

Like Running a Business?

The Saturday Evening Post raised an interesting legal question in a recent article.

It seems that one lovely Sunday when the sermon was overlong, the congregation rushed, as usual, from its pews on the first syllable of *Amen!*

Faithful Abigail, the only worshiper held entranced by the sermon, moved slowly and was trampled. She sued the church and its officials for damages.

“Those in charge of the church knew that most of the congregation stampeded after long sermons,” argued Abigail. “They should have recognized the danger in the situation. Not being prepared to cope with it, they were negligent.”

The church’s attorney shot back in his response, “A church is a nonprofit organization manned for the most part by volunteers. No one has a right to expect it to be run with the smart efficiency of a business concern. Abigail, therefore, has no real claim.”

If you were the judge, asked the writer, would you reward damages to Abigail?

What is interesting in this hypothetical situation was the characterization of the church: “A church is a nonprofit organization manned for the most part by volunteers ... No one has a right to expect it to be run with the smart efficiency of a business concern.”

Why not? What if the church were as good at what it does as McDonald’s is at what it does – or Chick-fil-A or Coca Cola or Microsoft?

What if the church was as committed to spreading the good news of the kingdom of God as American business is to winning new customers?

That is the point Jesus was trying to make. He wants people who bear His name to not only be nice people but to be men and women who make a difference in the world.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV).

