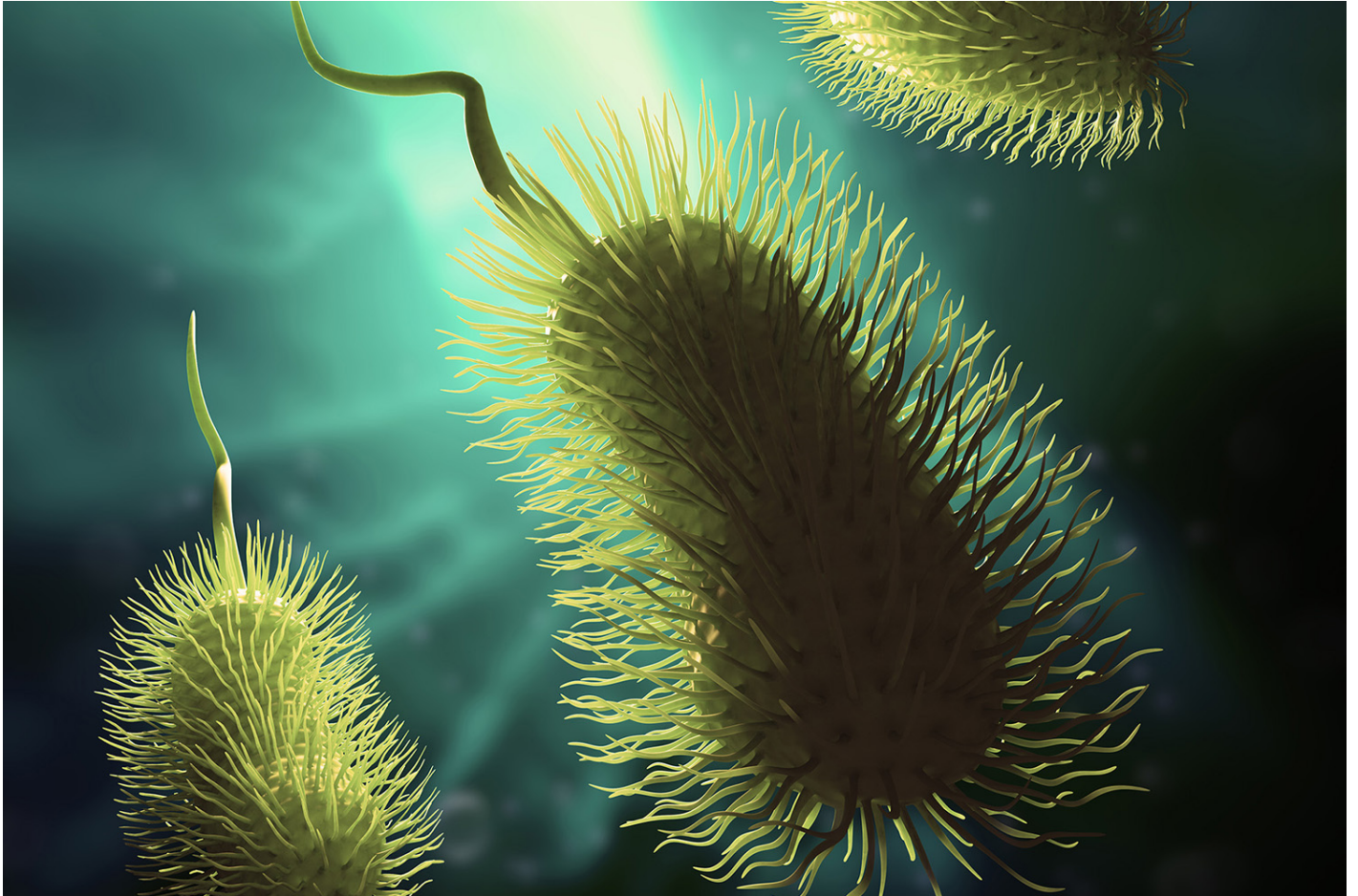


# Truth — How It Unfolds and Advances

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | December 6, 2018



Do you want to be a person of truth, someone who loves the truth, who is able to comprehend the truth and move forward in truth as it is revealed?

The Bible tells us that those who are lost are lost because “they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Something about them causes them to develop minds and hearts that do not love truth. These lost souls won’t accept advancing light and don’t have minds that are willing to move forward in unfolding insight.

Do you think the majority who refuse truth realize they are doing so or would they likely consider themselves defenders of the truth?

Consider people through history who have resisted truth, such as those who crucified Christ, or persecuted His Apostles, or those who murdered the Reformers. Do you think they would have said, “We know we are in the wrong; we know we don’t have the truth; we realize these people are in the right, so let’s destroy them?” Or do you think these opposers of truth thought they were defending the truth?

I think that most people, who end up opposing and resisting truth do so while ardently believing they

are defenders of the truth. How can we tell if we fall into the truth-loving group or the truth-opposing camp? By understanding how truth actually moves forward and then determining which system and method we are promoting.

Consider how truth, on any subject, advances through the human population. Does new truth happen this way: One day every person in the world awakens with the new truth understood and accepted? Or does it happen this way: A few individuals have an epiphany, an insight, an idea that they share, propose, and put forth and then that idea is tested by its application in reality or against reliable standards? The answer is obvious. Initially, the new truth is often resisted but, as the evidence supports the new position, more people are convinced and change their views and share the new truth with others, who are persuaded by the evidence, and the truth gradually spreads through the human family.

Consider germ theory. When first proposed by Pasteur and Lister, the idea that there were invisible organisms that caused disease was ridiculed and rejected. Doctors refused simple hygiene recommendations, such as handwashing and sterilization of instruments. But, the idea was tested in reality and patient outcomes demonstrated marked reductions in infections and deaths after surgery. The Mayo brothers (founders of the Mayo Clinic) were lovers of truth and they accepted germ theory and began applying Lister's sterilization techniques in their hospital and had drastically improved outcomes, as compared to typical surgical practices of the time. This led others to accept the truth, more evidence came in to support this new perspective, and germ theory slowly spread around the world and today is accepted in all cultures. Mothers teach their children to wash their hands, antiseptics are used on small abrasions, and doctors sterilize instruments. The human race has benefited by this advancement in truth.

This is how ALL truth advances, whether scientific truth or Biblical truth. Has any Bible truth ever advanced as a result of all human beings on earth awakening with the same idea? No! All Bible truth advances with studied individuals, who have discovered a new insight and shared that insight with others. The idea is tested against the totality of Scripture, in reality (the impact on lives, characters, relationships), and against reliable standards (design laws). As the evidence supports the new idea, more minds accept the truth and it slowly spreads throughout the population.

With a better understanding of how truth advances, now we can consider what organizational system would lend itself to the advancement of truth and what type of system would shut down and obstruct the advancement of truth. Then we can identify to which system we belong.

Consider an organization with many local groups who hold local authority, and membership in the organization is governed by the small local community, where individuals are known by each other. Those local community groups network in their region with other similar groups, sharing information and perhaps forming cooperatives, in which they elect leaders to organize their resources for a shared mission. Property ownership and rules of governing the entity remain under local control. Regional groups organize into larger divisions, perhaps with shared geography, or shared language, for further advancement of their mission and, if the organization is large enough, there might be a world conference, which would articulate the common principles of the entire group.

In this organization, given that authority remains at the local level and the world conference only endorses consensus positions, when accepted by all world regions, truth would be free to arise and be tested in the local communities. When an individual had a new idea, it would be shared in their local community. The local community would examine and test the idea. When it is borne out by evidence, it

would move beyond one local group to other groups in the region.

Because truth is typically initially resisted, this advancement of light is slow and even contentious at times. Thus, just like with germ theory, some groups will practice the new truth, while others stick by the traditional standards. In time, however, what is actually true will be demonstrated to be healthier and result in greater acceptance, until practiced by the vast majority — unless some obstacle is inserted into the organization to prevent the truth from its normal and natural advancement. And what is that obstacle? A hierarchical organization — a top-down authoritarian system.

In such a system, authority is not local, but is invested in a supreme leader or governing body that establishes, from the top, what is truth, typically with precise definitions. This could be called a creed or a list of fundamental beliefs, but, regardless, these definitions are not open to being challenged or deviated from by anyone within the organization. This is because in hierarchical organizations, questioning the established truth is seen as undermining its authority, as rebellious, and as an attack on “known truth.” New ideas are not tested, because, when they arise in local regions, they are not allowed to advance and be tested. Instead, the ruling authority has a system of thought police, or compliance officers, who oversee the local groups, monitoring for any idea which threatens the orthodox view, and then act to bring consequences to bear, thus ensuring new truth never takes root. Any group or region who attempts to resist the central authority and move forward in new light will be ridiculed, accused of being rebellious, and threatened with expulsion from the organization.

Consider when the gospel was being preached in the first century after the resurrection of Christ. The top-down, authoritarian, religious leaders utilized coercive power in an attempt to silence the Apostles. However, Gamaliel stood up and promoted a different method. He pointed out that others, with false messages, had arisen, but because their messages were false they faded away. He summed up with this inspired wisdom, “I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5:38-39).

And what does the history of organized religion tell us? Where has the vast majority of opposition to advancing truth originated, if not from the theological ruling counsels of each era? And what method did those systems employ, if not a top-down, authoritarian approach, with centralized definitions of orthodox truth?

The question for each of us today is: Do you want to be a person of truth, someone who loves the truth, who is able to comprehend the truth and move forward in truth as it is revealed?

Then consider, to which system do you belong? Truth presented in love, while leaving others free, or a hierarchical system of authority, which must enforce its beliefs upon others?

I invite you to be a lover of the truth!