

The MP3 Experiment

- I. Introduction
 - a. Describe the experiment as it would have appeared to an uninformed observer
 - i. T-shirts – Red, Blue, Yellow, Green
 - ii. Freeze tag
 - iii. Nap Time
 - iv. This actually happened
 - b. Explain the MP3 Experiment
 - i. A project of an organization called Improv Everywhere
 - ii. Over 2000 people downloaded an MP3 file from the internet
 - iii. Put it on their iPod and portable music devices without listening to it
 - iv. Put on colored T-shirts
 - v. Arrived on Roosevelt Island in NY on the afternoon of May 23rd, 2009
 - vi. Pressed play on their music devices at exactly 4PM
 - vii. They heard the voice of a guy who identified himself as Steve and said that he would be giving them instructions
 1. Jumping in the air on cue
 2. Playing follow the leader with people who were not participating
 3. Taking 15 second power naps by dropping to the ground on cue
 4. Playing freeze tag, with IT determined by shirt color
 5. Having a mock battle with inflatable hammers and baseball bats
 - c. Why?
 - i. Art
 - ii. Community
 - iii. Fun
 - iv. Unique Experience
- II. There are similarities and differences between participants in the MP3 Experiment and Christians
- III. Similarities
 - a. Major
 - i. They are volunteers
 1. No one forces us to be a Christian
 2. It is a voluntary choice
 3. Psa. 110:3; Matt. 16:24; Rev. 22:17
 - ii. They are from many different places and backgrounds
 1. The church
 2. Acts 10:34-35
 - iii. They don't know everything that will be asked of them beforehand
 1. We confess Jesus as Lord

2. What He says we will do
3. Where He sends we will go
4. Saul in Acts 9:16
- iv. They have to trust the one giving them instructions
 1. Who do you trust
 2. How far do you trust them
 3. How far can you trust Jesus?
 4. Does it show?
 5. The good shepherd – John 10:2-5
 6. What behavior do you regularly engage in that can only be explained by your faith and trust in Jesus Christ?
- v. Participants could be identified by distinguishing characteristics
 1. Clothing
 2. The fun began long before we got to the island; you could identify participants by their double T-shirts and iPods on the commuter train from Connecticut, in Grand Central and on the subways. Nobody knew what to expect, which was all part of the experience.
 3. Our dress, speech and behavior should also identify us
- vi. The success of the project depends on many individuals faithfully following the organizers instructions
 1. Wrong time
 2. Wrong place
 3. Not listening
 4. Not following instructions
 5. Would diminish or ruin the experience for the individual
 6. It would take a lot more than that to ruin it for the group
 7. Same for the church
 8. Every joint, growth of the body
- vii. To observers, they cause confusion, and provoke criticism, mockery or mimicry
 1. Many of you are thinking, how could anybody be so foolish?
 2. That is what the world thinks of us
 3. They don't have:
 - a. The same understanding of what is happening
 - b. The same trust in the leader
 - c. The same values
 - d. The same taste for adventure
 4. Persecution
- viii. To observers, they appear to be acting in harmony without any direction
 1. This would have to be the most startling and confusing thing for the observer
 - a. "Through all of this, you couldn't stop laughing. Part of it was the weirdness of seeing 3,000 people

acting in perfect unison, even though externally, there wasn't a sound."

- b. How did they all know to jump up at the same time?
 - c. How did they all know to drop to the ground at the same time?
 - d. Why were they all running from the red shirts and then instantly all running from the yellow shirts?
2. The church
 - a. Christians are different in many ways from each other
 - b. But in the most important ways, they are the same
 - c. They all act the same in certain circumstances, because they are all following the same leader – Jesus Christ
 3. When all are following the same instructions, harmony that cannot be produced or explained in any other way results
 - a. They forgive each other
 - b. They love each other
 - c. They worship together in harmony
 - d. They make similar decisions
 - 4.

IV. Differences

a. Major

- i. They were following men, we follow Jesus
 1. How far can you trust God?
 2. Does it show?
 3. What behavior do you regularly engage in that can only be explained by your faith and trust in Jesus Christ?
 4. John 10:14-15
- ii. Their instructions were to have fun, ours are to totally sacrifice ourselves to the cause of Christ
 1. Rom. 12:1-2
- iii. Their trust could have been misplaced, ours is not
 1. Kill the wolf could have gotten out of hand
 2. Other miscalculations
 - a. More people?!
 - b. Police involvement
 - c. In May 2009, A participant in an event in Roanoke with a similar purpose got arrested when she refused to interrupt her activity to show ID to a police officer when requested.
3. Not us
 - a. 2 Cor 5:14-15
- iv. Their instructions kept them in harmony for just over 45 minutes. Ours have kept people in harmony for thousands of years

1. 2 Tim 2:2
- v. People will do just about anything for a short amount of time.
Following Jesus takes a lifetime of commitment
 1. 2 Tim. 2:3-4
 2. Rev. 2:10

V. Conclusion

a. Two Suggestions

i. Work together!

1. One person acting in a different way may catch a small amount of attention
2. Many people acting in a different way creates an experience that will be remembered for life
3. When you are doing something for the Lord, work side by side with one or more of your brethren
4. It will make a bigger impression on you and the world

ii. What is your level of trust in Jesus?

1. How far can you trust Him?
2. How far DO you trust Him? Why the difference?
3. What behavior do you regularly engage in that can only be explained by your faith and trust in Jesus Christ?

iii. Who are you following?

1. If 2000 people in New York would follow the instructions of a total stranger just for fun,
2. Would you follow the instructions of the Creator and Savior of the universe for eternal life?

b. Sources

- i. "The MP3 Experiment - Pogue's Posts Blog - NYTimes.com," <http://pogue.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/28/the-mp3-experiment/>.
- ii. "Mp3 Experiment Six – Full Details « Improv Everywhere," <http://improveverywhere.com/2009/05/18/mp3-experiment-six-full-details/>.
- iii. "The Mp3 Experiment Six « Improv Everywhere," <http://improveverywhere.com/2009/06/15/the-mp3-experiment-six/>.
- iv. "It's the artful thought that counts - Roanoke.com," <http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/commentary/wb/205331>.