

**General Topics :: The Refiners fire is coming.**

**The Refiners fire is coming., on: 2017/12/31 15:07**

"Speaking at the Chinese Missions Convention in Ontario, Canada, on Wednesday, Chan lamented the fact that churches do not understand the power that God has given each believer, and instead keep them in "cages" where the only way they can survive is if someone feeds them. These cages include the children's ministry cage, youth ministry cage, singles cage, and married couples cage, he noted. "Let's just put everyone in their cages and let's just feed them every week and our whole job is to just keep feeding you, feeding you, and feeding you when the reality is you were made for something more," Chan emphasized."

Francis Chan has identified the very essence and elemental weakness of what we call our church system. Perhaps it is why he felt the need to leave his own well established church that had thousands in the pews every week and was successful in every measurable way, at least by the way our system of church is measured. Yet surely he was dying spiritually while most pastors are striving for what he had and what he has now given up? It is like the illusion of wealth and the American dream. No matter how many voices speak out about the fact that money does not bring you happiness and contentment, still the vast majority seek it out. Suicides, for the most part, are undertaken by the wealthy not the poor. The poor has the illusion to work towards yet the rich man now knows how empty his life was and still is, for no amount of money can fill a whole in your spirit. And so pastors all over the world strive to have what Chan had, not understanding the fundamental truth of their calling. Their calling is not to contain the Body of Christ in cages as alluded to by Chan, but their calling is to enable them and to empower them and edify them so as they may operate to the fullness in their own gifting.

Now how can we open those cages and let the Christian loose? We have to allow the gifts of the Spirit to operate in our midst just as they did in 1st Cor 14. Read that chapter and ask yourself why your church does not operate in such a way? What has changed? Does not the Word of God remain unchanged in an ever-changing world? Will not all the world pass away and the heavens above but still the Word of God shall remain. Did not Jesus Himself say that the Word is never broken? If it is never broken then why do we not worship as they did in 1 Cor 14? Why is there not two or three tongues? Why is there not two or three songs and spiritual songs? Why no interpretation of those tongues? Why is there not two or three prophecies or words of exhortation? You see saints, this is the cage that we have put most of the Royal priests in. You can clean the toilets and volunteer to look after the children but God forbid that He should speak through you from the front or, horror of horrors, from the platform.

Will God be contained? Will He continue forever to allow His Word to be chained and caged by the power structures of men? The power structures of men take solace in the fact that their system has been in place for centuries. We Protestants scoff at Catholic tradition and say how dare they put as much emphasis on tradition as they do on Scripture? They cry "Sola Scriptura," while all the while worshiping their own traditions as much as any Catholic ever did. How do we remove the chains from a people who cannot see their chains? How can we speak of true freedom while most of our brothers and sisters are caged and fed and have grown to like it that way? How can we restore the preeminence of Jesus in our gatherings?

Jesus wept over Jerusalem because He could see that in just a few short decades everything they knew, all of their traditions and means of worship would be torn down, stone by stone and nothing would be left. Nothing but Jesus. We will never know how much Jesus means to us until Jesus is all that we have, then we will know. The times are at hand brothers and sisters when God will allow every stone to be torn down of the structures we call the Church. The Church will remain for not even the gates of Hell can destroy us, but our system of worship shall be swept away by the storms of persecution. A tsunami of enormous proportions is headed towards us. When the waters begin to recede, know that destruction is at the door. This persecution will not destroy us, it shall refine us. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness (Mal 3:3)

**Re: The Refiners fire is coming., on: 2017/12/31 16:21**

YouTube message below where brother Francis Chan speaks of his experiences with the persecuted Church. Very challenging message. Our persecuted brethren have a different paradigm then we as believers in America do.

<https://youtu.be/BI494qbQJpM>

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/12/31 18:29**

The average, well meaning, and even devout Christian in America has no idea of what Chan speaketh because they have never seen it nor do they have any understanding of how a church could function without the ministry cages he describes.

The only way they will ever understand is if someone shows them in detail how a "cageless" church would function and look like.

It does no good to point out problems without at the same time proposing or explaining the solution IN DETAIL. I am not saying Chan is doing this, but you can't just tell American Christians their method of church stinks without demonstrating a compelling alternative.

**Re: , on: 2017/12/31 19:00**

Not sure if you are talking about the piece that I wrote or the youtube that Blaine put up Todd, but in my piece I present the details of how a cageless church functions, its called Scripture, everything we need to know is right there. Traditions are all well and good, but when the bars of the cage are constructed by traditions then the traditions have to go.....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2017/12/31 20:05**

I am not saying Chan is doing this, but you can't just tell American Christians their method of church stinks without demonstrating a compelling alternative.

A good alternative would be the persecuted church itself. I believe that it functions quite nicely without cages. But then for that matter it would have to function without cages as they have a radical dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Simply my thoughts.

Bro Blaine

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/12/31 20:08**

I know you described it Frank but 99.99999999 % of Christians will not see your post.

The church for the most part thinks it is just fine and does not know what it is missing. How is it going to be shown what it is missing?

**Re: , on: 2017/12/31 20:48**

You will have to ask God about that Todd :) But thanks for the observation that so little will read the things I write :) .....bro Frank

**Re: The Refiners fire is coming. - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/12/31 21:36**

Brother Frank,

I agree with what you and pastor Chan have exposed. There is so much available to us that we leave on the table, all too content to be poor towards the Lord.

There are so many aspects of the life of faith tied to the central point of the resurrection... while the cross is clearly indispensable to our faith, without the resurrection there is no real hope for the believer.

Just today at church it occurred to me that this is the message that got the apostles and early church persecuted... that Christ is risen and we all will too and be judged for the deeds done in the body. There is an inherent and healthy fear in his message that somehow has gotten downplayed in an (well intended) attempt to carry out the great commission without true discipleship, and instead of discipleship we created "cages" of service which at best slows the process of discipleship and creates an inclusive community of reformed yet unregenerate peoples. What occurred to me today was a lack of understanding especially of Holy Spirit's role/function in the life of the believer-

3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

What Paul wrote about here in Timothy is clearly observed in Acts 13:2 And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Holy Spirit is our CO or enlisting officer and yet we're not seeking to please Him but rather seeking to please men and (for me) therein lies the problem. There is no fear in failing men and no faith they can empower us....

**Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2017/12/31 22:42**

I like what Blaine posts on the persecuted church. When it comes to the church in America it is really hard to compare. I do believe that when the time comes God in His fore knowledge will have The American church ready.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2018/1/1 9:15**

Quote:  
----- And so pastors all over the world strive to have what Chan had, not understanding the fundamental truth of their calling. Their calling is not to contain the Body of Christ in cages as alluded to by Chan, but their calling is to enable them and to empower them and edify them so as they may operate to the fullness in their own gifting.  
-----

I would think some pastors and biblical elders actually are doing what Ephesians 4:1-5 says to equip others for the work of ministry. It is easy to paint the picture of everything wrong but much harder to constructively start building the body of Christ in your own local area. This is where the actual rubber hits the road. Who have we led to the Lord this year, are we making disciples? Are we living a victorious Christian life? I put myself under this same examination and fail in many ways. I need reviving, it is not good enough to say the model is wrong, the model is not what our Lord is as interested in as surrendered vessels that He can have His way in.

It is God being present not 5 fold, 12 giftings, all speaking or one speaking. If the Lord is not present it is in vain.

Of course there are valid points to what Chan is sharing, there is a complacent system of putting people in cages (boxes) and making the work of God very tidy and all in place (controllable).

2 Timothy 2:2 speaks to our need to make spirit-filled disciples who also in turn make other disciples. This is as Watchman Nee calls the "Normal Christian Life".

**Re: , on: 2018/1/1 10:24**

Greg writes.....

"it is not good enough to say the model is wrong, the model is not what our Lord is as interested in as surrendered vessels that He can have His way in."

This statement displays a lack of discernment. Of course the Lord is deeply interested in how we gather. Why do you think there was correction for the Corinthians? There is a difference between our personal walk with the Lord and the church

orate gathering. Of course the Lord wants surrendered vessels, that goes without saying. Of course the Lord wants us to be sharing our faith with others and seeing people saved through that. Caged people do not share their faith. According to Barna, over 90% of professing Christians have never saw anyone come to a saving knowledge of Jesus through their personal sharing.

Greg you and I have disagreed many times over the years about " the system." Your position has changed many times. Back and forward, back and forward, like a wave tossed by the wind. Perhaps you should settle on a position brother, settle it in your mind. ....bro Frank

**Re: , on: 2018/1/1 11:37**

~~~~  
It is God being present not 5 fold, 12 giftings, all speaking or one speaking. If the Lord is not present it is in vain.  
~~~~

Greg on that I agree. Jesus says below,

~~~~  
Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst...Mat.18:19-20  
~~~~

Brother seems that what Jesus is saying that there must be agreement. And the agreement can be in as few as two or three people where Jesus is present in their midst.

That is why I believe the next revival will be grassroots and in small groups. It will not be owned by a large gathering or by well-known pastors. The next revival will simply be Jesus manifesting Himself in small anonymous groups of people and moving on behalf of their prayers. For this is what is happening in the persecuted church.

As ever brother these are simply my thoughts.

Blaine

**Re: The Refiners fire is coming. - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/1/1 12:02**

Quote:  
----- "Speaking at the Chinese Missions Convention in Ontario, Canada, on Wednesday, Chan lamented the fact that churches do not understand the power that God has given each believer, and instead keep them in "cages" where the only way they can survive is if someone feeds them. These cages include the children's ministry cage, youth ministry cage, singles cage, and married couples cage, he noted. "Let's just put everyone in their cages and let's just feed them every week and our whole job is to just keep feeding you, feeding you, and feeding you when the reality is you were made for something more," Chan emphasized."  
-----

Oh wow!! This is it. It is a very clear assessment of what is going on. So often the church needs crowds to continually feed and minister to in order to justify its existence and give it an identity. We have lost the concept of fathers, sons, and posterity. We have forgotten that our ultimate goal is to bring sons into maturity so that they can reproduce sons and bring them to maturity. Our job is not to help large groups of people survive until the next meeting. Our job is to raise them up and send them out and see them, hopefully, exceed us in every aspect of their spiritual lives. Thank you for this post.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/1 13:49**

Bro Travis writes.....

" We have forgotten that our ultimate goal is to bring sons into maturity so that they can reproduce sons and bring them to maturity. Our job is not to help large groups of people survive until the next meeting. Our job is to raise them up and send them out and see them, hopefully, exceed us in every aspect of their spiritual lives. Thank you for this post."

Amen brother. This of course will bring us into conflict with the keepers of the status quo. It seems there is nothing new under the sun.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/1/1 22:22**

I believe we have, by and large, lost sight of the essence of the gospel. Jesus came to restore that which was lost in the fall. It is not all about prayers for forgiveness of sins and a far-off place called heaven or hell. It is not about God helping us through our daily lives. It is about bringing sons into glory. It is about His image being restored in us. It is about us once again being partakers of the divine nature.

But we have made it about saying prayers to change our eternal destinations and about having God help us live the lives we want to live. Case in point are the testimonies I have heard about people using their faith to believe God for a parking spot up front at Walmart. Testimonies like these show just how little we understand the gospel sometimes.

When we have an incorrect view of the gospel, it leads naturally to an incorrect structure that we call the church. It leads to church growth strategies and man-made programs meant to meet the day to day needs of those we minister to. It causes the body to view the church as a place where we employ men and women to minister to us each week. The church takes on a self-serving consumer identity.

But if we have a correct understanding of the gospel we will, I believe, naturally assume the structure God always intended. Men who have this understanding will be seeking God with their whole hearts. They will be seeking total life transformation, growing in intimacy with God, and will be receiving revelation of the word from the throne of God as they daily commune with God through the Holy Spirit. They will naturally become fathers and will desire to raise sons and daughters into fathers and mothers.

In their individual, local bodies, these men will hear from God about direction for the body. They might very well establish classes or programs as the Lord leads, but the motivation and end result will be much different from what we so often see in the modern American church. The goal will be maturity (Eph. 4), raising men and women to the measure of the full stature of spiritual manhood, and the fruit will be men and women who look increasingly like Jesus and who walk in His power. These people will change their communities. They will walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and, far from needing weekly ministry, will instead be ministers themselves.

It is a totally different paradigm from what we so often see today, but it is possible, and happening all over the United States and the world where people are after God's heart.

**Re: brother Travis - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/1/1 23:25**

Yes Amen!

That's what I was attempting to articulate-

In Acts 13 they heard directly from Holy Spirit and if we are to walk in and keep step with the Spirit we have to hear directly from Him and obey.

Remember when Phillip, who was a very successful evangelist converting thousands, was told to go south and met with the Ethiopian eunuch... which seemed like an inequitable exchange as he was only one man, but today there are millions of Christians in Ethiopia all tracing their history back to this eunuch!

Now imagine if Phillip had the church structure being exposed in this thread and didn't hear directly from HS, being content with his local success and missing the Lord's will ?

We forget what the Lord can do with a surrendered vessel and instead employ man's marketing schemes:/

**Re: , on: 2018/1/2 9:44**

Great posts by Fletcher and Travis, I say amen to the points raised.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2018/1/2 11:53**

Greetings

I can second that amen to what Frank, Fletcher, and Travis have posted.

My own heart, it is incredibly difficult to have daily relationship with brothers and sisters in CHRIST when you only see them once/twice a week for a few hours? JESUS is all about relationship. HE IS ALIVE and wants to have an ongoing relationship with us daily!

How can anyone disciple another in just three hours a week? There are a 168 hours in a week and at most the average church goer spends 3 hours with other Christians...is that really enough time together to impact one another lives meaningfully?

On a side note, I do not comment so often any more Frank but you be sure to know that I read what GOD has for you to share here :)

God Bless  
mj

**Re: , on: 2018/1/2 12:24**

Thank you sister, I appreciate that and know that many on SI consider you to be a most gracious and discerning sister in Christ. I totally agree with your comments. The brothers and sisters I am most close to are the ones with whom I have labored in prayer with over the years. You can really hear the heart of a saint when you hear them pray, not just once but many many times, you can really tell what lies at the center of their hearts and this is an intimate thing.

Tragically, for almost all churches, prayer meetings are a thing of the past, the most neglected of all the meetings because prayer meetings lift up Jesus and we labor together in prayer. This does not fit well at all with the structure of most churches where the central focus is the sermon on the Sunday morning. The central focus of every single meeting should be the presence of God and the preeminence of Jesus. Whatever flows from that, whether it be preaching or a word of knowledge or a tongue or a prophecy/exhortation or a spiritual song, this should be the focus of the saints, being led by the Holy Spirit in all things. Unfortunately I believe that this is simply a bridge too far for most. Only when everything is stripped away and all we are left with is Jesus, shall we finally understand that Jesus is all that we need.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2018/1/4 16:40**

So you have better discernment?

Maybe you could have expressed yourself with a bit more respect for brother Greg.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/4 21:56**

"So you have better discernment?"

Yes, the Lord has spoken to me directly on this subject. I asked the brother to settle his mind on the issue for the reasons I stated.....bro Frank

**Re: The Refiners fire is coming. - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/1/4 23:00**

I do love Francis Chan's ministry of the word.

Francis is talking about a complete paradigm shift. Francis Chan has been speaking about this shift for years now. He was able to effect it in his own life as a change in platform ministry and responsibility. However the Church he turned over to his Elders does not contain this paradigm shift itself, it still has its various ministries etc.

There are a few things that stand out in your O.P.

1. This paradigm shift Francis is speaking of.
2. The paradigm shift you envision once it's made in a congregation
3. A persecution-driven sweeping away of public worship as we know it, reformulating and reinventing itself as it seeks to survive persecution.

It's important to consider all of us posting on this website are products of the very 'system' that is eventually to change or be removed. There is no one that is not directly effected by institutional Church or some loose gathering of saints. All of those saints that have been anywhere near a TV, radio, or American Christian gathering are fully entrenched in American thinking.

What this means is we are an admixture of Jesus teachings, our own understandings and what we believe Jesus will bring to the people of God in years to come ( If the Lord tarries).

If you are spiritually healthy, it cannot be assumed for a moment the 'system' in place which God used, has been entirely detrimental to your walk with God. In fact, it has been beneficial in numerous ways. God is able to orchestrate and guide our flawed and fleshly congregations, leaders and ourselves into maturity despite our fervent complaints about that very 'system'.

If you are spiritually diseased, it cannot be assumed for a moment the 'system' in place God has used has been the cause of all your perceived weakness and flaws. There are other factors.

Now, to be candid, I heartily agree that a change needs to happen, but what that looks like has not been solidified. So while you envision it in Ephesians 5 style others will envision it vastly different. I believe the Most High God will orchestrate a full paradigm shift. Persecution ( correct me if I am wrong) does not produce tradition-dropping, gift-seeking, full congregational platform access Churches. It produces unity and bond based upon the love of God toward like-suffering saints, fervent dependence upon Jesus in the face of hardships that attempt to crush the faith out of way-side hearers, and strong ground receivers.

Giftedness, platform access are all a part of the 'system' still lingering in your own mind. I consider the upcoming change will remove platforms and permissions to speak, the order of a service will no longer need these formalities so that what you envision will not be a new freedom per-se, but a new way of living with each other according to our faith.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/4 23:50**

Marvin writes.....

"Giftedness, platform access are all a part of the 'system' still lingering in your own mind."

Platform access has no part in my mind, a wee bit bold to say what is in my mind Marvin. The last gatherings I was involved with in the last few years that involved saints from all over the country did not include a platform. I have zero interest in platforms. Now, gifts, that is another matter. I have never read in Scriptures about a platform but I have read about the gifts, their purpose and how they are a vital part of edification of the Body. What we agree with is the paradigm shift. I also agree that the church that Chan left has not changed.....bro Frank



**Re: The Refiners fire is coming. - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/1/5 0:51**

Hi Frank: Thanks for the response.

Well, my mind reading skills are no good, but I do hope my reading skills are better.

I read... "You can clean the toilets and volunteer to look after the children but God forbid that He should speak through you from the front or, horror of horrors, from the platform."

To me, this is a cry for pulpit=platform access. I do not mean that you're coveting someone else pulpit, but I believe you desire to be heard and for others to be heard as well. It appears in your postings that you have something to say and you believe others do to and for them to be given opportunity. This 'speaking' is by way of pulpit=platform=lecturn=floor.

My intent was simply to introduce another aspect to such a change. Our God is not caged and even if we are 'caged' this didn't stop Francis or his leadership from doing God's will. It does not mean all of God's will or even the fullness of anointing that is available, but we are still partakers caged or not. But like you, I opt for cageless.

I wanted to add...what cageless looks like after the removal of what we are so used to I have yet to see. All I have seen are variants of 'caged'. I'm not sure that anyone has seen anything other than 'caged' or a variant.

**Re: - posted by narrowpath, on: 2018/1/5 5:01**

Frank, does your superior discernment entitle you to criticize Greg personally here on SI? Maybe you can check James 3 and also check what is written above the "submit" button.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/5 9:10**

Yes Marvin, I was speaking to the present mindset of the church, not mine. We are definately on the same page brother. ....bro Frank

**Re: The Refiners fire is coming. - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2018/1/5 12:05**

One of the problems with the Church as we know it today is that the pastor has been elevated to a position far above what God's intention is for that particular office, and much of the Body of Christ is lacking because of it.

There are many good pastors that believe that they are faithfully serving God that are giving the people their own vision and building their churches on their own giftings. So the Body of believers in these churches is told that they are to get along side the pastor and help him to establish his own vision and mission. This is not to say that God has not given pastors particular assignments that they are to fulfill, but in many churches the saints are dependent on the pastor for a Word from the Lord, and have little or no idea that every member of the Body of Christ has a ministry and gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ. The Pastor is to work alongside the other offices of the fivefold ministry in building up the Body of Christ so that they can do the work of the ministry. This includes releasing the people in their own gifts and ministries.

The people of God need to be released from their cages that the religious system has constructed, so that they can be active participants, co laborers with the Lord in advancing the Kingdom of God.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/5 13:05**

Good post bro Mike, could not agree more.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/1/5 13:28**

Mike: I think it goes even deeper than that. A religious system is a system in which I try to please God and change my life from my own efforts. I can be carnally minded about spiritual things, be dressed in spiritual trappings, and be deceived into thinking that I am following Christ and being pleasing to Him. Carnal mindedness leads me to be concerned with carnal things, the external trappings of religion and the behaviors that I am hoping to modify. Touch not, taste not, handle not, but all of these things perish with the using. I look good on the outside, but I have only modified by behavior, thinking all along that this is what pleases God.

But carnal mindedness is death. The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither can it be. The only thing that self effort produces, no matter how much we think it is directed toward following God, is the works of the flesh. When we try to follow God through legalism, it produces only the opposite of what we hoped. This is Pa



ul's wretchedness.

All of the other problems we can talk about in the church: ambition, need to be noticed, desire for the stage, jealousy, envy, bitterness, etc., come from being carnally minded. The deception in this is that we think, because of our effort and our strict adherence to Christian standards, that we are spiritually minded. It is the same set of blinders that cover the eyes of literal Israel every time the law is read.

Those who in the last day say, "Lord, Lord, did we not do all these things in your name?", are, I believe, truly under this same deception. They think that their many works are what God is interested in, yet He says, "Depart from me. I never KNEW you."

We have to understand that entrance into the Kingdom is preceded by death to self. We must understand that God does not want to change our lives. He wants us to exchange our old life for His so that we no longer live, but He lives in us. It is not about heaven and hell. Neither is it about blessings and a good life as a believer. It is about becoming like Him. It is about being transformed into His image.

Somehow we have been selling the church a bill of goods for some time now. We have convinced them to make faith declaration based on fear of hell, promise of heaven, and promise of having their problems solved. But this is not the gospel. The gospel is about total transformation. He wants us out of our own minds and into His.

When we live IN HIM, we will naturally bear His fruit. Let the roots be good and the tree will be good. We will love out of a pure heart with faith unfeigned, because we are one with Him and He is love. Faith will be no problem. We will not need 12 laws of faith, or 25 principles of believing, or positive confessions, or any of those things. We will confess what is in His heart and mind, because we are IN Him and as a result we have the very mind of Christ. Our revelation of His love and faithfulness will make believing Him as natural as breathing. We have attempted to overcome carnality with self-effort, hoping to obtain more faith as a result. It will never work. Our entire effort is directed toward turning our hearts toward Him and seeking Him so that we might enter into His rest.

We will no longer strive to be holy. We will be in Him, one with Him, filled with His Spirit, and holiness will be the natural byproduct as the fruit of obedience flows out of intimacy and relationship. We will no longer strive to overcome temptation and sin. It will fall off of us as we run full speed, deeper into Him.

We have not, in many ways, even understood the gospel that we claim to preach to the world. Something significant has been lost, and I believe God is speaking it loudly into the body right now. There is a separation coming in which the body will be refined. But I believe it is a separation between those who choose to lose their lives to find His and those who choose to forsake His life because they would rather control their own.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/5 14:25**

Between brother Mike and Travis, we have had excellent teaching on this matter. I would say to all who read this thread, consider carefully what the brothers have shared.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/1/5 15:59**

Todd writes: "The average, well meaning, and even devout Christian in America has no idea of what Chan speaketh because they have never seen it nor do they have any understanding of how a church could function without the ministry cages he describes.

The only way they will ever understand is if someone shows them in detail how a "cageless" church would function and look like.

It does no good to point out problems without at the same time proposing or explaining the solution IN DETAIL. I am not saying Chan is doing this, but you can't just tell American Christians their method of church stinks without demonstrating a compelling alternative."

It is suggested that scripture is the answer and who would disagree with that? No one, except everyone.

The paradigm that Chan speaks of is not one that he lives in, Francis, lives in the 'un-persecuted' section of town.

I realize what has been said by Frank, Blaine, Mike, Fletcher, Todd and Travis have excellent insights and sound wisdom, I also realize all of them and no doubt many others want to pattern their lives after godly men attempting to break free from 'cages' where Jesus is not permitted to live out through them what he truly is. I think its also true that any of these men are examples to others where they are known face to face.

Yet, there is something terribly skewed in presenting a 'persecuted church' as a model to American Christians who have at best read about them, but in their lives have no familiarity with the persecution these believers face.

Persecution is no doubt on the horizon and I for one would consider it a miracle if I dont spend the remainder of my years in prison.

Yet, the 'persecution model' if I can call it that is not God's ultimate intention for the Church. I've never seen so much as a hint of such a thing in scripture.

A non-persecuted, free to evangelize, worship and congregate group of believers was the intention of the founders of this nation. I believe this more exactly represents God's will for his people. We all admire with the deepest admiration and respect the faith of those in China, Pakistan, Iran, Nepal etc who suffer for Christ knowing their children may never live into adulthood. I do not believe God's purpose and plan for his people is death, imprisonment or torture.

It also bears discussing just what constitutes a 'cage' over against what constitutes divine order, Church government and five-fold ministry roles.

There is nothing convincing me that once persecution starts and finishes in America ( if the Lord tarries) that our leaders at that time will not pick up right where we left off before death and imprisonment came.

The term "caged" is Francis Chan's characterization, but is 'caged' representative of congregations and leaders nationwide? Or is it representative of various Churches attempting to serve God but hindered by various Church government or eschatological viewpoints.

A theological paradigm shift that permits a free flow of body ministry is the paramount concern of some, but for others theirs will be the complete absence of 'gifting's which they regard as false and empty. In short, beatings and torture do not equate to revelation of scripture.

When listening to various ministers on SI. those like Jackie Pulliger teach and train the converts straight up charismatic/pentecostalism. Others like Paul Washer accentuate holiness and devotion, yet with Brother Paul body ministry is left out entirely.

These two wonderful and godly ministers are the antithesis of each other...there is nothing telling us that things will be different in the midst of persecution.

I agree scripture is the foundation for our faith and practice. Yet, it's filtered through you and I and that filtering will not disappear in hardship. In fact, in hardship is the place where habits and what we truly believe are brought to the forefront.

Scripture is the right answer, but its also the wrong answer. "lived out scripture" will be the epistles that are read and known.

I don't see persecution as the 'fix-it' for eschatological differences, nor do I see imprisonment a remedy for the lack of body ministry, I do see persecution as the removal of what makes us secure as Christians in our nation and safe among our neighbors.

Security in this world being removed by persecution and hardship is not obtained by giftings or by a seminary study on cessationism. Security is had through faith in a very personal and up close Jesus. It is that kind of security that frees men from their cages whether its steel bars or restrictive doctrines of men.

Persecution is coming I believe, but its an agent of cause, its not the ultimate transformer of character and desire for holiness of life.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/5 16:45**

Bro Marvin writes.....

" I also realize all of them and no doubt many others want to pattern their lives after godly men attempting to break free from 'cages' where Jesus is not permitted to live out through them what he truly is."

I cannot speak for the others Marvin, but I do not want to pattern my life after any man, accept the man Jesus. Every single priest and priestess is unique. It would be a mistake, in my opinion, to try and live your life patterned after a mere mortal man. Marvin writes.....

"A non-persecuted, free to evangelize, worship and congregate group of believers was the intention of the founders of this nation. I believe this more exactly represents God's will for his people."

We can agree to disagree on what the end time Church will look like. If you believe it will not be a persecuted Church because that is not what the founding fathers of America envisioned then we do have quite a stark disagreement on that point which is fine. We agree on much brother and of course we disagree on this point. Good men can disagree with each other.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/1/5 20:48**

Hi Frank:

My post was rather long so stuff can get skipped. I mentioned in my last post that I fully believe persecution is coming and now is being carefully legislated, this is not what our founding Fathers envisioned, nor does God require such a thing. Nevertheless what is God's will for his people optimally and what God does because of the spiritual condition of his people and the incessant blasphemies arising every moment...God's correction is coming.

Jer 31:20 Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the LORD.

Jer 31:21 "Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself guideposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went. Return, O virgin Israel, return to these your cities.

God's heart was not to punish Ephraim, but that He (Israel) would truly repent. So I believe God's heart towards his people in America is one of love and tender mercies nevertheless...

Jer 7:3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place.

Jer 7:4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'

Jer 7:5 "For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another,

Jer 7:6 if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm,

Jer 7:7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.

Jer 7:8 "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail.

Jer 7:9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known,

Jer 7:10 and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations?

Because of texts like these which I see directly apply to our current condition, I believe though God's heart is for mercy, his glory and his Name will be honored in a greater measure as we are chastened of the Lord. I do not believe this strange work is God's first choice, but it seems an inevitable one.

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/1/5 22:21**

I realize this thread is way above my head, but how can we know what's coming? Doesn't the word say, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. If this is true, how can we possibly know what's coming to the church, we can't unless we're on the same thought level as God. So are we just assuming here what's coming, or is some folks capable of knowing what God's thoughts are on the future of the church? I know we all do a lot of kicking around of scripture here, but I like facts, and my guess is only God has the real facts.

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2018/1/6 10:02**

I hope I can articulate this the way it is in my heart.

We know that the Bible tells us that those that live righteously in this world will suffer persecution. We can see from prophecy in scripture that great persecution comes upon the church in the last days. We can see from the current climate of the world and the ever changing climate of the USA that persecution on a level that most Americans have never experienced or considered is likely right around the corner.

The problem is that the gospel has been presented in America, by and large, in a way that is self-serving and "culturally relevant". (I say it that way because it has not really been relevant to the needs of the culture, but has been designed in large part to be appealing and attractive to the culture in the flesh.) We have said, "Hell is bad and you don't want to go there. Jesus paid this awful price for you. So you need to feel bad for the wrong you have done and what it has cost Jesus. You need to say this prayer, and you will be forgiven and have heaven in the bag. Besides, He will help you to be happy, healthy, prosperous, and live a really good life here on Earth." While there is an element of truth in these words, they are far, far from the essence of the gospel, and present it as a way to assuage guilt, assure heaven, and usher in happiness and a good life.

To a great degree, people in our American churches do not experience the true life transformation of rebirth, but instead add God to the rest of their life. The result is either, at best, a person who is born again but remains a spiritual babe for the rest of his life, or at worst a person who is not really born again and lives a self-centered life, all the while deceived into believing he is good to go. Our churches then develop a great number of programs to try to minister to people. Not that all programs are bad, but often we are doing this as a way to attract more people to our particular brand so we can grow our organization. Our focus is on numbers and decisions. But this is not the focus of the gospel. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples."

When persecution comes, those who are not rooted and grounded in Christ and in His word for themselves will be offended and turn back. This is the message Jesus gives in the parable of the sower. When real persecution comes, those who do not have root in themselves will give it up.

Our focus cannot be on having a great number of conversions. Our focus must be on bringing sons to maturity. Birth is just the first step in this process. We tend to get very excited when a person is born again, and rightly so, but why are we not equally excited as we look forward to the process of bringing that person to spiritual maturity so they will be rock solid, immovable, and able to reproduce themselves by bringing others to the Lord and disciplining them to maturity.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/6 10:58**

Very well said bro Travis. In essence the question becomes, and has been a question asked down through the centuries, what is real Christianity, what is the Gospel, who are the saints. William Wilberforce was famous for his friendship with John Newton who wrote Amazing Grace and of course for being responsible for slavery being banned in the British empire. He and Newton and others like them were despised by most of the "Sunday go to church," crowd. They referred to Newton and Wilberforce and others as "enthusiasts."

It was not a term of endearment, it was a hateful term. What Wilberforce is less famous for is the book he wrote entitled "Real Christianity." I guarantee that if Wilberforce were alive today and wrote that book today, he would not be invited to speak at most of our modern day western church. He speaks against self serving and culturally relevant churches, in the language of the day of course. He speaks against the fact that most who call themselves Christians had not actually experienced the new birth, had not actually been regenerated rather they were Christian in name only and by accident of birth.

th. Their Christianity was, he says, a cultural one, a mere adornment to their lives and not a life changing regeneration.

Before him Whitfield had made the exact same assertion and Wesley preached all over the country to people who were already supposedly Christians but were merely professors. Unfortunately today we suffer from the absence of people like Wilberforce, Wesley and Whitfield who were not afraid to look at the so called "Christian community" and tell them plainly that they knew nothing of the new birth. In Wilberforce's book he prophesies what would happen to Britain and its empire if its people did not come to a true knowledge of the Living God. It has absolutely come to pass. In more recent times we have had men like Tozer and Ravenhill who preached a similar message and many of their own "prophecies," have come to pass. Who has ears to hear what these men, and others sent from God, were saying to their generation and to the generations soon to come.

We are living in the days that they foretold. It cannot be business as usual, Christianity is in major crisis and has all but collapsed in Europe and the major denominations that are left, for the most part, have been ravaged by its own worldliness and taken over by a cultural elite who aim to please the world and please men rather than fear God. This is why the refiners fire soon to come is a great mercy.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/1/6 11:53**

What many are missing is, if you open your eyes and ears, the church is already being persecuted, and has been for many years, where have you been? Persecuted, is very vague, my question is to what extent is it to be persecuted? I know I'm a very simple minded soul, and I ask very simple questions, but if God meant for the word to only be understood by only the greatest theologians, us simple minded folks would have never been born. I know many here don't like simple, they sometimes like talking over the simple minds to make their opinions look greater or more sound in their words. I sure worry about the coming persecuted church "that's already here" doesn't make God very happy, didn't he mention something in his word about worry? When we set here and post things that I would call scare tactics, it really only confuses the unlearned, and we all know where confusion comes from, right?

I like what God said here.

God said, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze" Isaiah 43: 2

Edit: You know what bothers me most about the persecution threads we have here, most seem to come across as being judgmental in their opinions, this is the way they come across to me. Jesus said Christians should be known for how deeply we love, in the eyes of many non-Christians, we're known for how deeply we judge, not for how deeply we love. The presence of judgment almost always guarantees an absence of love, ever notice that people who judge, almost never help and people who help almost never judge? That's because I personally believe judgment creates a line, the line is labeled "better than" or "smarter than" or "more righteous than" the person who needs help. I think the best way to judge, is to judge ourselves, and make sure we're walking completely upright, and if we are, fire a way at judging others.

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/1/6 14:47**

Hi Brother Bill:

I don't see what you're claiming in this thread. I don't see judgmental-ism nor do I see "better than" "smarter than" or "more righteous than". What I do see are men who recognize the errors and problems facing the body of Christ and those same problems and sins directly affect us all.

Because of what they see and discern as a spiritual truth, they and myself record it here as a witness against the false gospel so often delivered on a Sunday Morning, there is a witness here of people naming the name of Christ that in fact make Jesus an "add-on" rather than the ultimate.

If the Nation of Israel's actions through out the Law and Prophets displayed, they displayed what happened when they compromised with sin, idolatry, false teachings and false prophets. In short they were deceived about themselves, God and their true spiritual condition. This deception was not permitted by God to continue unabated. God intervened. In doing

so, his intervention started with the "prophets warning the people". I consider what Blaine, Travis, Fletcher, Mike, Frank and other do on this website as like-kind warning; there are others no doubt who are in full agreement yet do not post for one reason or another.

I have been accused since my early years as a street witness, that I was being judgmental. At that time and now, I say, no. I am declaring sin to be sin as God has judged it. I am declaring righteousness to be righteousness as God has declared it.

Over the decades I have preached and taught everywhere from Pastors conferences to men's rehabilitation centers. I have been with false pastors, greedy ministers, con-men, liars, men seeking Christian women to bed-down, perverts, thieves.

In all this, my heart has been given the same message as I preach and believe. "This is what sin does to a man...if you do this same thing you too will fall". "If you live according to the Spirit of holiness and honor God, God equips you to serve him in a wide variety of places". In no place is my life exonerated from the judgments I declare to be God's, In no place is my life exonerated from the promises I declare to be God's. I will speak personally a little more on this and stop lest it appear as some self-justification. I am justified in declaring the truth because I am born of the truth and love the truth. Truth and love are not enemies to one another in God's kingdom. The love of God in me is not to keep silent but to speak...this has been my calling all of my Christian life.

Isa\_62:1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.

God's love in me does not direct anger or judgment towards men. What the man does, what he says, what he wills, falls under the categories that God has declared in his gospel.

When I see idolatry attempting to gain hold in my own life, I am quick to condemn it and repent. Because of this, I am no hypocrite to condemn it as a sin done by others without falling under the condemnation of Jesus in Mat 7:5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

I know what it is to fail God and I know what it is to be given grace and kindness. But without God's gift of repentance and belief that he means what he says, I would have remained in failure. The last thing I desire, and if I may speak so boldly so do all those here, they want the people of God to honor God, live holy and love the Lord and one another.

**Re: , on: 2018/1/6 15:10**

Bro Marvin writes.....

"I don't see what you're claiming in this thread. I don't see judgmental-ism nor do I see "better than" "smarter than" or "more righteous than". What I do see are men who recognize the errors and problems facing the body of Christ and those same problems and sins directly affect us all." Amen ...bro Frank

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2018/1/6 17:22**

No worries, it's probably just my lack of understanding, sorry.