

# THE CHURCH - IT'S ALL IN THERE

by Carl McMurray

In 1999 Faith Popcorn was considered a guru in business and social trends operating from about a 95% accuracy rate. She was highly sought after. I was reading back through some of her trending prophecies and was impressed with her accuracy now at this later date.

One trend Ms. Popcorn mentioned, that seems turned in the opposite direction but actually is not, is a trend toward intimacy. If you thought of it in retail terms we might compare it to the fact that on the one hand people like going to Meijers or a Super Walmart or IKEA where everything is available in a giant conglomerate. At the same time we have seen an increase in small specialty shops for things like bagels, manicures, coffee, or candles. People like the customization and intimacy of a small specialized store as well as the Mall or Superstore, for different reasons. The ones that are suffering are the retail businesses in the middle-sized category that are too big to be intimate and too small to address a variety of needs. They're getting their socks beat off on both ends. Note Sears, JC Penny's, K-Mart, etc.

What does this mean to us? It means we must focus clearly on fellowship (partnership, working together, sharing in God's work, one-another activities). People are looking for it, craving real, friendly, quality closeness, and God teaches it as part of the church's work, Acts 2:42. We need to identify the jobs that need doing (like helping with fair booths, greeting visitors, teaching great classes, etc.) and then join together and get going. We need to appreciate our workers (because we have some great ones) and use encouragement to draw together rather than being critical and divisive.

Additionally, the trend toward intimacy tells us that people need and appreciate special friendships and personal attention. Hundreds of people in a worship service can be an exciting, but few of us can relate personally to that kind of crowd. Even in big crowds we need one-on-one connections. People need individual connections. We **MUST** look around and welcome visitors into our worship and congregation AND into homes and our small circle of friends. We must give them individual intimate connections to Christ and His body. Paul described it in Ephesians 4:16 by "each individual part..." causing the body to grow by building in love.

We re-emphasize that the Lord's church *has now* and *has always had* that which men need for fulfillment. But, we must look beyond ourselves and minister to others (Philippians 2:4) for that power to be able to start to work for them.