



January 28, 2026

MESSENGER

Quote of the Week

"Say YES !"

Pastor Connie in this week's message

INFO

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Contact Information:

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FAST-FOOD AND FAST-FAITH

I've decided to go on a FAST-FOOD FAST --- just because I like the sound of the words together. Wait a minute! I think I'll go on a *FAST-FOOD FEAST FIRST*. That sounds more interesting.

America didn't invent the concept; even in ancient Rome street vendors knew how to make a fast buck with fast-food. But twentieth century America is where it really became an art form. When Horn and Hardart opened their Philadelphia *Automat* cafeteria in 1902, it quickly became all the rage. Who could believe it? Look into little windows to select the sandwich you want, put a couple of nickels into a slot, and your sandwich window was unlocked. Enjoy! Automats soon popped up in all major American cities. I went to one in NYC when I was a kid.

In 1921 a guy in Wichita, KS, opened the first White Castle diner in an abandoned streetcar, where he sold miniature hamburgers for a nickel, and people gobbled them up. This was the small beginning of America's fast-food fascination with the hamburger. It was at The Rite Spot, a Pasadena diner on Route 66 (at the corner of Colorado Blvd. and Avenue 60), that the cheeseburger was first advertised. McDonalds, of San Bernardino, CA, got into the game in 1940 and soon multiplied into a chain by adding the "Drive-Thru" model to the fast-food image. Their success drew others into this rapidly expanding market, and now, the main streets of just about all American cities and towns are lined with options. Americans never have to cook a meal at home again!

Except, it turns out that a regular diet of fast-foods is pretty unhealthy: typically high in calories, saturated fats, sugar, and sodium, while being low in essential nutrients like fiber and vitamins. Regular consumption is linked to serious health issues, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.¹ As a general rule, you can be sure that ***if it's quick and easy, it's not likely to be nourishing.*** So, fast-foods ought to be treated as an occasional indulgence, not as a basic diet. Some of us should probably re-evaluate our habit of living on quickie meals.

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In the last few decades, we've moved on from eating in our convenient fast-food place, to driving through to pick up our favorite items, to doing some sort of cell-phone magic that has them delivered to our home within minutes. This is making the whole situation worse. We barely burn the unhealthy calories from our last fast-food meal in walking to the front door for the next.

What's more dangerous than a diet of fast-food? A spiritual lifestyle of **FAST-FAITH**. *Shortcut Christianity has become an increasingly popular lifestyle of Americans who profess to be believers --- as long as it's casual; as long as it's convenient. "Seeker-Sensitive" is a title embraced by modern megachurches who aim to address people's "felt needs." Quickie religion, pretty comfortable and not too demanding. It's mostly about slogans, catch-phrases and formulas. Pastor/"Influencers" bounce around in pulpits delivering eat-on-the-run sermonettes. They may ask for occasional symbolic acts of self-denial, but these are fast fasts, usually followed by fulsome feasts.² This is the kind of Christianity the Apostle Paul wrote about:*

The time is coming when people will not put up with sound teaching, but, having their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Paul's phrase "having their ears tickled" could be "having their palates teased" in our fast-food analogy. Once again, ***if it's quick and easy, it's not likely to be nourishing.***

A fitting end to a Fast-Faith worship service might be a Door Dash Doxology. *Amen!*

Pastor George Van Alstine

¹ This article gives striking evidence <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6146358/#:~:text=Fast%20foods%20typically%20contain%20extra,other%20potentially%20disease%20promoting%20chemicals>.

² Feasting and Fasting are both important religious practices. Interestingly, the words have very different origins: *feast* from a Latin root, from which we also get *festive*, *fiesta*; *fast* from