

## **“Are Churches in Competition with Each Other?”**

### **1 Corinthians 3, *et. al.***

(A free transcript of the sermon is available at the Information Desk in the Lobby)

**THEME:** According to the Barna Group, each year one out of every seven adults changes churches for any of a variety of reasons.

Some people move to a different city and shop for a new church. Others decide a different church may be more to their liking, so they church-hop. Bouncing from church to church is a way of life for many Americans who enjoy the variety of experiences in different churches.

Churches are finding that the way to attract and retain attenders is to focus on the changing interests and needs of people. Many such churches are unequivocally committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are willing to adapt their methods to reach people, but not at the cost of compromising the message of the gospel. Such churches are attractive because of the excitement of seeing lives changed by the power of the gospel.

Because of the heavy traffic between churches these days, many wonder if the churches themselves are competing to become the largest or most popular congregation in the community. This may be more of an attitude among some church members than a church-wide strategy.

Church shopping is a reality. Whether we like it or not, we must acknowledge it. It is also important to point out that church-hopping does not necessarily mean churches are in competition with each other.

In attempting to deal with the tough question of church-hopping the following **considerations** should prove helpful.

#### **I. THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERISM**

#### **II. THE PASSAGE OF HISTORY**

#### **III. THE TIMELESSNESS OF TRUTH**

#### **IV. THE LEGITIMACY OF LEAVING**

#### **V. THE GOAL OF MATURITY**

### **SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS**

**February 25, 2007**

1. How many churches have you attended for a period of time, and what were your reasons for leaving?
2. Identify any advantages you think there might be in regularly attending multiple churches.
3. What is the impact on a local church if members or regular attenders leave without a word to the church leaders?

#### **I. THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMERISM**

4. To what extent do you think the broad array of options in the American culture influences attitudes toward the church?

## **II. THE PASSAGE OF HISTORY**

5. Do you believe the New Testament description of life in the early church is a sufficient guide for dealing with all the challenges facing churches today? Why, or why not?

## **III. THE TIMELESSNESS OF TRUTH**

6. What essential aspect of the Christian life does a person miss out on by bouncing from church to church? See 1 Peter 5:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17.
7. What is every church member's responsibility in dealing with conflict in the church? See Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 3:12-14.

## **IV. THE LEGITIMACY OF LEAVING**

8. List and explain the various reasons you consider appropriate for leaving a church.

## **V. THE GOAL OF MATURITY**

9. What is the most tragic thing that can happen to Christians in a local church? See 1 Corinthians 3:1-2.
10. If a person is attracted to a church only because of the preacher, what does he fail to understand? See 1 Corinthians 3:3-5.