

DOWN HOME: To logo, or not to logo

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Just the other day, I realized I hold coffee and hamburgers to a double standard.

Beth and Linda, good friends who work here at the *Baptist Standard*, carried bags of hamburgers into our lunchroom just as I finished leftover carryout Chinese—garlic chicken and brown rice, I think it was.

Even though I had just finished lunch, Beth and Linda made me hungry all over again. My mouth watered, and I think I heard my stomach growl, something like, “I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.”

For a moment there, I broke Commandment 10 1/2: “Thou shalt not covet thy coworkers’ hamburgers.”

My friends started unpacking their burgers. Meanwhile, I sat there, wondering why I harbored such a strong desire for a classic American hamburger. Were my Chinese leftovers excellent? Yes. Were they filling? Yep, for at least two hours.

So, why did I have such a strong desire for one of their burgers? Then it hit me (the answer to my question, not one of the hamburgers): They were

packed in brown-paper bags.

The best burgers I've ever eaten come from hole-in-the-wall joints that pack their wares in brown-paper bags. No chi-chi white sacks with colorful logos for them. They let the quality of their burgers do the talking, the marketing and the "branding" for their fine dining establishments, whose flame-heated steel grills average 19.3 years old.

While I was looking covetously on Linda's hamburger, I realized a contrary thought: As much as I desire hamburgers packed in plain paper bags, I despise coffee poured into plain styrofoam cups.

The incongruity of my double standard for hamburgers and coffee made me wonder aloud: "Why do I only want coffee in cups with logos on them and only want hamburgers in bags without logos on them?"

Ken, another friend and co-worker, provided the answer: "Well, that's easy. The best coffee comes in logo cups, and the best hamburgers come in plain bags."

How do you argue with logic like that? Like me, Ken has been attending Sunday school since before he was born. Together, we have consumed several thousands of gallons of "Sunday school coffee" from plain-white cups. Make that thousands of gallons of very bad coffee. He knows whereof he speaks.

Driving home from work, I pondered my double standard and came to the conclusion that it is well-founded and almost invariably true.

Then I thought about how people see Christ. We are branded with a logo, if you will, when we accept the label "Christian." Does the product of our lives cause others to associate Christ with something positive, something desirable? Much more is at stake than burgers and coffee.

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