



Preacher's Pen by Gene McCoy

Division by Design a satirical look at modern methods

In the interest of appealing to a broader audience, thereby reaching more lost people with the gospel, our congregation will no longer be meeting as a unit. Instead, we will be fragmenting the congregation according to the various demographic and special interest groups represented. Each of these groups will form a separate congregation and a distinct identity complete with a different designation or name and its own style of worship.

Recognizing the great difficulty to mingle with people of different interests and the obstacle to evangelism that is posed by throwing cowboys and farmers into the same arena, these will be the pilot groups that will initiate our church growth strategy. Only in the musical, "Oklahoma," is it possible for the farmer and the cowboy to be friends. It is naïve to believe that the church could provide an environment for the two to get along in harmony and peace.

Therefore, we will simulate a rodeo arena for the cowboy service. The pews will be removed from the auditorium in favor of hay bales. The fiberglass baptistery will be replaced by a stock tank. Hitching posts will be installed in every parking space in our parking lot. The name of the church during that hour will be "The OK Corral." Chaps and spurs will be the acceptable fashion, but guns will have to be checked at the door. The singing, accompanied exclusively by guitar, will feature the harmonies characterized by The Sons of the Pioneers or Riders in the Sky.

Since a large percentage of our members are league bowlers, we think we can attract that crowd by introducing a Bowler's Church. The hay bales will be replaced by molded plastic seating, and the foyer area will be filled with every imaginable kind of pinball machine and video game. The wood chips that covered the

floor for Cowboy Church will be removed to reveal the hardwood "alleys."

Next to use our facilities will be the RVers Church, at which everyone will be addressed as "Good Sam." Our building will be transformed to resemble a community center, complete with shuffleboard, a snack bar, and a table laden with board games and playing cards. Round tables and folding chairs will replace the molded plastic seats from the Bowlers Church.

Sportsman Church will be the next fragment of our congregation to use our building. Congregants will don camouflage gear and may choose from various seating options. Some may want to sit in the duck blind section. Others will prefer the tree stands around the perimeter of the auditorium or the cushioned pedestal seats resembling those in a bass boat. Of course, we will retract the roof to accommodate those in this group who believe they can best worship God in the great outdoors.

Other ideas are being developed to accommodate and attract the world, having learned that marketing and packaging are the key ingredients to evangelism. The "Go ye" of the Lord's commission to Christians has been replaced by the more effective "come ye" invitation to the worldly. We have finally come to understand that accommodation by the church is more effective than the "repent and be converted" message of the apostles. Oh that we had learned sooner that fragmenting the church is the key to growing the Kingdom and unifying God's people. And that the best way to bring sinners to Jesus is to make the church conform to our normal surrounding; that our comfort and convenience are primary requirements to be attracted to Jesus. ■