



# Good Morning, Church!

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis, Founder and Executive Director  
The Academy for Small Membership Church Ministries

## What Comes Out of Church?

By Rev. Dr. Carl K. Ellis

Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”

~ Matthew 15:10-11

How do we measure the success of our local churches in leading people to Jesus? Do we look at how popular our church is and how many attend Sunday morning worship? Do we count the number of people who join the church or the number of people who find Jesus and are baptized? Do we point to the number of children and youth that attend Sunday school and midweek services?

The Pharisees were upset with Jesus because his disciples did not follow tradition. Unfortunately, the Pharisees followed tradition but “made void the word of God.” Jesus further reminds them that “it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person.”

I suggest that the question is not how many people attend Sunday worship or are baptized. What matters is how those who attend church and profess to be Christians live their lives when they leave worship, Sunday school, and other church activities.

It is time for the church to begin asking, “Do we follow Jesus' teaching, or have we become a church that worships Jesus on Sunday, but sees Jesus as irrelevant in our daily lives?”

And would we be able to pass the test that Jesus shared in Matthew 25:31-46?

- Do we share what we have with those who are hungry and thirsty?
- Do we welcome strangers unconditionally?
- Do we share clothing with the naked?
- Do we care for those with medical needs and ensure everyone has access to health care?
- Do we visit those in prison, or do we scream, lock them up, and throw away the key?

Maybe we need to ask ourselves whether we measure our success by the number of people who attend on Sunday or by how we live Monday through Saturday, because it is not what goes into church but what comes out of church that matters.