



Consumer Reports

I recently received my March/April subscription to Backpacker Magazine. I could not wait to sit down and flip through the slick colorful pages loaded with trail tips, hiking advice, suggested hiking trips to take and loads of advertisements about quality products. As I opened my magazine, I noticed that this particular publication was solely dedicated to editorial reviews on hiking boots, backpacks, sleeping bags and tents. Eight professional hikers, men and women, hiked hundreds of miles of trails with differing terrains. From the humid wetlands of Florida to the snow and ice covered towering peaks of Alaska; and from the parched deserts of southern California to the Appalachian Trial mountains of Maine. Many months were spent testing the quality of all of these products pushing them to their limits. At the end of the miles of trekking comes the publishing of their results for consumers, such as me, to make more educated decisions on what is needed for our next trip.

I am sure that all of you have at some time utilized a magazine or a book which has field tested items that you planned on or hoped to use. Be it Consumer Reports for household products, O Magazine for long lasting lipsticks or makeup, or Motor Trend to see which new vehicle received positive crash-test ratings, we have relied on their information and advice to inform our decisions.

So what about churches? There is not a publication that I know of that “field tests” different kinds of churches to see the quality of worship services, the authenticity of the people, or the actual practice of its theology. This is an interesting concept to think about and even more curious to look at from both the “consumer” side and the “field tester” side.

Imagine if there was a magazine that “field tested” churches. Let’s call it *Church Reports*. What would the field testers say about Tomahawk? How would they evaluate us? Where would they rate our spiritual depth? Where would they rate the authenticity of our fellowship? How would they rate the quality production of our staff or their spiritual leadership? What would they say about our commitment to our theology in the church? All of these are great questions. Probably of equal importance how would readers of this imagined Church Reports consume this information? It would it deter them from coming here? Would it let them know that Tomahawk is a place they would like to attend? I hope that they would find a home here at Tomahawk.

In reality, there is not a magazine such as Church Reports. People may or may not know what they are getting themselves into when they darken the doors of a church. All they can go off of is their first impressions, the feel of the people and the place, how they are treated, whether or not anyone even notices them, and if are they made to feel welcomed. Once that hurdle is overcome then it is time to see if the people are real, genuine, and authentic about their faith and about whom they are as people. They check to see if the theology of the church matches how they think or if the church offers quality substantial ministries for their desired areas in life. Hopefully, once all of this is met or dealt with people will join in the fellowship here at Tomahawk.

Bottom line is that when people come here for the first time, more times than not they do not know anything about who we are here at Tomahawk. So let us put our best foot forward and welcome people warmly. Be real and be you so people can see who Christ is in your life. I know we can do this, Tomahawk is a great place to be.

Useless Fact of the Month

In Alabama, it is against the law to wear a fake mustache that could cause laughter in the church.