

Why I do not belong

I do not belong to a local church though I regularly attend one and contribute to its ministries. It is not because I have any problems with membership – quite the opposite in fact! Here is my reasoning: In my many years of itinerant ministry I have been involved with many missionaries and admire their work. Therefore we have, over the years, pledged our financial support to their ministries, both overseas and locally. Thus I cannot pledge any financial support to the church I attend, a basic requirement I believe, for any church ‘member’.

I am coming more and more to believe that the day of the local denominational church is passing as it is being replaced by several, smaller church ‘plants’ where the emphasis is on becoming actively involved as disciples rather than as consumers who move from church to church until they get what they want. It used to be that all one listened to was the Sunday morning sermon but with easy access to the internet, one doesn’t have far to go to find good, solid Bible teaching or sound worship (I highly recommend www.sermonindex.net). Further, the cost of maintaining our church buildings and paying salaries is escalating and putting burdens on members than many are not prepared to carry.

I have been a church pastor and, I believe, did my job well. However, I think it true to say that I have been used more in the Kingdom of God when I was not a ‘professional’ pastor, having all the “job description” expected by the denominational leaders and the church Board. Indeed, when a younger man, I was used of the Lord in leading a “large, successful” city-wide youth ministry, even though employed full-time as a teacher. I knew His anointing and found “the yoke easy and the burden light” though the hours were often long. – and I never thought of being paid! Now it seems that no one can lead such a work unless there is a salary!

O that the Lord would raise up more “lay men and women” who operate in His ministry with His anointing and not seeking financial gain. Of course, I believe that the labourer is worthy of his hire but one should never regard the ministry as a job – but rather as a calling of God.