

Truth-Seeking Together: Using Collaborative Scientific Inquiry as a Pastoral Tool for Congregational Harmony

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Abstract

This study presents a small-scale observational field demonstration based on sunrise observation and explores its potential as an accessible framework for collaborative truth-seeking. Congregational unity is a central biblical concern (Psalms 133:1; John 17:20-23). Churches face competing truth claims and conspiracy-based beliefs that may undermine trust, weaken fellowship, and expose vulnerable congregants to harmful misinformation. This study proposes that collaborative scientific inquiry may function as a practical pastoral tool for promoting truth-seeking, epistemic humility, and congregational harmony. No human participants took part in the demonstration. Two synchronised video cameras, separated vertically by 990 mm, recorded sunrise from Beachy Head, United Kingdom. Frame-by-frame analysis determined whether measurable differences in sunrise detection occurred between observation points and whether the observations matched established geometric expectations. The findings demonstrated an 84-frame difference between the two cameras, equivalent to 1.40 seconds at 60 frames per second. Despite methodological limitations, results were consistent with predicted effects of Earth curvature and rotation. The study concludes that simple, reproducible observational science may provide a constructive and non-confrontational context in which Christians investigate disputed claims together. Such activities could facilitate reflection, respectful dialogue, and shared truth discovery whilst supporting the biblical pursuit of unity (Ephesians 4:1-6; Ephesians 4:15-16, Proverbs 27:17, Philippians 2:1-4). Church leaders are encouraged to integrate collaborative experiential-learning approaches into discipleship and pastoral practice. This study is fundamental as it reveals that future research should evaluate their effectiveness in reducing conspiratorial thinking and strengthening congregational harmony.

Key terms: Collaborative scientific inquiry, congregational unity, conspiracism, pastoral practice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study presents a small-scale observational field demonstration based on sunrise observation and explores its potential as an accessible framework for collaborative truth-seeking. Conspiracy-based beliefs present an increasing pastoral challenge in some Christian congregations. They can foster suspicion, undermine trust, expose people to misinformation, and divide the church. This last issue is particularly significant because church unity is a central biblical priority. Psalm 133:1 presents brethren dwelling together in unity as both pleasing to God and a source of divine blessing, while Jesus prayed that His disciples would be one as a testimony to the world (John 17:20-23). The New Testament repeatedly exhorts believers to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3) and to avoid divisive attitudes that threaten Christian fellowship (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10). Conspiracy beliefs may leave individuals vulnerable to misinformation, including health-related subjects that have the potential to cause harm and even contribute to avoidable morbidity or mortality. Church leaders face a substantial pastoral challenge: how can they uphold truth (1 Timothy 3:15, 2 Timothy 1:13-14, Titus 1:9), protect vulnerable congregants (James 1:27, Isaiah 1:17, Romans 15:1), and preserve Christian unity (Ephesians 4:3-6, John 17:20-23, 1 Corinthians 1:10) whilst engaging compassionately with those who hold conspiratorial beliefs?

Defining key terms will help clarify their meaning as operationalised in the study. **Presuppositions** are beliefs not scientifically verifiable and concern reality, knowledge, and conduct (DeMar, 2007). A **worldview** is a network of presuppositions through which humans interpret experience (DeMar, 2007). **Conspiracism** is a worldview that interprets major events as covert actions by powerful groups, often against the public good. It differs from investigating specific conspiracies by functioning as a broader epistemological stance characterised by heightened suspicion of official explanations, institutions, experts, and recognised authorities. (Dagnall et al., 2015; Baća, 2024). **Congregational harmony** refers to the relational unity, trust, peace, and shared purpose that characterise healthy Christian fellowship, grounded in biblical teaching on the unity of believers (Psalms 133:1; John 17:20-23; Ephesians 4:3). It encompasses both doctrinal agreement on essentials and loving relationships despite secondary differences. **Collaborative scientific inquiry** is the shared investigation of a question through observation, measurement, discussion, and reflection. Experiential learning is an educational process in which understanding develops through concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptual interpretation, and practical application. Experiential learning involves using direct observational experience to encourage critical reflection on truth claims and belief formation. **Truth actualisation** is the process by which propositional knowledge becomes personally recognised, experienced, and integrated into an individual's understanding of reality. It describes the movement from merely hearing a claim to directly engaging with evidence and reflecting on its significance. **Vulnerable congregants** are individuals whose decision-making may be influenced by misinformation, social isolation, distrust of legitimate expertise, or difficulty in critically evaluating competing truth claims. The term is pastoral, not pejorative, and implies no intellectual deficiency.

On the other hand, **epistemic humility** is the acknowledgement of one's limited knowledge and the readiness to revise beliefs in response to evidence, reason, wise counsel, and theological reflection. **Citizen science** denotes the involvement of non-professional researchers in scientific investigation through observation, data collection, and analysis using accessible methods and equipment. **Geodesy** is the scientific discipline concerned with measuring and understanding the Earth's shape, size, gravitational field,

and spatial orientation. The **dip angle of the horizon** is the angle between an observer's horizontal eye-level line and the visible horizon, influenced by the observer's elevation and Earth's curvature. **The Coriolis** effect is an apparent deflection of moving objects relative to the Earth's surface caused by the planet's rotation, influencing large-scale atmospheric and oceanic circulation patterns. **Christian epistemology** examines the nature, sources, and justification of knowledge from a Christian perspective, integrating divine revelation, Scripture, reason, and experience. Educationally, the study draws upon principles of **pedagogy**, understood broadly as the theory and practice of teaching and learning. It pays particular attention to **metacognitive** processes, in which learners reflect on and regulate their thinking, understanding, and learning strategies. In contrast, **didactic instruction** refers to a teacher-centred approach to education that emphasises direct explanation, knowledge transmission, and structured guidance.

Previous research has examined conspiracy beliefs as a social and psychological phenomenon, linking them to mistrust of authority and heightened susceptibility to misinformation (Pierre, 2020). Studies have likewise explored epistemic humility, scientific literacy, and critical thinking as potential responses to misinformation (Allard & Clavien, 2024). Scholars have discussed the pastoral challenges posed by misinformation, highlighting the importance of truth-seeking when subordinate to love (Carson, 2012; Hybels et al., 1989). While Osmer (2019) shows how his scientific toolkit can enrich practical theological education, a notable gap remains in using collaborative observational science as a pastoral intervention for congregants who hold conspiracy-based beliefs. This study addresses that gap.

Conspiracism raises epistemological and authority challenges. Pastors may encounter members whose Flat Earth beliefs conflict with the widely accepted understanding of an oblate spherical Earth in a heliocentric solar system. Such situations pose pastoral challenges beyond questions of biblical accuracy and interpretation. Correcting perceived errors may seem dismissive or authoritarian, while avoiding the issue can permit tension and mistrust to develop within the congregation. This study proposes that carefully designed observational science can serve as a constructive pastoral tool, enabling believers to investigate claims collaboratively and fostering truth actualisation, mutual respect, and congregational harmony.

The Christian community widely accepts the Earth's shape as an oblate spheroid, a conclusion supported by extensive empirical evidence. Nevertheless, acceptance of scientific knowledge depends not only on the evidence itself but also on how individuals encounter, interpret, and appropriate truth. Many within the Flat Earth community are well-meaning Christians who struggle with authority and identity (Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson, 2023), rendering appeals to authority largely ineffective. Firsthand experience may help address this challenge. Engaging as a fellowship in exploring, testing, and verifying claims through observable, repeatable investigation may help members appropriate the truth, which has the power to free them from bondage (John 8:31-32, 2 Corinthians 3:17, 2 Timothy 2:25-26).

This small-scale observational field demonstration was designed with this principle in mind. Rather than relying on complex instrumentation or indirect reasoning, it employs a straightforward observational method to investigate a measurable consequence of large-scale geometry. Using two vertically separated cameras to record sunrise timing, the experiment seeks to detect small but observable differences consistent with geometric expectations. The methodology is intentionally simple and reproducible, requiring only readily available equipment and a suitable observation site. It functions not only as a

measurement exercise but also as an example of citizen science, enabling individuals to engage directly with empirical observations, evaluate the results together, and reach a shared conclusion.

This study aims to determine whether measurable differences in sunrise-detection timing occur between vertically separated observation points using a simple dual-camera system, and whether these differences align with the expected geometric effects of Earth's curvature. The upper camera will detect the first visible appearance of the Sun before the lower camera, following a consistent top-camera-to-bottom-camera pattern. For adjacent cameras separated by approximately one metre, the expected temporal difference is on the order of seconds, with a delay of 1 to 2 seconds under typical conditions. At a recording rate of 60 frames per second, this corresponds to a measurable difference of approximately 60 to 120 frames between adjacent cameras.

This study proposes that collaborative scientific inquiry may serve as a practical pastoral tool for addressing conspiracy-based beliefs. Grounded in biblical principles of truth, humility, and unity, it argues that shared observational experiences can foster constructive dialogue and reduce conflict and mistrust. The study reviews relevant literature, including pastoral responses to congregational tension, Christian epistemology, experiential learning, and the relationship between identity and belief formation. It describes a simple observational study investigating a measurable consequence of Earth's geometry using a dual-camera sunrise experiment. The authors present and discuss the findings in relation to their scientific and pastoral significance. Finally, the study considers implications for church leadership, proposing that experiential, collaborative engagement with evidence may promote truth-seeking, protect vulnerable congregants, and strengthen congregational harmony.

In conclusion, this study presents an observational field demonstration and explores the potential value of collaborative scientific inquiry as a pastoral tool for addressing conspiracy-based beliefs in church communities.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study relies on Earth's large-scale oblate spheroidal geometry, particularly the relationship between observer elevation and horizon geometry. As observer height increases, the visible horizon recedes, and the dip angle increases, allowing elevated observers to witness sunrise slightly earlier than those at lower elevations. Direct discussion of Earth's spheroidal geometry is relatively uncommon in contemporary literature as it is generally regarded as established. Nevertheless, assumptions concerning global Earth geometry remain fundamental to a range of disciplines. Geodesy employs reference ellipsoids for coordinate definition and mapping (Kiamehr & Eshagh, 2008; Meyer et al., 2025; Ruffhead, 2022; Yazid et al., 2019); satellite navigation systems calculate position relative to Earth-centred ellipsoidal models (Ehigiator, 2018; Eteje et al., 2018; Januszewski, 2011; Yousef & Jasim, 2019); surveying practice incorporates curvature corrections when measurements extend beyond local planar approximations (Audu & Tijjani, 2017; Bagherbandi et al., 2023); and sunrise, sunset, and horizon calculations explicitly depend upon the geometry of the Earth's surface (Dubath & Alice Gasparini, 2026; Patat, 2011). Large-scale treatments of the Coriolis effect in atmospheric science and long-range ballistics assume a rotating spherical or spheroidal Earth (Anh et al., 2018; Baranowski et al., 2020). The routine use of these geometric assumptions across independent fields provides indirect but powerful evidence of their continuing scientific validity. However, this is not the primary focus of this study. The following sections examine the

central object: experiential learning offers an opportunity to support vulnerable members of our congregations. The study draws on four intersecting areas of scholarship: pastoral responses to congregational conflict, Christian approaches to truth and epistemic humility, experiential learning, and the relationship between identity and belief formation.

Scripture and pastoral literature affirm that ignoring conflict is inappropriate (Burns et al., 2013). Wisdom from above is characterised by purity, peace, gentleness, and mercy, and is non-judgemental (James 3:17–18, Galatians 5:22–23) and pastors should pursue peace as far as it depends on them (Romans 12:18, Hebrews 12:14, Romans 14:19). Pastoral leadership should embody servant hearted humility (1 Peter 5:1–4, Matthew 20:25–28, Mark 10:42–45, Philippians 2:3–8) and should prioritise what strengthens peace and unity (Romans 14:19, Hebrews 12:14, Ephesians 4:11–13). Consistent with these principles, empathetic and respectful engagement can facilitate individual and congregational growth (Dudley, 2010), while delegation may be appropriate when conflict threatens core pastoral responsibilities (Acts 6:1–7). Although this study is directed towards pastors, a capable deacon may be the most appropriate member of the leadership team to facilitate this work. Skilled conflict resolution involves listening neutrally, negotiating win-win outcomes, compromising on non-essentials, and unifying around a shared vision (Lattea, 1999). Earth's shape may seem non-essential, but Scripture does not explicitly describe it (Got Questions Ministries, 2021). However, conspiracism introduces deeper concerns as it undermines trust in experts and authorities (Baća, 2024) or 'conspiracist delegitimizing', the central theme of Robinson & Watson (2026). Kabakci et al. (2025), examining trust in science, similarly find that conspiracy beliefs correlate with diminished trust in experts and public institutions. This erosion of trust can have serious consequences; in the authors' recent experience, a congregant ignored sound advice regarding general healthcare and hydration during a heatwave, with fatal outcomes (Lyons et al., 2024).

Thus, the authors assert that a loving, collaborative intervention is appropriate and biblical. The next section investigates Christian approaches to truth and epistemic humility. In approaching the question of how Christians discern the truth, the authors have previously demonstrated epistemological tools (Sinclair & Sinclair, 2025) placing Scripture as the supreme authority (2 Timothy 3:16–17; Psalms 119:160; John 17:17; Proverbs 30:5). Dogma, the Church's official teaching, is only valid when corrected and substantiated by Scripture (2 Thessalians 2:15). Reason, the third layer, is useful but must remain submitted to the Lord (Proverbs 3:5–6). When aligned with Scripture, dogma, and reason, experience serves as a meaningful witness to truth (1 John 1:1–3). This is not the only approach to Christian epistemology, however. Outler's "the Wesleyan quadrilateral" is widely recognised within evangelical and ecumenical circles (Bloesch, 2005). Wesley emphasised Scripture's primacy and considered tradition, reason, and experience important factors for interpreting doctrine or resolving questions beyond explicit scriptural guidance (Noble, 2016). The present study limits itself to traditions that maintain Scripture's material and formal sufficiency as the final norm of theological truth. Alternative Christian models which appeal to ecclesial authority, religious experience, historical consciousness, or other sources as co-ordinate authorities are not considered because they rest on fundamentally different epistemological assumptions about the locus of divine revelation. This brief review shows that when Scripture and dogma offer little guidance, reason and experience become essential tools for uncovering truth.

Epistemic humility involves recognising the limits of one's knowledge and fallibility, and remaining receptive to alternative perspectives, thereby fostering inquiry, dialogue, and the pursuit of truth. This

posture is fundamentally scriptural. Human understanding is partial and indirect, constrained by finite perspective (1 Corinthians 13:12; Isaiah 55:8-9; Job 26:14; Romans 11:33-34). Christians are cautioned against relying on personal judgment and are instructed to submit their interpretations to God (Proverbs 3:5-7, 2 Peter 1:20-21). Humility in seeking truth is expressed through attentive listening before speaking, fostering understanding (James 1:19, Proverbs 18:13, Proverbs 12:15), openness to counsel, which separates the wise from the self-deceived (Proverbs 12:15, Proverbs 26:12), and collaborative decision-making. In contrast, individuality is more likely to fail (Proverbs 15:22). Intellectual growth occurs through engagement with others, as sharpening requires friction (Proverbs 27:17). True wisdom is demonstrated through humble conduct. It produces gentleness, mercy, and sincerity (James 3:13-17).

Comparable themes appear in contemporary literature on intellectual humility. Snow's (2022) account of intellectual humility aligns closely with the definition adopted in this study, particularly in its emphasis on recognising intellectual limitations and engaging constructively with alternative perspectives. Snow distinguishes open-mindedness from intellectual humility, whereas this study treats openness to others' views as integral to epistemic humility. Pritchard's (2021) account likewise emphasises human fallibility, respectful engagement, and willingness to reconsider one's beliefs. However, his focus lies primarily on interpersonal dispositions associated with intellectual humility. At the same time, the present study places greater weight on recognising the limits of one's knowledge as a foundational component of epistemic humility.

The next section will briefly review the pedagogical foundation of experiential learning to investigate whether experiencing the truth is a helpful strategy. Experiential learning is a well-established educational method that recognises the importance of experience in forming and reassessing understanding (Shuell, 1990). Yet experience alone is insufficient. Reflection is generally regarded as the mechanism by which people critically examine observations and integrate them into existing knowledge structures (Dillard et al., 2024; Peabody & Turesky, 2018). The experiential strategy proposed in this study, applied to conspiracism, is novel, though tangential evidence suggests it may be beneficial. Conspiracy beliefs can form a self-reinforcing worldview, in which new claims are readily incorporated if they appear consistent with existing beliefs (Dagnall et al., 2015). This suggests that approaches that engage learners in reflective, metacognitive scrutiny of evidence may be more effective than didactic instruction (Gagliardi, 2025). Although this is not a comprehensive review of the subject, it is hoped that it underscores that the experiential learning strategy of experience, reflection and application is a promising means of opening constructive dialogue. The final section of this literature review considers the relationship between worldview, identity, and belief formation.

Arsaliev (2021) emphasises the profound connection between worldview and personal identity. He defines "personality identity" as an integrative construct comprising beliefs, values, ideals, principles, and personal meanings that shape behaviour and life direction. This suggests that worldview functions not merely as a collection of beliefs but is a core dimension of identity. Flores's (2025) central thesis is that individuals protect key aspects of their identity through what she terms identity-protective reasoning. Although situated primarily within political epistemology, the underlying principle aligns closely with the present study's argument that people are motivated to preserve identity and, consequently, worldview commitments. Flores (2025) identifies several mechanisms such as heightened scrutiny of disconfirming evidence, selective search for supporting evidence, construction of alternative explanations for unwelcome

findings, persistence in existing beliefs despite counterevidence, and increased polarisation rather than belief revision that help explain how deeply held worldview commitments may be maintained despite intellectual challenge. Gottlieb et al. (2023) offer an important counterpoint. Their study of collaborative fact-checking found that individuals frequently revised initial credibility judgments after investigation and discussion with culturally diverse peers. Identity influenced both the decision to investigate and the standards used to evaluate evidence, yet it did not prevent belief revision. Their findings suggest that deeply held beliefs, though resistant to change, may shift through reflection, evidence gathering, and engagement with alternative viewpoints. Collectively, these studies indicate that identity exerts a conservative influence on belief formation, but deliberate critical inquiry and exposure to new evidence can moderate it. This literature review suggests, therefore, that pastors should respond to conspiracism with positivity and humility. Applying an experiential learning paradigm, alongside the methodology described in this study, may help reduce conspiracism and serve this vulnerable community.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This small-scale observational field study compared observed differences in sunrise timing between vertically separated cameras with predictions from a spherical Earth model. Data were collected at Beachy Head, United Kingdom (50.743079°N, 0.263827°E), using two identical USB cameras mounted 990 mm apart on a rigid vertical frame. Both cameras were connected to a single laptop and recorded simultaneously in OBS Studio (OBS Studio Contributors, 2023) at 60 frames per second, commencing before sunrise and continuing until the solar disc was clearly visible above the horizon.

We divided the video footage into individual frames using FFmpeg (FFmpeg developers, 2026) and examined them in Adobe Lightroom Classic (Adobe Inc., 2026). For each camera region, we measured the solar limb size in the upper camera, then reviewed subsequent frames until the lower camera showed a matching limb size. We calculated temporal offsets by converting frame differences to seconds using the known recording rate (60 fps). We compared observed results with predictions from a simple geometric model developed in R (R Core Team, 2026). The model used Earth's rotation rate (360° per 24 hours) and differences in dip angle (see Figure 1) between the camera positions to generate predicted temporal offsets. Atmospheric refraction and distant obstructions were not included.

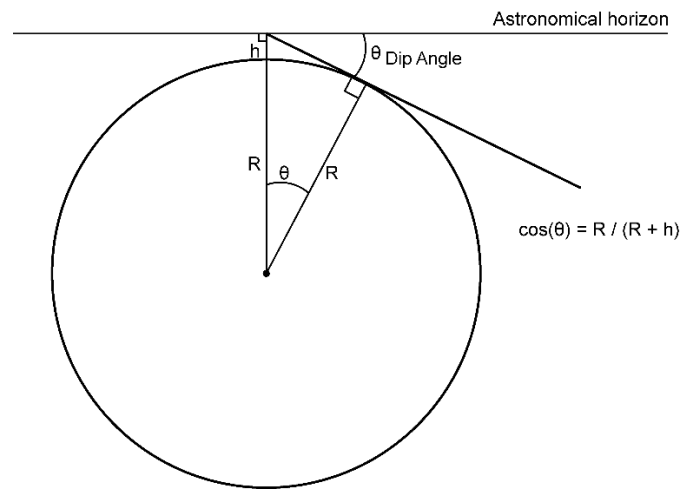


Figure 1 Diagrammatic Explanation of the Dip Angle Calculation: R (radius of equivalent sphere used: 6,371,221 m (Weigert & Zimmermann, 1971)) is the radius of the Earth, h is the camera height, and θ is the dip angle of the horizon.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysed video sequence was examined to determine the temporal offset between sunrise appearances in the upper and lower camera fields. The observed values were then compared with predictions generated by the spherical Earth geometric model.



Figure 2: Frame 9940 - Sunrise Beachy Head 8/7/2026 4:59



Figure 3: Frame 10024 Beachy Head 4:59

The cameras were vertically separated by 0.99 m. There were 84 frames between Figures 2 and 3, which, at 60 fps, corresponds to a temporal offset of 1.40 s. Using the spherical Earth geometric model, this temporal offset predicts an observation height of approximately 8 m above sea level. The actual observation height was approximately 50 m above sea level. The model is deliberately simple and does not account for atmospheric light-bending effects, which may contribute to the discrepancy between the predicted and actual heights.

Discussion

Although the findings are neither unexpected nor controversial, as they support the hypothesis, they nevertheless possess evidential value. Flat Earth belief is not a single, unified model but rather a collection of diverse and often competing explanations. Despite these differences, no coherent Flat Earth framework appears to predict a measurable change in the Sun's apparent position arising solely from a vertical change in observer height, as it considers only horizontal distance (Flat Earth Society, 2022).

Beyond its physical implications, the observation is relevant to the wider themes explored in the literature. The exercise exemplifies experiential learning by inviting participants to evaluate a natural phenomenon through direct observation rather than relying solely on secondary sources or appeals to authority. Such experiences may encourage epistemic humility by revealing both the strengths and limitations of personal observation and by creating opportunities to re-examine beliefs in light of empirical evidence. This may be particularly relevant where beliefs are closely linked to personal or group identity, as studies of conspiratorial worldviews often report. Rather than seeking to ridicule or confront individuals, observational activities of this kind provide a potentially constructive framework for exploring evidence while preserving personal agency and dignity.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, atmospheric effects such as refraction and scattering may influence the apparent timing of sunrise, introducing variability independent

of geometric considerations. The present study does not control for these effects. Second, although we made efforts to rigidly stabilise the camera system, residual mechanical vibration or micro-movement from wind may introduce small alignment or timing errors, particularly given the height of the camera mast. Third, using consumer-grade USB cameras introduces potential variability in sensor response, latency, and synchronisation. Wide-angle lenses limited the size of the sun limb observations, which reduced accuracy. Although simultaneous recording minimised timing discrepancies, hardware-level synchronisation was unavailable.

Fourth, the selected site, Beachy Head in England, featured 17 km of open sea, which would be sufficient if observations occurred at sea level. The practical horizon extends to 3.5 km at 1 metre altitude, 5 km at 2 metres, and 6.2 km at 3 metres. However, the path to the beach was inaccessible, so I chose a secondary spot at 50 metres elevation instead. This was a protocol breach, as Bexhill-on-Sea is visible within the frame. Finally, the study is based on a limited number of observations at a single location and time point. As such, the results should be interpreted as exploratory and would benefit from replication under varied environmental conditions.

Future iterations of this experiment could enhance methodological robustness and broaden the scope of analysis. Repeating measurements across multiple days and under varying environmental conditions would allow assessment of variability and reproducibility. Incorporating environmental data (e.g., temperature, humidity, atmospheric pressure) may help account for atmospheric effects. Improvements in instrumentation, such as hardware-synchronised cameras or higher-frame-rate acquisition, would enhance temporal precision. Increasing the number of vertical sampling points could also enable more detailed modelling of the relationship between height and sunrise timing. Finally, this approach may be extended into an educational or citizen science tool, providing a simple, accessible demonstration of observational measurement principles and large-scale physical phenomena.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: This study demonstrated that sunrise was detected earlier from a higher observation point than from a lower observation point separated by approximately 990 mm. The two cameras showed a temporal difference of 84 frames (1.40 seconds at 60 fps). Although the experiment was exploratory and subject to several methodological limitations, the findings were consistent with the geometric expectations associated with Earth's curvature and rotation. More importantly, the study shows how simple, replicable observational science can serve as a collaborative truth-seeking activity within Christian communities. Rather than relying solely on appeals to authority or confrontation, participants can engage directly with observable evidence, creating opportunities for reflection, discussion, and shared discovery. Such an approach aligns with biblical principles of humility, truth-seeking, and the pursuit of unity (Psalms 133:1, Ephesians 4:3, James 3:17-18). The authors do not suggest that a single experiment will resolve deeply held beliefs or worldview commitments.

Nevertheless, engaging with evidence experientially may provide a constructive, non-threatening context for difficult conversations. In this way, collaborative scientific inquiry may serve as a practical pastoral tool that encourages respectful dialogue, supports vulnerable congregants, promotes epistemic humility, and strengthens congregational harmony. Further research should investigate whether similar experiential

approaches can reduce conspiratorial thinking and improve trust, understanding, and unity within Christian communities.

Recommendations: Church leaders should pursue truth and unity together rather than treating them as competing priorities. Scripture calls believers to speak "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) whilst making every effort to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). Where conspiracy-based beliefs create division, pastors should seek responses that preserve both doctrinal integrity and Christian fellowship, reflecting Christ's prayer that His people would be one (John 17:20-23). Pastoral engagement should prioritise gentleness, patience, and careful listening. Believers are instructed to be "quick to hear, slow to speak" (James 1:19) and to restore those in error with gentleness (Galatians 6:1). Accordingly, pastors should avoid ridicule or unnecessary confrontation and instead create safe opportunities for respectful dialogue and shared investigation.

Churches should encourage Christians to develop biblical habits of truth-seeking and discernment. Scripture commands believers to "test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) and commends the Bereans for carefully examining claims against available evidence (Acts 17:11). Collaborative observational activities may offer a practical way for congregants to exercise these principles. Church leaders should actively protect vulnerable members from harmful misinformation. Shepherds are entrusted with caring for God's flock (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2-3). Where misinformation places individuals at risk of physical, emotional, or relational harm, pastoral intervention should be undertaken compassionately, prudently, and in a spirit of service. Congregations should cultivate epistemic humility as a Christian virtue. Christians "know in part" (1 Corinthians 13:12) and are warned against leaning solely upon their own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-7). A posture of humility, teachability, and openness to correction should therefore characterise discussions concerning disputed claims and controversial topics.

Finally, future research should investigate whether collaborative truth-seeking activities contribute to congregational flourishing. Such studies may help determine whether experiential approaches strengthen trust, reduce unnecessary conflict, and promote the peace, unity, and mutual edification that Scripture associates with healthy Christian community (Psalms 133:1; Romans 14:19; Colossians 3:14-15).

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