

Confessions of a former Mark Driscoll fan

(Source: “Confessions of a Heretic Husband” website)



I used to be a Mark Driscoll fan. There, I said it.

In my defense, he wasn't always crazy. I've never read any of his books, but the titles of his earlier works don't seem too bad. Pretty typical stuff that most Evangelicals would be comfortable with.

My wife (who is a staunch feminist) used to listen to his sermons quite a bit, and I would as well. We didn't care for his sermons on women submitting, but hey, we didn't like the sermons on submission at our church either. What can you do? The rest of his stuff seemed OK.

Oh, and there was the talk of his encounters with demons as well. Well, most people who've been Christian long enough have one of those stories. One of the pastors at our former church had one, as did at least one close friend of ours.

In fact, the head pastor at our former church was quite a Mark Driscoll fan. He thought he was one of the best young preachers around and was the bees knees when it came to preaching God's truth. This was a couple years ago, I don't know if he's changed his mind.

In retrospect, that should have been a warning bell about our pastor rather than a ringing endorsement of Driscoll.

I drifted away from Driscoll when he started on his macho man Cage Fighting Jesus schtick. I've never been a traditional "macho man". When our church held men's retreats my friends and I would be in the basement playing Settlers Of Catan while other guys went on hikes and played basketball.

Then in 2010, Driscoll published a book called *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*. I had not yet donned the mantle of Heretic Husband at this point. My wife and I were still going to the same church, and no [bombshells about the pastors there](#) or [about her father](#) had been revealed yet.

When I saw the title of the book, I said "Huh, I thought that's what the Bible was for." Driscoll had clearly gone off the deep end, I thought.

Two years have passed, and it seems like a lifetime ago. Driscoll says something crazier each month, it seems. Blogs have been started by people who have survived his church. Words like "cult" and "spiritual abuse" are thrown around more and more when people talk about him.

I keep using the word "crazy". Mark Driscoll, is, of course, as sane as you or I. I'm sure he loves his wife and children the same that I or anyone else does. You can't even say his beliefs are crazy - he's certainly not the only person that holds them. Plenty of other Christians believe they have had encounters with supernatural powers. Plenty of other Christians think women should submit to their husbands.

Mark Driscoll isn't crazy. He's simply living proof that a little belief can be a dangerous thing.

A while ago a sermon was given at our former church in which the youth pastor described a youth event in which teenagers hung bible verses on the wall. One of them had invited a friend who wasn't a Christian. This fellow heretic looked at what was going on and said, "Wow, you guys really believe this stuff." (this was delivered as a compliment, not a sarcastic comment.)

I don't remember the rest of the sermon, but looking back on this anecdote, I find myself shaking my head. People believe stuff. So

what? Believing in something is, in itself, no great thing. Everyone believes in something. Even if it's just the physical universe around them.

What distinguishes one belief from another is the actions that they bring about. Does your belief make you build people up, or tear them down? Save them, or kill them? Love them or hate them?

Of course, Mark Driscoll would say that his beliefs build people up, save them, and fill him with love. And I'm sure that Mark Driscoll's church has done lots of good things for the community and the world at large.

In fact, any belief could probably be said to have good effects and bad. So, then, what's my point?

My point is not about where Mark Driscoll is (though that's disturbing in itself), it's about where he's going.

There's an expression in the United States (possibly other places as well, I have no idea) called "drinking the Kool Aid".

This refers to Jim Jones, leader of a movement called the People's Temple. In 1978, 909 members of this movement committed suicide by drinking poisoned Kool-Aid. A monster, right?

In exhaustively researching Jim Jones for this post (*cough* Wikipedia *cough*) I found that Jim Jones was a staunch supporter of racial integration in the 1950's. He and his wife adopted "several children of at least partial non-Caucasian ancestry; he referred to the clan as his "rainbow family,"¹

This was no small thing in the 1950s. If Jones hadn't gone off the deep end he would probably be remembered fondly for these actions.

There were many other steps from racial integrationist to mass suicide. You can read about them if you're interested. I know I'm probably not the first person to draw a comparison between Driscoll and Jones, and I don't think we'll be reading about a mass suicide of Mars Hill members any time soon.

But let's look at what Mark Driscoll thinks about people who disagree with him:

"Here's what I've learned. You cast vision for your mission, and if people don't sign up, you move on. You move on. There are people that are gonna die in the wilderness, and there are people that are gonna take the hill. That's just how it is. Too many guys waste too much time trying to move stiff necked, stubborn, obstinate people. I am all about blessed subtraction. **There is a pile of dead bodies behind**

the Mars Hill bus (chuckle), and by God's grace, it'll be a mountain by the time we're done.... You either get on the bus, or you get run over by the bus. Those are the options."²

(Emphasis is my own.)

Driscoll's defenders would probably be quick to say that he isn't talking about REAL dead bodies. In conservative Christian circles, it's common to talk about non-Christians as "spiritually dead". Maybe this is what he was talking about. I don't know.

This is what I do know: There is indeed a pile of dead bodies behind the Mars Hill bus. It's a pile of people hurt by Mark Driscoll. People who have suffered spiritual abuse at his hands and the hands of others at his church. There's also a growing pile of crazy sounding books, tweets, and sermons.

I can hear the defenders now: "But what about all the GOOD he's doing!".

There are other people doing similar good things WITHOUT the spiritual abuse.

When the bad is in danger of outweighing the good, isn't it time to reevaluate?

References:

¹ Reiterman, Tim and John Jacobs. [*Raven: The Untold Story of Rev. Jim Jones and His People*](#). Dutton, 1982. [ISBN 0-525-24136-1](#). p. 65.

² [Link to article \(contains audio of Driscoll saying this\)](#)