

# The King's Highway

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### THE CHURCH MUST APPEAL TO THE VISITOR

by Paul L. Swauger  
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Success never comes accidentally! It is the result of particular, concentrated plan-following. A noble goal is achieved only through directives and intensive effort. To reach and keep the visitor we must give ourselves to the task of meeting his need in Jesus' Name. For him to feel alone and strange in our church is almost inexcusable.

I desire to stir us to new concern. My appeal is for the visitor who will be coming to our churches.

#### THE CHURCH MEMBER AND THE VISITOR

How attractive for God's people to come to the sanctuary with a soul passion that makes hearts warm with genuine friendliness, proving they are sold on their church and their Christ by action and by spirit. Christian friends, do not forget that you were once "alienated and enemies... yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Col. 1:21). Most visitors are in need of this salvation. It is a fatal mischief to act as though we do not care if souls go to eternal damnation.

Reuben Stauss stopped in a public building for a drink of water. The fountain was in the hallway and others, who had already drunk and were satisfied, stood and chatted. Thirsty and anxious he had to elbow his way to the fountain. Is this not typical all too often of the thoughtless unconcern which makes it more difficult for the thirsty to find the Water of Life.

Some time ago I heard of a young man who had planned an evening of worldly entertainment. With time on his hands before this gayety, he turned into the doorway of a humble church. As he was leaving at the close of the service, quite untouched, the usher at the door took his hand for a farewell word and an invitation to return. I believe he saw that young man as God saw him. He inquired about his soul's welfare with such love and interest that the visitor felt his very heart melting within him. A tear fell from the eye of God's saint and was caught on the clasped hand of the stranger. He hurried out into the night but that tear burned through his soul like fire. His night of godlessness was agony to him. As I recall, he later returned to the little church and gave his life over to God.

#### THE CHURCH SERVICE AND THE VISITOR

The worship service of the church ought to be of the highest type. An unprepared preacher cannot be of credit to the service; neither is the unprepared worshiper. "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God." The visitor needs to catch the divine charm of

being lifted up in heavenly places through true worship of believers.

A radio preacher told recently of a magazine concern which desired a photograph of people in prayer, for publication. A certain pastor was contacted and arrangements were made to photograph his congregation without their knowledge of it. The film revealed a shocking fact. Many were far from even the appearance of prayer, missing the precious contact with God that prayer affords. The picture was never published. Visitors, no doubt, left that service with hearts still hungry.

Back of every meeting needs to be the weeping and the waiting that brings God's seal. The responsibility for revival is upon our shoulders. A perplexed man spoke to me recently with words like this: "I have stepped into churches where I have felt immediately and forceably the presence of God...but it is not often the case as I visit various churches...Why?"

The Sunday school ought to be Christ-centered; Bible-based; and life-related. Conversion of lost souls must be the first and final aim. Teachers must be apt at teaching. The visitor is happiest to know, not that the Sunday school has a class for his age but that the Sunday school has a class for him.

Begin services on time. Have them well planned, with tasteful variety that moves grandly toward a goal that pleases God.

#### THE CHURCH BUILDING AND THE VISITOR

Stores, stations, markets and homes have every kind of modern convenience. The church building that was styled for several generations ago cannot meet present demands. Someone imagined that Rip Van Winkle slept another stretch of time and when he awoke fast automobiles, airplanes, and modern life had him nearly hysterical. He spied a church and ran to it for refuge; here he was in familiar surroundings. It had not changed.

The church should be at least as fine as the homes of the worshipers. It should employ restful colors in furnishings and other appointments. It should be worthy of highest-quality advertising; a building that lends itself to Sunday school, youth and church needs, with nursery, restrooms, coatrooms, library and classrooms in ample arrangement. The visitor who finds the church building inviting will be more likely to return.

#### THE PASTOR AND THE VISITOR

If the noble Apostle Paul could declare, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the cultured and to the uncultured; both to the wise, and to the unwise," how much greater is the debt of the pastor to the visitor who has by his own choice come into the church

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