

Church Attendance & Conspiracies

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | February 26, 2010



Could explain the pros and cons of church attendance? Are there times when it is not healthy to attend and what attitude should we bring when we do attend.

What are the “reasons” for church attendance? I have come to the point where I think it is better to bail water than jump ship. If you’re not part of the solution you are part of the problem!

The second topic that has come up again more than once is the distraction of Conspiracies! I have in my past been caught up in them until I realised that my focus should be on Christ. But, let’s be sure there are conspiracies all around us i.e.: Evolutionism, 9/11, washing machines and odd socks...! Is there any benefit in being aware of conspiracies? For example should we research to the best of our ability such things as microchips and flu vaccinations so as to not blindly walk into a trap? I realise heart motive is what is important, but what is our responsibility? I raise this issue because almost unavoidably we run into some conspiracy theorist nut who certainly has a lot of “evidence” he is willing to share... but how do we respond to such people?

Great questions and I will answer them separately.

Church Attendance:

We must remember we are at war - war between good and evil, Christ and Satan, love and selfishness, truth and lies. Satan is working with all his evil scheming to destroy minds and capture individuals to his way of living. One of the classic strategies in any warfare setting is to "divide and conquer." If we allow the enemy to divide us, split us apart, then we cannot work together, encourage, uplift, assist the wounded, share supplies, plan actions together etc. A divided enemy is an easier enemy to conquer. Therefore, the Bible encourages us:

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Heb 10:25

The closer we get to the coming of Christ the more desperate Satan becomes and therefore the more intense the warfare and the more important we band together. It is essential that we join together with other Christians to encourage, uplift, share burdens, multiple our resources, coordinate our efforts, study the truth, and ultimately experience greater love and brotherly affection thus advancing God's kingdom!

I see no benefit in avoiding church or disengaging fellowshiping with believers in Christ. Such activity works to Satan's advantage as those severed from the church are easy prey for discouragement, entrapment in worldly schemes, confusion of mind, and ultimately acceptance of the world's value system.

Where it gets confusing for some is when they attend a particular church which has been taken over by the "tares" who are trampling the "wheat". Christ said that the wheat and the tares grow up together until the harvest. This means that in any body of believers there will be those who are loyal and faithful to Christ and those who are doing the enemies work. And, sometimes, an organization or group can become toxic. When this happens and there is no possibility to reclaim leadership for Christ and redirect the group in healthy paths, then the only healthy choice is to leave that group, but not for isolation and solitude, but to join with another body of believers for continuation of the gospel commission.

I like your analogy to bail water rather than jump ship - well said. However, I have had patients who were in churches, local independent bodies, in which the pastor was critical, controlling, abusive. He would single people out from the pulpit and publicly chastise them with "a word from the Lord." My patients would leave the service discouraged, depressed, distraught and humiliated. There was no possibility of changing the environment and therefore the healthiest solution was to find another church. But again, leaving a particular local congregation is not the same as leaving church and staying home. We must not forsake our duty to minister to others and our ability to minister is markedly enhanced by our fellowship with other believers.

Conspiracies:

There is no end to conspiracies and if we spend our time on conspiracies we are not focusing our minds on the truth. One of God's laws, which govern our development, is the law of worship - by beholding we

are changed. We actually become like that which we admire, worship, focus upon, meditate upon or otherwise fill our minds with. Therefore, we need to be cautious allowing our minds to dwell on conspiracies. They will only confuse and distract the mind from truth.

It is much better to be so acquainted with the truth that error becomes obvious by contrast. The following quotation states it beautifully:

The best way to deal with error is to present the truth, and leave wild ideas to die for want of notice. Contrasted with truth, the weakness of error is made apparent to every intelligent mind. The more the erroneous assertions of opposers, and of those who rise up among us to deceive souls, are repeated, the better the cause of error is served. The more publicity is given to the suggestions of Satan, the better pleased is his satanic majesty. — Testimonies to Ministers, p. 165.

There is a difference between “conspiracies” and legitimate questions that arise. Many individuals had legitimate questions regarding the safety of the flu vaccine. The problem arises when individuals allow hyperbole, fear, rumor, allegations and rhetoric to form their beliefs rather than the evidence. Jesus said the truth will set you free (John 8:32). This applies to all of life, including to questions such as whether to get a flu vaccine or not.

From a heavenly perspective the evolutionary theory of origins is a clear counterfeit of Satan’s, designed to confuse the mind. Yet, there are many people who have honest questions about the scientific record. In order to win these people to the truth of God’s kingdom it is beneficial to become familiar with the evidence and tenets of the evolutionary theory in order to discern the errors and lead people into truth. However, only persons who are mature and well grounded in the truth of God’s word should undertake such a venture.

The theories of the enemy are well crafted to deceive and only those solidly grounded in truth, those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong should spend time studying the theories of the enemy.

When I was in my residency I was required to read the various theories of psychiatry. The vast majority of the theorists have rejected the idea of God and accepted the evolutionary origins of life. Their theories of the mind are completely infected by this bias. Yet their theories are highly thoughtful, intellectual, and have the appearance of wisdom. I realized the power this material could have over my mind. Therefore, for every hour I spent reading one of these theorists I spent two hours reading God’s Word and other Christian material. It was only in this way I could keep grounded. Through that method I was able to understand the various theories yet not become confused by them. I learned to recognize in these theories the truths they contained from the errors entwined throughout.

From such study, and experience with patients, I have been able to present a model of the mind that promotes the truth about God, is rational, reasonable, in harmony with the scientific evidence and therefore powerfully refutes the evolutionary theories of our mind.

So my approach is to ignore the vast majority of “conspiracies” as they are mere distractions from the healing truth about God. The more time we focus on the conspiracies the more credence we give them. However, when certain falsehoods reach public saturation and become so commonly accepted as to be considered legitimate possibilities, we have a responsibility to wisely familiarize ourselves with these theories in order to expose the error and lead people to truth.