


Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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Objections to Organized Religion

I recently came across an internet article titled *30 Reasons People Leave Organized Religion* https://www.buzzfeed.com/jake_farrington/people-leaving-the-church. There are many books, periodicals, and internet resources on this particular topic and other similar issues. However, I found this article to be particularly interesting and copied it for future reference. After reflecting upon it for a while I decided to do a sermon series using bits and pieces of the listed objections and excuses that people use to avoid coming to worship in a local church. I may or may not use all of these reasons and I may end up coming up with some others. It just depends upon how well everything flows with the sermons and within the realm of our own organized religion. I mentioned objections and excuses because there is a difference between the two. Objections are existing obstacles that hinder someone's path and excuses are verbal challenges that provide a false front for the actual objection. I also stated coming to worship instead of coming to church because the church is the people and what we actually do when we come to together on Sunday mornings is worship God. I found it interesting that none of the 30 reasons deal with worshiping God.

While each reason is different, there is a degree of commonality among them all. The most noticeable common problem is that it is a lot easier to leave a church than it is to fix a church. Though they each have very valid reasons for their objection to organized religion, each one of the objections is from someone that took the easy way out. There have been times within the coalescence of life that many of us have been on the threshold of deciding between leaving and staying whether it is in aspects of marriage relationships, careers, or religion. I wonder where we would be if any one of our biblical heroes had given up so easily. Jesus could have quit trying when he encountered criticism. The Apostle Paul could have quit testifying when he encountered prison. The disciples could have easily quit when they faced persecution. When the Roman Empire required all citizens to publicly sacrifice to common gods some Christians lapsed while others faced the threat of death. The list goes on throughout Christian history and Christians continue to face persecution in some parts of the world today. Each one of these scenarios faced a much bigger challenge to faith than anything that we may encounter here in America today.

There is a famous lesson from Jesus in Matthew chapter 13 called *The Parable of the Sower*, the seed that fell on rocky ground did not have much soil and withered away. This represents the person that endures for a while but falls away when trouble arises. Trouble always arises in one form or another throughout life. Therefore, it is impossible for the church to be exempt. The main correlation that I noticed among the 30 reasons is that each one is about what someone else did or said. However, I noticed that in the Bible the lessons are very personal. When Jesus speaks to the audience, he speaks to me. Therefore, the objections and excuses, even though they are serious and legitimate, are matters of self justification and blaming. Organized religion will never be for everyone but we can make sure we are not the causes for others to stumble by being the tenacious seed that fell in fertile soil and focusing on being the church that Jesus organized.

Thank you,
George