

Chapter 1 : Religion Racket, Do It Yourself, Ch 10

A unique examination of various types of invitations, classified in a way that they may be readily used. Every issue and fear is dealt with in regard to giving invitations.

I am not big fan of the way a lot of invitations are done. I will leave it at that. Finney is usually accused by Calvinists of inventing the invitation. According to *The Effective Invitation* by R. Alan Streett Revell, , the invitation goes back much further than Finney. For example, he talks about the preaching of John Chrysostom , Patrick , etc. He documents the fact that in the 12th century Bernard of Clairvaux would ask for a show of hands after his messages. Again, in America the first people documented to use the public invitation were the Separate Baptists Calvinists, folks! The hymn being sung, he would then extend an invitation to such persons as felt themselves poor guilty sinners, and were anxiously inquiring the way of salvation, to come forward and kneel near the stand. Finney, who is often credited with inventing the invitation" *The Baptist Heritage*, p. The invitation has been misused, sure. Lee wrote the forward. To give you just one example, the first invitation Whitesell gives is to respond later, perhaps by making an appointment with the pastor. You have to agree, there is nothing high pressure about that. There are many spiritual, low pressure ways to give an invitation. The invitation can take many forms. Here in Japan, since my church is so small, I usually just ask them to pray where they are for a minute, and take it to God. That is an invitation to act on what they have just heard. However, one time a few years ago there was a man I knew needed to make a public profession of faith, ala Romans He is now the best Christian in my church!

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Chapter 10 Do It Yourself Religion Nearly everyone has heard the story of the minister on the golf course who sliced his drive off the first tee toward the rough. The ball hit a tree, ricocheted to the ground, hit a rock, and bounded back into the air. On its flight upward the ball hit a bird in flight just at the right angle and bounced onto the green, rolling to a stop one inch from the hole. A gentle wind blew it into the cup. A hole in one! The minister raised his eyes to heaven and complained, "Father! In matters of religion most people seem to prefer doing it themselves. We have developed a kind of "do it yourself" religion. The prophets spoke of "Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes" and this is, a description of today. Each individual seems to have his own particular idea of religion he is building from a do it yourself kit. We never seem to be content with what God has said or done Nothing is more apparent than the uncomplicated simplicity of worship as it was practiced in New Testament times. Jesus put it this way, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Everyone seems to have his own schemes, systems, and methods for being religiously successful. A casual look at the books on religion reveals a great number with titles such as the following: They might be called "Get Religious Quick" schemes. They are the "do it your selfers dream". These schemes all come packaged complete with elaborate details as to how to make them work. If the plan is followed results are guaranteed! There are those alert enough to keep an eye on the advertising, business and entertainment world. Anything that works in these fields can usually be "religionized" and made to work in the churches. Too much of religion is concerned with carrying out success schemes and promotions. We have taken the majesty, glory, and magnificence of religion and reduced it to a cheap, do it yourself plan. Yes, do it yourself religion is popular. Everyone prays, "Thy will be done. The preacher brings good sermons but we are not about to receive his instructions. Another very apparent quality that early worship services possessed was a lack of organizational machinery. Look at the mass of complex organizational machinery we have found necessary to run our do it yourself religion. An overabundance of organization bogs down the whole structure. The average denomination has to operate in a complicated hierarchy that is awesome to behold. The program of the church is normally carried on through a maze of committees, boards, departments, etc. Very little ever really gets done because it is almost impossible for any project to work its way through all the organizational channels. This reaches the extent that nearly all the members of some churches are officers in the church machinery. Too many Chiefs and not enough Indians! The church is nearly always a member of a local denominational organization which in turn is part of still a larger one. This proceeds until it reaches the world-wide activities. The organizations in these various branches of the denomination continually grow larger Ordinarily the denomination belongs to one of the super world organizations that bind the denominations together. One of these super organizations employs more than ministers in desk jobs at their headquarters! The average pastor could probably give himself full-time to keeping up with all the organizational machinery of which his position makes him a part. Too many times he finds this is what has happened. There was a time when being a minister meant preaching and attending to the spiritual needs of a congregation. Today the cry is for specialization. The day of the general practitioner will probably soon be over. Today it is common for larger churches to have several different kinds of clergy on their ordained staffs. One minister can be in charge of sermons, another specializes in home visitations while another heads up the ministry of teaching. There are educational directors, music directors, and pastoral counselors who also operate clinics. In some cases there are even women preachers but these find it difficult to meet the requirement of being the husband of one wife. Missionaries have to be experts in irrigation, social work, nutrition, contour plowing, construction, languages, etc. Missionaries have found that a lot of their work has been taken over by the Peace Corps. Some have found this gave them a little time to do such non-essential things as teaching the Bible. Most of the activity in religion today is nothing more than keeping the machinery running. A lot of this organizational machinery is kept running long after its purpose has been forgotten. The

resultant mess that man has made of religion reveals the utter failure of this complicated mass of organizational machinery. It is composed of words and phrases that never mean what they say. These words and phrases have to be translated, or at least, interpreted. Most churchgoers understand this language and the meanings have fairly well been standardized. Here are some typical phrases and their interpretations: Young people must have their fun. Norman Wells works, you may send them through the Webmaster: E-Mail , Webmaster, or send directly to David Wells , as you may wish!

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