. is usually far more effective than that carried on at a traditional pulpit and pew. Perhaps one reason is we tend to trust those we choose to connect with in day to day life. We may or may not trust a minister we really do not know... but we DO trust our neighbors, family, and friends that we have been able to see live lives that bear testimony to the fact that their faith is a real thing that is a key component to their life. I think it is a help to the church in its mission to evangelize and disciple.

It sounds a whole lot like Acts 5:42

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Re: - posted by Miccah (), on: 2012/2/16 14:42

BrotherTom,

Maybe I am misunderstanding what you wrote, so please correct me if I am wrong.

Are you stating that people who do not worship in a traditional sanctuary are lukewarm, or false believers?

Thanks!

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by Lysa (), on: 2012/2/16 15:06

Quote:
-----KyleJBritt wrote:
It is important for people to realize the Gospel is the most relevant and real thing to all people and all nations, and when traditions and culture have influenced our doctrine and church, we are in a bad position and can become irrelevant to the community.

Welcome, KyleJBritt!! I agree, where EVER two or three are gathered together in "my" name, Jesus said, He will be in the midst of them. Thank the Lord for it!

God bless,
Lisa

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by narrowpath, on: 2012/2/16 16:48

I have no issue with that. We only need a place to meet. I can do without a pulpit. No need to dress up (or down). Just men and women given to prayer, full of the Word and Spirit and godly elders to watch over the flock. Have a love meal together. Keep church simple, life is complicated enough.

If we want a religious performance we need a stage for a music band and OHP, sound system with PA and professional lighting, paid staff, newsletters, website, programmes for all ages and and and...

Re: , on: 2012/2/16 16:53

Don't forget the PowerPoint. Must always have PowerPoint if ya gonna be hip.

Re: , on: 2012/2/16 17:07

Two sides of error - the traditional protestant service and the megachurch style service. Some people's idea of good old time religion only dates back to the reformation. We need to go another 1500 years back to the New Testament instead!

In Christ -Jim

Re: , on: 2012/2/16 17:09

"I have no issue with that. We only need a place to meet. I can do without a pulpit. No need to dress up (or down). Just men and women given to prayer, full of the Word and Spirit and godly elders to watch over the flock. Have a love meal together. Keep church simple, life is complicated enough."

God bless you narrowpath! Amen. I would only add that the pulpit can become a dangerous enabler of the Roman Catholic clergy/laity system. Of course there are some men of God that this is not a snare to.

In Christ -Jim

Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2012/2/16 17:46

of course!

leave at home your PowerPoints
but Preach the word that God annoints

:)

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/2/16 18:01

I go to a church that has 4 services. One is traditional and the other 3 are more come as you are. We attend 2 of them based on my weekend work schedule. There is one on Saturday evening and it is come as you are.

Personally, I can't stand dressing up for church. By dressing up I am referring to suit and tie and dress pants. I did this growing up. Mom dressed me up in a 3 piece suit and clip on tie. Not only did I go to church but also to Sunday school. I think the worst part of the whole thing may have been the tie. Well, as a result of that experience I will only wear a tie on a 'special' occasion and it has to be very special for me to do such a thing. When I go to church it is jeans and a collared shirt for the traditional service and a regular shirt for the untraditional service.

Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2012/2/16 18:06

I also wonder, with a thread such as this- does it cause some Christians to look down on other Christians as a result of the method?

I know of an IFbaptist church who says a person should never come to churches and not be dressed up. Although the thought is nice where does the reasoning come in? I usually think of the pharisee and the poor man in the back. One says
Thank God I am not like them' and the poor man says 'I am not worthy'. It seems to be something that man is more concerned about than God. I think it comes down to a part of cultural thing of the church? Be dressed to reflect holiness? You can easily say be dressed up to play the part while keeping your sins hidden in the closet because you have a part play and flaws have no business being in that part.

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by twayneb (), on: 2012/2/16 19:42

Decided not to weigh in after all. Blessings.

Dress down, Live below. That's the only place we can wash feet., on: 2012/2/16 20:53

"I know of an IFbaptist church who says a person should never come to churches and not be dressed up. Although the thought is nice where does the reasoning come in? I usually think of the pharisee and the poor man in the back.".....Deadn

That's exactly right, DEADn. I always try to make it a point to DRESS DOWN for church, so that the poor feel better, and not embarrassed or Ostracized. Poor sisters especially feel inferior when in rags, compared to some of the well heeled stylists in today's Churches.

Then we come to the Priest-Class/Ministry class suit and tie. You can always tell who the Preacher is, Eh? By the uniform...It sets him apart...and then it is often followed by the wanna-be ministry class, who dress likewise.

There is so much Pride in it, and it is so far away from promoting true Christian Body life. Imagine yourself as a homeless married couple, down on your fortune...and dirt poor. Your walking with God, and enter a building where Christian Worship is going on, and everyone is dressed in finery: Dresses, suits and ties; squeaky-clean and rich.

You stick out like a sore thumb, and you are treated that way. Jesus commanded us to go to the hedges, and highways, and COMPEL them....WHO_SO_EVER!! let him come, and drink of the waters. Any deviation of rejecting the desperate poor, because of their poverty, is the same as rejecting Jesus Himself. It is these that ought to made to feel comfortable,

and equally loved as my children.

It is these that we ought to go out of our way to honor, with all of our heart, if they belong to Jesus...and if they do, they belong to me; they are mine. How would you like your travelling, poor daughter to be received, and honored, when you are dead and gone. If we refuse...and keep our lives....well..

You then have become a respecter of persons, and an enemy of God....And it is very important to receive these, lepers that they may be, as Jesus did, and does. He rejoices in restoration and the healing of the soul, and this is the nature and the true call of the New Testament Church.

James 2

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

But ye have despised the poor!".....

In Gospel missions to India, I love to go to the slums and streets, and preach there, and to the poorest church families I can find. It is such a joy, and they are so tenderly meek...and grateful that you love them, and they are often ripe for Salvation.

I have been with Evangelists who loved to display their prosperity; gold watches, and white silk suits, etc. To me, it was profane. I choose Khakis, and simple native wear...not to embarrass them...as one of them...even their brother...which I am.

I want to be on their level in every way, and even descend under them, to the lowest seat, where I may minister to them; wash their feet. I want to live with them, if possible. This opens more doors, than I can imagine.

Jesus never once refused anyone because of their social status; the Gadarene Devil possessed Maniac, the Prostitute, to the leper.

I have fellow-shipped the leper...by grace. Thus was I. We must treat others, as Jesus treated us...all the way. Grace and mercy...

Re: Churches go less formal to make people comfortable - posted by joliboy11, on: 2012/2/16 21:09

Isaiah 53:2 For He comes up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; He has no form nor majesty that we should see Him, nor an appearance that we should desire Him.

If that is will of God for Jesus, why would we do such methods?

1Timothy 2:9 In the same way also, I desire that women adorn themselves in decent clothing, with modesty and sensibleness, not adorned with braiding, or gold, or pearls, or costly clothing,

1Timothy 2:10 but with good works, which becomes women professing godliness.

- as can be applied to the Bride of Jesus Christ as a whole