

A wire shopping cart is shown from a three-quarter perspective, set against a dark, textured background. The cart is empty and has four wheels. The text "Church Shopping" is overlaid in the center of the cart in a white, sans-serif font.

Church Shopping

Church Shopping

- “We live in a religiously pluralistic society steeped in relativism.”
 - Americans advocate freedom of religion and tolerate all religions
 - Americans believe truth is relative and is affected by your background and beliefs
- This has led to an attitude that it does not really matter what you believe or where you worship, including the choice to believe nothing and to attend nowhere

Church Shopping

- Does it really matter if we assemble with others for religious purposes?
- Are there any real differences between churches?
- Why can't we just go to the church of our choice?
- Isn't what I need from the church service more important than where I go to church services?

Is Assembling Necessary?

- Disillusionment
 - Weary of liturgical worship; uncomfortable with formality
 - Hurt by hypocrisy and self-righteousness
 - Infatuated with contemporary cultural influence on religion, fashion

Is Assembling Necessary?

- We assemble because God commanded it
 - Heb. 10:25 - “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”
- We assemble to encourage and be encouraged
 - Heb. 10:24 - “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”
 - 1Cor. 14:12, 26 - “...let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel... 26 Let all things be done for edification.”

Is Assembling Necessary?

- Mark 2:23-28
 - The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath
 - Man was not made for the assembly; the assembly was made for man's good

Are All Churches The Same?

- There is one faith and one Body
 - Eph. 4:4 - “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling”
- The Body of Christ is the church
 - Col. 1:18 - “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Are All Churches The Same?

- The church is the pillar and ground of the truth
 - 1Tim. 3:15 - “I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
- The church is not to tolerate error or immorality
 - 2John 9-10 - “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him”

Are All Churches The Same?

- Do all churches meet this Biblical criteria?
Then not all churches are alike
 - Matt. 7:21-23 - “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

Can One Attend The Church Of His Choice?

- Contemporary America has developed cafeteria Christianity
 - Shop for churches like one would look for a car
 - The basis of that decision will be:
 - How entertaining the worship may be
 - How many youth services are offered
 - How big it is
 - Less about its practice of what God has said

Can One Attend The Church Of His Choice?

- Religion is not about what man wants but rather what God wants
 - John 4:20-24 - “Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. 21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

What Do I Get Out Of It?

- “What can the church do for me?”
 - 1Cor. 10:24 - “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”
 - Rom. 15:1 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”
 - Phil. 2:3-4 - “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

What Do I Get Out Of It?

- The question ought not be, “what can the church do for me” as much as, “what can I do for the church?”
- A servant will find happiness in the assembly

Church Shopping

- If you assemble with others who do not hold to God's truth, or whose interests are not God's priorities, then you run the risk of losing your soul and becoming disillusioned with religion
- If worship is more about you and less about God, you will soon err from the faith and lose interest in your salvation
- If you worship in a church of your choice rather than God's choice, you will not please Him and you will be lost