

Why Church Outreaches Often Fail

“And if I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself” (John 12:32).

There's no doubt that people are falling away and leaving churches. I believe that is a sign that we are living in the last of the last days. I also believe pastors are panicking to try to bring in people or retain people. You can't browse a bookstore without seeing multiple books about how to grow your church or retain attendees.

But there is one big problem with all of this. We can't grow churches by methods. Only the Holy Spirit can effectively grow the universal church. When leaders begin to focus on growing numbers in their congregations instead of growing numbers for the kingdom, they soon start to resort to secular outreaches and end up disappointed.

Over the past several years, I've been a part of many different outreaches.

We've had back-to-school bashes and given away backpacks full of school supplies while entertaining the kids with carnival activities. It was a kind way of loving the community. Some families visited the church later, but most took the free stuff and were never seen again until the next year.

Many outreaches are done in love with the underlying intent of drawing people into the church. In one of our former outreaches, we had at least 100 people show up for the fun and free stuff. Only two or three visited the church afterward, and none of them made our church their church home.

So why do outreaches often fail? And why do most churches buy into the idea that giving away things and throwing fun

carnival events draw people into the church?

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