

**General Topics :: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?****why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?, on: 2010/7/17 9:54**

Brethern,

please dont be disturbed by that title. In the last 1700 years, many many saints have done the Work of God, and i fully realize, Praise His Name, that Yahweh has been in control, that the Blood of Jesus cleanses all sin, that Dear Jesus Messiah, at this second is interceding for all of us in the Most Holy Prayer Ministry EVER....but..

we....and our forefathers, their forefathers in the Faith have failed miserably.

If you think i'm wrong, just get on your knees and read John 17:1-26

i say almost 1700 years, because it was in 315 AD that the child of the devil Constantine had a "dream"; 'paint red crosses on the shields of your army and you will be victorious in battle'...and he was.

satan couldnt beat the Early Church, that is the Body of Christ, so he decided to join it, which gives us to this very day the system of hellish slavery known as the "roman catholic church", complete with priestcraft, non-canonical man traditions, such as transubstantiation, meaning that they believe that the 'wafer' they put into the mouths of desperate souls is the actual, for real Body of Christ...rank idolatry, the wine they serve is the actual Blood of Christ.....blasphemy. they took the Cross and made an 'image' of Jesus, and put it on the Cross, which is MOST definitely blasphemous! Their priests are commanded to be celibate, which is a twisted interpretation of Scripture, and as we see today that leads to hordes of closeted homosexuals, roosting in the ranks of this 'priesthood from hell' many of whom sexually predate on children, and Lord only knows about the celibate women servants they call nuns. Councils of these 'priests' get together and decide who are saints, and these "saints" are WORSHIPPED! Those dear souls enslaved in this system are actually encouraged to pray to these "saints"!....please dont tell me Jesus doesnt weep over this apostasy.

Let me not forget about that haunt of demons, the "vatican"....a whole city', and God only knows what stolen treasures of gold lay underneath its streets, in hidden vaults, the booty of war and theft, all controlled by their 'leadership', and the man they call the "vicar" of Christ, enough has been said of him, all i know he has been prepared a place when the Day God deals with him.

Enough about "rome", as this post is not solely an anti-rome screed, because what is called the protestant "church" does not follow too far behind.

martin luther started great, ended bad. i say that, because i look today, and there is no such thing as a "protestant" Church, said Church being the Body of Christ.

oh no, there are hundreds of denominations, each with its own absolutes. The result of man's fecklessness, and arrogance in TRYING to cut the Body of Christ into hundreds of pieces, ranging from mainline lukewarm backslidden denominations.. shall i name them? Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Methodists, Evangelical Lutheran, mainline Lutheran, and keep going down the line...baptists? many of whom seem stultified to me, hard, and hard hearted, denying the Baptism of Holy Ghost some of them, while at the other end of the spectrum, you have pentecostals who have the audacity to proclaim that unless you speak in glossolalia, "tongues", you're not baptized in the Holy Ghost. What about the "state" churches? there are many....and now, in this age of circuitry and petroleum, lost sinners, have but to turn on a TV, and see the utterly corrupt, God defying circus we call "televangelists", all begging and pleading for MONEY?!? If i wasnt to know better, watching these greedy fleshlings, i would assume that "programming" was some sort of secular satire comedy program.. ..and lest we not forget the hypercharisma that Brother Strom showed us the other day, the kundalini thing, the purvey of devils and every unclean spirit north of hell, the "holy" laughter, the "holy" drunkenness, or as one very confused purveyor of this spew calls it, "the heavy drunken glow-ray".

and like rome, dont think for a second, there is not clergy abuse within the ranks of the protestant "church".....the very TITLE "PASTOR"....what is that all about?!?

"pastor" means "shepherd", right?

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Just think about it for a second. Scripturally, we have ONE SHEPERD and One Shepered only and His Name is Jesus.

its not "pastor" Bob, or "pastor" Tom, etc....how have we forgotten this?

Jesus paid with HIS BLOOD for this Title, and we give it to mere men?

have we ALL gone mad insane? How far can we stray from Holy Scripture? rome did the same thing when they conferre d the title "pope", "vicar of Christ", which means "little Christ".

Is there NO fear of God?

hear me, i am a pitiful vessel myself, and by my written words, understand, i beg you, i am not trying to posit myself abo ve anybody, put me at the bottom of the pile, because i wont have the best day at the Judgement Seat, but i have to test ify. i HAVE to!

look at our very liturgy itself, its almost like "roman-lite".

go into a building, some of them very fancy, 10 to 11 on Sundays, same thing, over and over again. Stand up, sing a few songs, sit down, "pastor" makes a long prayer, out comes the collection plate, stand up, pray for the collection, sit down. Hear a lecture from "pastor", and he's been taught at seminary to make it "three points" and to try and keep it under 45 minutes, lest the people get bored. he makes an appeal for those who havent been saved, ALL HEADS BOWED, Heave n forbid we should SEE those who want Jesus to take over their souls, their hearts, minds, their very body and lives, "rai se your hand if want to be saved".....okay lift your heads now, and you're released, and by the way, the altar is now open , IF you want to come up and pray....and out by 12, 12:30, so various "cliques" can whisper among themselves whether t hey are going to head to Denny's, or Applebee's...forget the lonely ones, or the weirdo's you dont want to eat with, and b y 1 PM the doors are LOCKED.

"roman-lite"

But dont forget Wednesday Bible study, which is not really a study, its just an abbreviated form of the sunday service, on ly difference being, the attendance is a fifth of what it was sunday.

its all the "christianese" version of "wash, rinse, repeat"

and if you dont think the protestant church has its version of venerated "saints", just peruse this forum and see all the ba ndwidth wasted in the never ending tussle about Calvin, Finney, Arminian. i mean no offense to anybody, but when i see somebody write, "I'm a five point Calvinist", my head just droops. Droops further, whenh i see stuff like "I'm a pre-mil, po st-trib dispensationalist, who hews to pre-destinationism".

(if that sounded off in my list, its because God has not led to me to indulge in such, and again i beg forgiveness if i offen ded anybody)

i know everybody here is a blessed soul, beautiful in His Eyes, and i praise God such a website is allowed to exist, wher e i have the freedom to testify what God has laid on my heart.

but something has gone terribly wrong over 1700 years, search your hearts.

If we REALLY want revival, we need to pray to God to smash all man made, devil crafted jails of division, contentious, sectarianism, denominationalism, priestcraft, roman or protestant, ecclesiatical abuse, to pray for a New Pentecost, get l ow, get humble, die to self, die to our over active minds and self-will.....and let Jesus take over His Church, the Church o f God.

because.... this is not working saints, i know it and you all know it....search your hearts...this is not working.

God the Father, and the Son Jesus Christ LONG for our souls, and for the souls that are far from Him. Jesus longs for u s with a Passion, and said so, very clearly in John 17:1-26

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i've failed him, many times, and i repent, and beg for re-commissioning in His Name.

the question begs, are we of one accord?

neil

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/7/17 10:11

Neil,

You made a lot of interesting points, most of which I agree. (The one I disagree with is in the calling of a man a 'pastor'. These terms are gleaned from Paul's writings to Timothy.)

In any case, revival begins with me. I cannot impose it on another, much as I would like to. God has called us to faithfulness and obedience. Difficulties arise when we work to discredit the WORD and its meanings.

2 Timothy 1 shares interesting insights into the mindsets that work to subvert the Gospel. (I have the wonderful privilege to teach this lesson tomorrow to the adult sisters at church! Oh, and we do have a name.....:-))

Blessings

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2010/7/17 10:17

The call of the gospel is still compelling. His grace is irresistible, His love is undeniable, His promises are timeless and true. If the Church has lost its relevance for today; it is because it has forgotten its place and purpose--it serves as the Body of Christ!!

The Church is to be full of peculiar people; people with a hunger for the truth, people who thirst for more of GOD'S presence and power, people who love righteousness more than life, people with a zeal for good works!! May GOD fill HIS Church, which is HIS BODY, with HIS peculiar people!!

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by StevenL (), on: 2010/7/17 11:43

I couldn't agree more Natan4. Especially about the man-made abominable "office" held by people titled with holy names like pastor, reverend, bishop, father, my lord, eminence, his holiness, or even "brother"..... you know, the Clergy. They EXPECT to be addressed in this manner by the Laity. Been there, seen that, won't do it.

To be a good "christian" today, You have to go to some phony, religious re-creation of a "temple" ruled by a "priest" "pastor", pay your "tithes" on a "sabbath". And if you refuse to participate in this modern version of the ancient Hebrew theocracy, well, you may as well be the devil himself. You will certainly chew your tongue for eternity in the very Fires of Hell. To even present such an idea, that the church is a miserable, ineffective failure, is to brand yourself a rebel, a heretic, a dog.... yes you are demon-possessed. The keepers of the phony temple (the pastors) will make sure that you are identified as such to prevent any sheep from being fouled with your blasphemous message. With the anointing of God heavy upon them, they will escort you to the faggots for burning as the sheep watch in holy terror.

There are hearts stirring with such sentiment even now as they read your thread. Minds already churning with rebuttals.. looking for your errors. "Yes Natan4, some of what you say is almost right, but.." The defender of God's "church" is rightly indignant. "Something WRONG? How dare you! God can do no wrong and WE, the church, are God's handiwork. Why, we follow the Holy Bible, you know, the REAL version of it!"

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Yes, the "church" idea that is presented to us as if it were the holy, scripturally-based, body into which we MUST be baptized or be doomed, is a gigantic failure and a hoax. Everything that Adam's children have ever done has failed. The "church" has failed and will continue to fail.

But, this won't affect the Called-Out Body for Whom the God Savior died. This Body will do exactly as planned. Most of the "church" won't ever know it.

As to the question: No, we (assuming you meant those who call themselves Christians) are not of one accord. I think that's been pretty plain for at least 1,700 years. And it will NOT get any better in this age, small smatterings of "revival" notwithstanding. But there's another age coming.

God bless you Natan4 and strengthen you and preserve you from the adversary.

Re: - posted by MaloyPreach (), on: 2010/7/17 15:17

I agree with Ginnyrose that the office of "Pastor" is scriptural; however, I do share the discontent that Natan4 and Steven L have concerning the current leadership situation in The Church. I am from a Classic Pentecostal background and I was in the Pentecostal Church before anyone ever heard of "prosperity" preaching. From the very beginning of the Pentecostal movement, Pentecostal preachers preached against worldliness and for being eternity-minded. I have had the misfortune to watch our churches be invaded by a new breed of preachers who are preaching a God-wants-you-to-have-it-all-NOW message. Along with that message, there is another teaching that is necessary for them to teach in order to succeed in taking over and that is the "authority of the pastor." If you do not want to be exposed then you must teach that anyone who exposes you is in rebellion, and that is exactly what they are doing! We are in sad times in the Body of Christ. I believe we are gearing up for Revelation 17.

Re: , on: 2010/7/17 15:25

and God bless you too Steven...richly.

Re: , on: 2010/7/17 16:32

Neil, my brother in the Lord. I could not agree more. We are a priesthood of believers. I thank the Lord that despite the abominations of what you write, we have had a remnant down through the centuries that kept the fires of holiness and shone the light of Christ into a dark world. These people would typically be hunted down by both sides, whether the Catholic church or the reformed church. I guess when you are hated for Christ's sake and those who call themselves by His name hunt you down and kill you, thinking they are doing the work of God, then you know that you are on the right, narrow path.

I thank the Lord that I sense in my spirit that a new dawn is rising, a new wineskin is coming. A wineskin fitting for a new wine of His presence. The glorious majesty of an almighty God will take hold of a people, will sweep them away in a mighty river of His presence and they will, with all their hearts, seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, seek first to glorify Him in the beauty of His holiness. Seek only to lift and to glorify the name of Jesus, seek only to "know," Him in the fullness of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

I might slightly disagree with my sister Ginnyrose. Yes personal revival is very important and should always be before our face. We should constantly long after Him as the deer panteth for the waterbrooks. Yet, in a corporate setting, or a national setting, there have been men of God calling God's people back to Him since the OT. The time is ripe for leadership that God raises up to call the people back to the shekinah worship of the living God. In Nehemiah 8 we see Godly leadership in glorious action where Ezra and Nehemiah realize the worldliness of the people coming out of a long stay in Babylon. Calling an eight day celebration of the living God for those who recognized their state, which led to these very people repenting.

There is a crisis, a tragedy that has befallen the people of God. They have leanness in their souls, they are not "unto God, a sweet savor of Christ." Instead they have a stench of the world about them. God will raise up, is, as we speak, raising men, raising leaders who not only understand our true state (there are actually many men who do) but understands how God would have us deal with it.

God has to retake, or take, His rightful place in the hearts of His people. Many are so lost, so worldly, so far from the "presence of God," as to not even know what it is. There is at least a generation, right now, of people who have heard tale of such a presence, but never have tasted of it. God will be high and lifted up. God will come to a people who lift Him up.

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God told us that as we draw near to Him then He would draw near to us. Yet, He is not our granddad, He is not Santa Clause, He is not a kindly old gentleman, He dwells in a place that we can boldly come before Him, but not with presumption. Yes we have the honor and privilege to approach this throne of God, availed for us by Jesus Himself. But, will you skip into the presence of a most Holy God? Will you??? No you will not. Is He your buddy or your pal? No, He is not. He is your Father and He rules and He reigns and the angels fall down and they cry out "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." Will you do any less? When you cry out "Abba Father," will you not fall down before your heavenly Father and just simply tremble before such awesomeness, an awful place, meaning full of awe.

There is a time coming soon where the "temple will be restored," so to speak. God will be elevated amongst His people above the din of the world and beyond our circumstances. He, and He alone is our exceeding great reward." "This is eternal life, that you may know Him." He shall be known to a people who draw near to Him in the beauty of His holiness. In His presence we will know the height and the depth and the fullness of Him and we will be ruined for all of this world and we will never be the same, we will never be the same and then we will indeed be a sweet savor to our Lord and to our God.

As we come into this place of fullness before Him, then the persecution will increase upon God's people, in fact the enemy of your souls will do everything in His power to destroy such a people, such a fragrant army. Yet, what can he take from us, a people dead to ourselves and alive to Christ. He may be able to take everything from us, but he cannot take our freedom in Christ that was wrought for us at the bloody battle-field of Calvary. We will be a people who will have learned to be content in every situation, a people who know that no matter what comes at them, that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. The worldly Christian believes this Scripture to be a magic phrase that allows them to pursue the desires of their own hearts, as they believe the "and all these things shall be added unto you," means that they will have material things, yet this is the song of the martyr.

The man or woman of God can walk through any fire, any furnace, any trial or tribulation and know that they can do all things in Him. Why do they "know," this? Because they "know," Him and they have stood in His presence and cried "Holy." And they know that they can count all loss as mere rubbish because no matter who they are or what age they are that their lives are but a vapor and they will soon join a mighty throng around the throne from every tribe and every tongue and every nation and will cry out night and day "Holy, Holy, Holy is our Lord God Almighty." A new song, a new song, sung as one by the priests of God for all eternity. And all of these light and momentary afflictions will be swallowed up in the glory of the unadulterated presence of the living God that is beyond what our minds can comprehend, for it is written....."Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."brother Frank

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by Friedrich (), on: 2010/7/17 16:38

Watchman Nee has some excellent writings on these same points in a book titled, "God's Plan and the Overcomers". He, in a terse and biblical way, outlines God's plan in the failures of the church and God's plan for the overcomers in these last days.

The book might not answer all the questions, but what we can glean from this brother will most likely help us.

Re: - posted by knitefall, on: 2010/7/17 17:03

All interesting points. But do not be discouraged! He said -HE- will build -HIS- Church. There are great things going on all over. God's arm is not short brethren! This is actually the "rock" Jesus was speaking of. That He is going to build His Church through speaking to people.

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/7/17 21:27

At the risk of sounding like one of those people who with one fell swoop totally ignore the points supporting your thesis and just give an all-encompassing, other-side-of-the-coin answer, I humbly submit to you dear brother Neil:

1. Compare the Church with Old Testament Israel. While a substantially large group of people were Israelites, not all of those people were God's chosen people.

Rom 9:6 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

I believe the same to be true of the church. Not all who are of the church are God's people. If you let your mind entertain such a train of thought and see this shadow/typology through to its logical conclusion, it can be seen that God was

always greatly working in His people, even though the people at-large that claimed His name looked nothing like what they should have, had they truly been His.

2. It is also important to define what a winning church looks like. What does it look like when the church is succeeding or prospering? Do we have our own conception (glamorized by high preaching and high points in history such as revivals) or a thoroughly grounded and biblical one?

3. I believe it is important, somewhat in regards to the last point and overall in general, to respect the unique distinctness of the original church. The first century, apostolic, church of Acts is the foundation for which we are built upon. They did certain things that have to be regarded as special: were literal witnesses to risen Lord Jesus, wrote scripture, walked in consistently miracle-performing lifestyles, faced extreme opposition daily, lived communally, preached a new message to a completely virgin world. They did all this and more in one context. Some of these things can't be re-done. Others do still happen. They had the time in history that was pregnant with them all: a sort of divine-orchestrated, anthropic greenhouse created specifically to birth a church foundation for all coming generations.

That crudely said, forgive my ignorance, I also believe that church put up with a lot of garbage just like today. The Church of Corinth? A bunch of charismaniac sin bags Paul had to continually preach the simple gospel message to. The Galatians? Spirit-quenching, borderline legallists. The Hebrews of Jerusalem? Salvation-negelecting, unbelieving, unmatured, back-turning, almost God-refusing people. Or how bout discrimination in Acts 6? And on top of that, all of them had false teachers sneaking in; all of them had people divided over doctrine; all of them had little sects of "I am of Apollos" or "I am of Paul." I'm probably not being fair, but the letters to these groups would seem they had deep struggles; they were largely human; and they had a few solid people trying to encourage them into the narrow way.

And that's just the New Testament era church. The following years are filled with heretical teachers and bitter, church-dividing arguments. Did Constantine do something desperatley fatal? I beleive so. I have often thought of that as a pivotal turning point in the Church, but that leads me to consider these previously mentioned points and hope in the last one:

4. Christ's promises:

Mat 16:18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Eph 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Christ will have and does have His Church. The true Church of Christ has always had expression throughout history. Without preaching a remnant theology, I will say that expression of God's true people, from Genesis to Jude, always seems small. Only in Revelation do we see that number of people that no man can number, once God has gathered together all of His saints throughout time.

Also, that there is a real, vital, holy, God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-saturated Church is one of the reasons Jesus died..."that He might sanctify her...that He might present her in splendor." These aren't maybe's. He died so He could do this, and since that day 2000 years ago, that desired result has been accomplished and will continue to be accomplished.

6. If you are still patiently bearing with me brother, I risk breaking complete forum decency by posting a video that will most surely and wholly answer your grievances. Forgive my facetiousness, but I only exude it because I know how insensitive such a move can be. In any case, I am compelled to ask you to please consider the words of Mr. Washer in this video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7CGCXFp5Bs>

The heart of what he is saying is critical I believe to this discussion. God is committed to having a people, unified and whole. He had that in the Old Testament; He had that in the greatly imperfect Church of Acts; and He has had that to the present. Different practices, forms, and methodoligies perhaps have been better than others, and some may appeal to each of us more personally than others. This I believe can be factored into:

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1. The original first point. Tares are with the wheat and so we have unregenerates running institutions.
2. The Bible doesn't lay extensive and specific groundwork for how a church is supposed to operate in meetings. Guidelines are there in some places and over-arching themes need to be respected, but it appears as though liberty in the specifics is left to each fellowship of believers.
3. We all have personalities with likes and dislikes. We will all be drawn to certain ministry philosophies more than others. This is something we either use to motivate us to find that specific place in the universal Body to which we belong and/or God uses to cultivate unconditional love, grace, mercy, selflessness, etc within us.

I do say brother I have shared many of these sentiments and have recently stumbled upon a B.B. Warfield article in which he unrepentantly puts the blame solely upon the person in our position. Please do read his words, while not all may be directly applicable to your heart right now, I believe there is wise counsel here for you. I humbly submit his words at-large to you in closing:

I wish to be perfectly explicit here, and very emphatic. No man can withdraw himself from the stated religious services of the community of which he is a member, without serious injury to his personal religious life. It is not without significance that the apostolic writer couples together the exhortations, "to hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not," and "to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together." When he commands us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together," he has in mind, as the term he employs shows, the stated, formal assemblages of the community, and means to lay upon the hearts and consciences of his readers their duty to the church of which they are the supports, as well as their duty to themselves. And when he adds, "As the custom of some is," he means to put a lash into his command. We can see his lip curl as he says it. Who are these people, who are so vastly strong, so supremely holy, that they do not need the assistance of the common worship for themselves; and who, being so strong and holy, will not give their assistance to the common worship?

Needful as common worship is, however, for men at large, the need of it for men at large is as nothing compared with its needfulness for a body of young men situated as you are. You are gathered together here for a religious purpose, in preparation for the highest religious service which can be performed by men—the guidance of others in the religious life; and shall you have everything else in common except worship? You are gathered together here, separated from your homes and all that home means; from the churches in which you have been brought up, and all that church fellowship means; from all the powerful natural influences of social religion—and shall you not yourselves form a religious community, with its own organic religious life and religious expression? I say it deliberately, that a body of young men, living apart in a community-life, as you are and must be living, cannot maintain a healthy, full, rich religious life individually, unless they are giving organic expression to their religious life as a community in frequent stated diets of common worship. Nothing can take the place of this common organic worship of the community as a community, at its stated seasons, and as a regular function of the corporate life of the community. Without it you cease to be a religious community and lack that support and stay, that incitement and spur, that comes to the individual from the organic life of the community of which he forms a part.

In my own mind, I am quite clear that in an institution like this the whole body of students should come together, both morning and evening, every day, for common prayer; and should join twice on every Sabbath in formal worship. Without at least this much common worship I do not think the institution can preserve its character as a distinctively religious institution—an institution whose institutional life is primarily a religious one. And I do not think that the individual students gathered here can, with less full expression of the organic religious life of the institution, preserve the high level of religious life on which, as students of theology they ought to live. You will observe that I am not merely exhorting you "to go to church." "Going to church" is in any case good. But what I am exhorting you to do is go to your own church—to give your presence and active religious participation to every stated meeting for worship of the institution as an institution. Thus you will do your part to give to the institution an organic religious life, and you will draw out from the organic religious life of the institution a support and inspiration for your own personal religious life which you can get nowhere else, and which you cannot afford to miss—if, that is, you have a care to your religious quickening and growth. To be an active member of a living religious body is the condition of healthy religious functioning.

I trust you will not tell me that the stated religious exercises of the Seminary are too numerous, or are wearying. That would only be to betray the low ebb of your own religious vitality. The feet of him whose heart is warm with religious feeling turn of themselves to the sanctuary, and carry him with joyful steps to the house of prayer. I am told that there are some students who do not find themselves in a prayerful mood in the early hours of a winter morning; and are much too tired at the close of a hard day's work to pray, and therefore do not find it profitable to attend prayers in the late afternoon: who think the preaching at the regular service on Sabbath morning dull and uninteresting, and who do not find Christ at the Sabbath afternoon conference. Such things I seem to have heard before; and yours will be an exceptional pastorate, if you do not hear something very like them, before you have been in a pastorate six months. Such things meet you every day on the street; they are the ordinary expression of the heart which is dulled or is dulling to the religious appeal. They are not hopeful symptoms among those whose life should be lived on the religious heights. No doubt, those who minister to you in spiritual things should take them to heart. And you who are ministered to must take them to heart, too. And let me tell you straightout that the preaching you find dull will no more seem dull to you if you faithfully obey the Master's precept: "Take heed how ye hear"; that if you do not find Christ in the conference room it is because you do not take him there with you; that, if after an ordinary day's work you are too weary to unite with your fellows in closing the day with common prayer, it is because the impulse to prayer is weak in your heart. If there is no fire in the pulpit it falls to you to kindle it in the pews. No man can fail to meet with God in the sanctuary if he takes God there with him.

How easy it is to roll the blame of our cold hearts over upon the shoulders of our religious leaders! It is refreshing to observe how Luther, with his breezy good sense, dealt with complaints of lack of attractiveness in his evangelical preachers. He had not sent them out to please people, he said, and their function was not to interest or to entertain; their function was to teach the saving truth of God, and, if they did that, it was frivolous for people in danger of perishing for want of the truth to object to the vessel in which it was offered to them. When the people of Torgau, for instance, wished to dismiss their pastors, because, they said, their voices were too weak to fill the churches, Luther simply responded, "That's an old song: better have some difficulty in hearing the gospel than no difficulty at all in hearing what is very far from the gospel." "People cannot have their ministers exactly as they wish," he declares again, "they should thank God for the pure word," and not demand St. Augustines and St. Ambroses to preach it to them. If a pastor pleases the Lord Jesus and is faithful to him, there is none so great and mighty but he ought to be pleased with him, too. The point, you see, is that men who are hungry for the truth and get it ought not to be exigent as to the platter in which it is served to them. And they will not be.

But why should we appeal to Luther? Have we not the example of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we better than he? Surely, if ever there was one who might justly plead that the common worship of the community had nothing to offer him it was the Lord Jesus Christ. But every Sabbath found him seated in his place among the worshipping people, and there was no act of stated worship which he felt himself entitled to discard. Even in his most exalted moods, and after his most elevating experiences, he quietly took his place with the rest of God's people, sharing with them in the common worship of the community. Returning from that great baptismal scene, when the heavens themselves were rent to bear him witness that he was well pleasing to God; from the searching trials of the wilderness, and from that first great tour in Galilee, prosecuted, as we are expressly told, "in the power of the Spirit"; he came back, as the record tells, "to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and"—so proceeds the amazing narrative—"he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue, on the Sabbath day." "As his custom was!" Jesus Christ made it his habitual practice to be found in his place on the Sabbath day at the stated place of worship to which he belonged. "It is a reminder," as Sir William Robertson Nicoll well insists, "of the truth which, in our fancied spirituality, we are apt to forget—that the holiest personal life can scarcely afford to dispense with stated forms of devotion, and that the regular public worship of the church, for all its local imperfections and dullness, is a divine provision for sustaining the individual soul." "We cannot afford to be wiser than our Lord in this matter. If any one could have pled that his spiritual experience was so lofty that it did not require public worship, if any one might have felt that the consecration and communion of his personal life exempted him from what ordinary mortals needed, it was Jesus. But he made no such plea. Sabbath by Sabbath even he was found in the place of worship, side by side with God's people, not for the mere sake of setting a good example, but for deeper reasons. Is it reasonable, then, that any of us should think we can safely afford to dispense with the pious custom of regular participation with the common worship of our locality?" Is it necessary for me to exhort those who would fain be like Christ, to see to it that they are imitators of him in this?

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?, on: 2010/7/18 16:57

The sources used to locate this information are not merely what has been cited, however anybody with half an interest can do a bit of footwork on their own and find much more than what has been revealed here.

This is by no means an accusation against as what we know to be the leaders and the state of the church, but rather a call to separate from them altogether and stop with all the accusations that have historically proven to be rationalized away.

There is a lot of personal distain for the state of affairs currently seen, however, in reading this, look and catch a glimpse how this first began... and then do something about it.

This is not complete and detailed, but only gives a glimpse of what is behind what we see currently afoot today.

Agapeo,
phanetheus
Acts 20:32

Had the Reformation been a total break from the Babylon Mother (OF HARLOTS), I could abide Protestantism. Having spent quite some time studying history of this so-called Christianity, at present, it seems stupid for me to think that any form of Protestant Demonationalism is anything less than a hodge podge of daughters, who are just as much hookers as their Babylonian mother.

A large majority of conservative Protestant and Orthodox leaders and theologians will wholeheartedly agree that Roman Catholicism is a perpetuation of Babylon. In fact, a lot of people know early Protestant Reformers clearly identified Rome as the Great Whore of Babylon described near the end of Revelation.

...but regarding the Reformation, what kind of break really occurred?

Without going into too much detail about this, the Great Reformation was hardly the first of The Mother of Abomination's whoring daughters taking their brand of prostitution to the streets. There have been several such incidents of this Mother of Harlots daughter's running away from home and fabricating their own red-light district.

For example, the Anglican Church ran away from her Mother because her Pimp, the King of England, was not granted divorcement. (This is the foundation upon which Anglicanism was laid.)

After every council of the RCC, whether: Nicea, Ladocea, Trent, etc...there were schisms, and more daughters of the Mother Harlot sold their wares in more and more places.

Every single one of these reformings (Reformations), which claimed to maintain and adhere to the one true faith, were simply reactionary in nature, and based their so-called reformation on what Roman Catholicism had already tainted of the One True Faith. There really was never a complete break and coming out from Babylon. All former 'reformations' have the earmark of not an elimination of walking in apostate prostitution, but have been merely variations of it, to either a greater or lesser degree.

Has Protestantism succeeded?

Has the great Reformation really gone back to the original plan laid out by Jesus and through the apostles?

The good news that Jesus Christ proclaimed, the gospel of Jesus Christ, hardly finds any resemblance with what we see or hear today ...even amongst those who think the devised belief system they adhere to is dot perfect.

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How can there be any complete no-holes-barred relationship with Jesus if what we adhere to anything which goes against what He lived and taught? A whole-hearted relationship with our Heavenly Father in His Son does not occur by doing and telling others, "not all the principles God provides for profitable living are valuable." Neither does, "God is love and he has made a way to escape fire, when Jesus plainly states, "EVERYONE WILL BE SALTED WITH FIRE."

Faith is not faithfulness to Jesus Christ if our own words and actions do not conform to His example in both deed and word. What kind of affinity does God have with somebody who picks and chooses what is and is not right about what God has clearly revealed in the pages of the Bible?

Amidst all the rank apostasy abounding, seemingly seen in everywhere we turn, this seems to be the *coupe de gra* (sp) of not recognizing The One who made us as The One and only source of right instruction and direction in living how he designed us to best function.

Who has really returned to the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3)?

Protestants claim commitment to following Jesus and His apostles in every respect, yet if this were true, we would once again see the Acts of the Holy Spirit more powerfully displayed than at the advent of the Jerusalem Church, just because "where sin does abound, grace does much more abound." Further, "...those who experience and perceive their Elohim shall be mightily courageous, even performing as He is" (Dan. 11:32).

When have you seen this occur as a regular daily event?

The liberal christian (aka:saducees) says the bible is myth, metaphor, and allegory, so because we believe God cares for us, the Good Book has good examples for ethical morality. The conservatives and/or fundamentalists (aka:pharisees) says they believe God has done and sometimes does and says everything His testimony declares ...but, since the 1st century, some things that happened then have changed because God no longer operates that way or perhaps it's a different dispensation.

Tell me what the difference is! Isn't this what "having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" is all about? After that statement about "having a form of godliness but are actually powerless," Paul says to have NOTHING to do with them.

How do you obey that command, and just what do you think "come ye out from among" them really means?

Are the Scribes (expositors and theologians) living and teaching what Jesus has exemplified as the way into life?

The Herodians (religious right and moral majority) think it's all about manipulating things in affiliation with the powers of church and government...but when did Jesus ever do this? In fact when did He ever advocate being part of any system of domination whose ideals rest on their own opinions of what will right the wrong (however they conceive it to be)?

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Anyway, nearly everybody acknowledges Martin Luther to be the primary original founder of Protestantism, yet when it satisfied Martin's own devisings he repeatedly rejected the authority of scripture. In the 95 thesis nailed to the door of the RCC hold, that castle, we can read that he did not protest indulgences and penance (taxing), but the over-abuse of them. (How many of you have taken the time to investigate what you are told is true regarding the history of the christianity currently promoted?)

Mark Twain once made an astute observation, something to the extent that :what is currently believed and practiced in Christendom, is the result of a succession of others telling others ad infinitum, and the end result isn't even worth a brass farthing.

Rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, Luther declared : "For that which is asserted without the authority of Scripture or of proven revelation may be held as an opinion, but there is no obligation to believe it.... Transubstantiation... must be considered as an invention of human reason, since it is based neither on Scripture nor sound reasoning" (Documents of the Christian Church, ed. Henry S. Bettenson, p. 280).

If he had applied this standard to everything we might be living in a very different world.

When he was charged with inserting the word "sola" (alone) into Romans 3:28, as cited by Alzog the church historian, he haughtily replied, : "Should your Pope give himself any useless annoyance about the word sola, you may promptly reply: It is the will of Dr. Martin Luther that it should be so" (Manual of Universal Church History, Henry Alzog, D. D. p. 199). PLEASE NOTICE: no other reason for such unscriptural changes as these were ever given. When it came to his personal doctrinal convictions, Martin Luther was in reality a self-promoting man.

Determining the stripe of any person, institution, or movement, Jesus said, "By their fruits (words and deeds) you will know them" (Mt. 7:20).

Note these instructions Martin Luther gave to the German princes when thousands of the peasants, who had sincerely followed his revolt against Rome, themselves rebelled against those arrogant princes:

"Rebellion is not a vile murder, but like a great fire that kindles and devastates a country; hence uproar carries with it a land full of murder, bloodshed, makes widows and orphans, and destroys everything, like the greatest calamity. Therefore whosoever can should smite, strangle, and stab, secretly or publicly, and should remember that there is nothing more poisonous, pernicious, and devilish than a rebellious man. Just as when one must slay a mad dog; fight him not and he will fight you, and a whole country with you. Let the civil power press on confidently and strike as long as it can move a muscle. For here is the advantage: the peasants have bad consciences and unlawful goods, and whenever a peasant is killed therefore he has lost body and soul, and goes forever to the devil. Civil authority, however, has a clean conscience and lawful goods, and can say to God with all security of heart: 'Behold, my God, thou hast appointed me prince or lord, of that I cannot doubt, and has entrusted me with the sword against evildoers' (Romans 13:4)... Therefore I will punish and smite as long as I can move a muscle; thou wilt judge and approve.... Such wonderful times are these that a prince can more easily win heaven by shedding blood than others with prayers." (A Short History of the Baptists, Henry C. Vedder, pp. 173-174).

Are these the words of a man directed by the Holy Spirit?

Luther's personal rebellion would have had made very small marks on the world if had he not appealed to the political and financial gains of German princes. And "it is true to say that the motives which led to the Lutheran revolt were to a large extent secular rather than spiritual" (Alfred Plummer, The Continental Reformation, p. 9).

If Martin Luther was God's man of the hour, then what is the measure of True Christianity?

Was our risen Saviour really using this man?

Facts are, Luther (and Calvin, too) had personal agendas at the root of their rebellion called "Reformation." Protestantism's first Reformer's insisted on their basic unity with the Catholic Church and identification of her as their "Mother" church!

Regarding John Calvin, George P. Fisher wrote: "He did not deny that the Christian societies acknowledging the Pope are 'Churches of Christ'... He indignantly denies that he has withdrawn from the Church" (History of Christian Doctrine, p. 304). Philip Schaff noted Calvin's description of the historical Roman church: "As our present design is to treat of the visible Church, we may learn even from her the title of Mother, how useful and even necessary it is for us to know her" (History of the Christian Church, Vol. VIII, p. 450).

As Fisher wrote, regarding Luther: "In the retention of rites and customs he did not require an explicit authorization from Scripture. Enough that they were not forbidden, and are expedient and useful. His aversion to breaking loose from the essentials of Latin Christianity in matters of doctrine is equally manifest" (History of Christian Doctrine, p. 283). In Luther's own words: "No one can deny that we hold, believe, sing, and confess all things in correspondence with the old church, that we make nothing new therein nor add anything thereto, and in this way we belong to the old Church and are one with it" (Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation, Vol. I, p. 468).

How much of the Great Reformation was really and truly any reformation at all?

Martin lived tortured with a continual sense of guilt. His insisting that 'faith' alone saves, and his rejection of countless scriptures teaching the need for obedience, Martin Luther showed just how stubborn, self-willed he proved to be. His extreme emphasis on salvation by faith alone magnifies his desperation to devise some system where the law of God and the justice of God would have no place.

The Greek word for faith does not mean mere belief, but is a total confidence so that one lives in an honorable and obedient relationship with the party to whom they are faithful. Luther's concept of faith was not faith at all.

Completely ignoring its direct parallel with the teachings of Jesus Christ, Martin Luther proudly declared of the book of James: "Compared with the Epistles of St. Paul, this is in truth an epistle of straw: it contains absolutely nothing to remind one of the style of the Gospel" (Henry Alzog, Vol. III, p. 208). Luther stubbornly rejected the entire book of James as unagreeable with his doctrines ...and in his high-handed disgust with it threw it into a river.

James explains: "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:10-11). Referring to these Ten Commandments he concludes by telling us to speak and act according to this law. And the words of Jesus Christ agree. For when a young man came to ask Him the way to eternal life, He answered, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments," and He proceeded to name some of the Ten Commandments (Mt. 19:16-19).

The Bible teaches: "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 Jn. 3:4). This is clearly referring to the Ten Commandment

s—the spiritual law written by the very finger of God.

Since Luther regarded Moses as having to do with God's law—which Luther hated—he wanted “nothing to do” with Moses' inspired writings! In rejecting the first five books of the Bible, Luther declared: “We have no wish either to see or hear Moses. Let us leave Moses to the Jews, to whom he was given to serve as a Mirror of Saxony; he has nothing in common with Pagans and Christians, and we should take no notice of him” (Alzog, Vol. III, p. 207).

Since Luther stubbornly wished to “take no notice” of Moses, we might remind him of the Apostle John's description of the victorious saints of God singing “the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Revelation 15:3). But Luther's own writings promptly answer: “I look upon the revelations of John to be neither apostolic nor prophetic” (Jules Michelet, *The Life of Luther*, p. 273). He might then add, “Everyone may form his own judgment of this book; as for myself, I feel an aversion to it, and to me this is sufficient reason for rejecting it” (Alzog, Vol. III, p. 208).

Luther's favorite writer was the Apostle Paul it's wondered why he never noted Paul's inspired words to Timothy: “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:15–16). Remember that only the Old Testament Scriptures were written when Timothy was a child. (...or Romans 7:12 or Paul's admission that he himself adhered to the foundations of the faith passed down from his forebearers (II Tim. 1:3) , or totally ignored that it was Paul's custom, just as it was Jesus' and the Apostles to attend Sabbath assemblies.

Plain and simply put, Martin Luther willfully rejected the authority of any book in the Bible to which he felt an “aversion.” As well, he turned a blissful eye away from inspecting the actual details of what his favored writer's were referring to.

Jesus declared, "MAN SHALL not LIVE by bread alone, but BY EVERY WORD THAT COMES OUT OF GOD'S MOUTH" (Mt. 4:4).

Although most regard it as the word of God, few read it anymore; much less, study into the fine details to learn God's heart in any matter. For example, you can mention meditation on scripture and many think about eastern buddistic, hindu, or various catholic magico-mystical contrivances.

Even evangelicals seem more focused on loving Jesus than on learning what He has to say, yet Jesus is the very One who says, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15).

So confused, so divided, and so ignorant about what the inspired word of God is trying to tell them, yet they say they love Jesus and they say they love God. They approach scripture with sentimental attitude doing a cut and paste of bits and pieces—not really reading the entire Bible with a desire and prayer for understanding and asking God for the willingness to obey what He is telling them in its pages!

You can find literally hundreds of examples of this in 'christian' newspapers and magazines.

One that really floored me was in June 2006, the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States passed a resolution "essentially condemning the Bible as an 'anti-Jewish' document. Not only does the resolution aim to address perceptions of anti-Jewish prejudice in the Bible and Episcopal liturgy, but it suggests that such prejudice is actually 'expressed in... Christian Scriptures and liturgical texts'" (VirtueOnline.org, June 15, 2006). (and that's when my subscription to "Discipleship Journal" came to a sudden halt for quite some time.)

Are most 'believers' out of their sentimentality loving gourds?

When really studied and even half-way understood, the Bible is completely pro-Jewish and is, in fact, an account about

how God gave this people, His chosen people, a basic way of life in the Old Testament
—though only in the letter of the law—
and of how Jesus Christ, a Jew whom any Bible reading person ought to recognize as the genuine Author of true Christianity—referred to the Old Testament again and again as "Scripture." He put His stamped impress on it and certainly on what we call the New Testament as well. But, today, the basic Christian concept of the Bible as the "inspired word of God" is being "watered down," criticized, and virtually eliminated from our professing "Christian" culture! In fact, the vast majority of present-day religious leaders often teach attitudes and ideas totally contrary to what the Bible actually says! Instead of just admitting this is their own "philosophy," they teach their ideas in the name of "Christianity"! What even gives them the right to bring Christ's name into it, when it has nothing to do with Jesus or what He taught?

So much more could be said, however, it seems the point is clear enough already. Consider these things and think about your own 'christian' stance in relation to these historic and biblical facts.

Finally brothers and sisters:

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

II Cor. 6:14-18

to Paul (giggles), on: 2010/7/18 23:17

How can I convey how blessed and happy you all have made me by even deigning to respond my complaint?

You all have given me blessing upon blessing because I know that I am not alone in the natural, among the Body of believers, and I say that to those who might disagree with what I outlined.

'disagreement' is not bad, quite the opposite, for if we disagree, and are filled with the Holy Spirit, that means we can REASON TOGETHER IN LOVE, and that is good, that is profitable.

so I thank You all, for at least taking the time to read what is on and in my heart.

So Paul, let me say this, you have been gifted with wisdom, and I have taken your words to heart and weighed them.

meaning, it's always been like this, as in the Temple, as in the Church, there are those souls, who might be "just going through the motions", May God awaken them, there is nothing new under the sun.

in your 2nd point you spoke of a "winning" church. The way I see such, I can't attach the adjective "winning" to a church, or the Church. I don't say that in contention...oh no. sitting here pondering as I write, the words

"loving", "welcoming", "inclusive", come to my heart.

It seems so many professional clergy attach great importance to counting heads, or how many they "run". (I've actually h

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heard this word used, 'how many do you run on Sundays?'...the heart breaks)

on your third point, you make a very valid point: and i quote you:

"3. I believe it is important, somewhat in regards to the last point and overall in general, to respect the unique distinctness of the original church. The first century, apostolic, church of Acts is the foundation for which we are built upon. They did certain things that have to be regarded as special: were literal witnesses to risen Lord Jesus, wrote scripture, walked in consistently miracle-performing lifestyles, faced extreme opposition daily, lived communally, preached a new message to a completely virgin world."

ALL TRUE.

then you wrote that not all these things can be re-done.

in the Case of literally witnessing Jesus and writing Scriptures, TRUE, can't be re-done.

But something's gotta give, because we've just fallen into a sort of "roman-lite".

You see Paul, a storm is brewing, and let me talk in the natural for a second. There are three main elements afoot in the 21st century, that could possibly lead to a most diminished life, secular life.

a dwindling crucial resource-petroleum.

violent religious fundamentalism in the lands where most of this resource lays.

man's lust to attain nuclear weaponry.

what i'm trying to get at is this, maybe this comfy lil life we all have going is going to be snatched away from us.

while that might seem like a bad thing, millions dead upon dead, starvation, sickness, etc is never a good thing, but out of such trials, maybe humankind will wake up and recognize their dependence on God....and out of that dependence, might come the realization that not only are we utterly dependent on God, but on each other, and out of this revelation, might new vibrant forms of congregation give birth, out of desperation. i dont know.

Your point 4 is spot on. "Jesus' Promises".

the "Rock" of Peter, as i read it, was THE CONFESSION, this FIRST Confession, "You are the Son of God", is what the Body of Christ is built on....can we agree on that?

here's some you wrote that i amen:

"The true Church of Christ has always had expression throughout history".

"Hernhutt" comes to my heart and mind immediately. i'm sure you know of Count Zinzendorff's Holy Ghost hideaway at Hernhutt, but here's for tzzadiqim (hebrew for saints) that dont:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolaus_Ludwig_Zinzendorf

its a good Wiki article on Count Zinzendorf.

Paul, you got to item 6 and said you "if" i'm still "patiently bearing with you"?

OF COURSE!! You spend time in fruitful discussion with me, and may God deal with me ever so severely if i dont return this love you have shown me in fellowship, albeit cyber fellowship.

item 6 is Paul Washers you tube piece, but can i go back to the "remnant theology", which i must study on. I think i know what you mean.....the "true" Christian, the "true" Church.

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i feel i would be scaling the heights of arrogance if i was ever to breath the attribute "true" in relation to my walk, or to a congregation i belonged to as being the "true". Implication being, others are false, and the way i see it, thats in God's Jurisdiction, mindful of the words of Gamaliel in Acts

"When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"
Acts 5:33-39 (ESV)

i love that portion of Acts, in my view, Gamaliel was the only one of that lot blessed with Godly wisdom and sense, and who knows, maybe Gamaliel eventually apprehended Jesus as Messiah.

Back to Paul Washers message; Paul, we're all different, we all gravitate towards different teachers, and while Paul Washer is a true man, i dont gravitate towards his message. Mind you, if i was to fellowship with him, break bread, we'd have a wonderful time in Christ.

I could delineate WHY i don't gravitate towards Paul Washer, but its not necessary...and you posting such a video is NOT insensitive, not in the least, its sharing, and i love you for it.

Good message, what i got out is, we have to be careful with ripping the tares, coz we'll yank wheat too, and that is sad.

i have read BB Warfield's article once, and do need to read it again, it's very good.

Have you ever read Bonhoeffer's "Life Together"? I find that book, written based on his experiences headed up a secret seminary in nazi germany, a sort of primer on how we configurelife together.

i guess thats what i long for, life together with other followers of Jesus...."communal"? to an extent, meaning nothing is "mandated". "cultish"? God forbid.

Bud, let me close this, coz i'm fading, and tell you, i've been crafting what i call the "Order of Service" as the Lord leads...it would be a worship service, more like "worship sharing", where all congregants can share with each other, heart testimony, share burdens, share Scripture, share tears, share victory, with Jesus as The Pastor.

God carress you in your sleep tonight, neil

Re: to Paul (giggles) - posted by jimp, on: 2010/7/18 23:46

hi,Jesus is the head of the church and i am His.we won already at the cross and ressurection.praise Him!jimp

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by osandoval, on: 2010/7/19 18:42

brother Neil,

I wholeheartedly agree with your post. I think part of the problem is the issue of focusing on building "church buildings" as opposed to following the pattern we see in the New Testament, namely, house churches. I would encourage my brothers and sisters to consider this website and the information therein: www.ntrf.org (particularly an article entitled "Toward A House Church Theology").

I know that "house churches" per se are not the answer, as there are many "dead" ones out there right now. But I believe it would be a good step toward the answer, as it helps to foster genuine Christian community.

Along with the problem of focusing on buildings, comes the problem of the hierarchical "clergy/laity" system where the equality of every believer under the Headship of Christ and the priesthood of all believers(1Pet.2:5,9), is no longer visible. This system elevates the "clergy" above the "laity" and hinders the "laity" from operating in the gifts and callings of God upon their lives. It helps make them lukewarm "pew sitters", and it creates a "One Man Show" mentality, where the gifted pastor is seen as the star of the show(Sunday Service)for all to see and idolize and marvel at. In 1Cor.14 we see clear

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r commands on how the church is to operate during church meetings. Most of those commands are completely ignored in today's church system, such as the command to allow participatory activity from every believer during the meetings. A couple thoughts for the brethren who believe that the title of "Pastor" is biblical. The Bible does teach that God has given pastors/teachers to His Church for its edification, just as he gave apostles, prophets and evangelists (Eph.4:7). However, those giftings, callings, or functions are nowhere described as "titles" of superiority for Christians to wear. Nowhere in the NT do we see anything like "Pastor so and so", "Evangelist so and so", "Prophet so and so", or even "Apostle so and so". In Matt.23:8-12 Jesus clearly forbade them from placing any titles of that sort on themselves. Why? because it elevates one Christian above another. Someone says, what about the authority that is given to pastors/elders? That authority is given to them to protect the sheep from wolves and heresy, not to lord it over God's people (1Pet.5:3). They are His sheep, and He is their Pastor.

With regard to the Church failing, yes, but God has always had a remnant. And even today within this traditional church system there is a remnant of true believers in Christ. And I believe God is stirring up many of His remnant to long for New Testament book of Acts Christianity. I believe He is saying to His sheep, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches".

In Matthew 15:3 our Lord asked the Pharisees, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

In general, much of the church has strayed from biblical church life for the sake of man-made traditions.
Oracio

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by phi_rho, on: 2010/7/19 21:45

I agree with a lot of what you said, except mainly the part about leadership. I agree that titles get abused, but they roles are biblical. I'm not going to get into an argument on that, because we share the same frustration, so let's get past the minutiae.

There is a current revival taking place in Kansas City. The power of God is evident, but not just as a Charismatic Free-For-All. People get healed, lives get changed, and many people have found it worth the effort and pain to uproot themselves from their homes and relocate just to be where God is.

What is more overwhelming to me, besides just the evidence of the Holy Spirit, is the conviction in the Word preached. It has produced a healthy body of people, who have been trained to respond to the Word of God by changing, and allowing God to bring them closer and closer to perfection. The pastor (pardon the expression for those of you who despise the 5-fold ministry) doesn't just speak on how much God loves us despite our faults, but he brings to light fresh revelation that isn't just a regurgitation of denominational instruction.

Another fresh facet of this revival is the direction it is going. It isn't just circling around on anointing or inaugural event (as if revolving around some imminent drain to bring it to its demise like every other move of God), but the people (not just guests or leadership) want MORE of God. They want to grow, expand and mature in what God has for them, not just enjoy "drunkenness" (a word I wince at when blurted by Charismatics).

If you are interested in seeing for yourself, look up World Revival Church, they are on YouTube, Daystar, and their own website. There really is something unique and fresh happening, and almost the entire congregation is hungry for God like most of us here. I really hope this reaches out to the people here, as it seems this is a website for people hungry for the REAL, POWERFUL, CORRECTING Father that we have.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/7/19 23:13

hi, 1 million latinos are becoming born again christians every 6 weeks ... 1 million chinese every 4 weeks ... 1 hundred thousand moslems this year so far...give to missions or go to the field and see the great real revivals going on around the world from efforts and monies from us ...Jesus is in charge of His bride.jimp

Re: To Neil - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/7/20 1:22

Blessings to you Neil. Your heart is something to be coveted in this hour. In humble response to your post, I submit to you:

I asked about your definition of a "winning" church only because the thread's topic is that of a failing church. If we are failing, there is the possibility we could not fail, that is, to put it crassly: win/succeed/etc. And in a way, that is almost the question behind the question or thought behind the thought. We are failing but only because we are not winning, which would look like this _____ (fill in the blank). I anticipated your response and for that I beg forgiveness for my presumption, as you didn't seem to go there.

I thought you, as many people do to show the inadequacy of the modern church, would appeal to primarily the Church of Acts and perhaps revival era churches in as secondary support to show how miserably subpar the current church is. This is why I had a point three arguing for the unique nature of the first church, as well as the distinctly human element (the sin, the sectarianism, the heresy, the legalism, etc) that most certainly shows these people were anything but perfected divines of sainthood. Most people tend to hagiography when they recount the early church, and then they compare their elevated view of it to the worst of the worst in today's church so the difference is emphasized. So without denying the awesome nature of that first church, I wanted to also convey it, that were it not for God's divine purpose of establishing them as the foundation of His church universal, they would not appear so different from us today.

I would cautiously say the same for revival era churches. I have heard many cliches from various revival preachers that revival should be the norm for the church. To that I say a resounding no. If that was the norm, then it would be the norm. Those times are also uniquenesses in the history of the church that should be treasured for what they are and realized for what they aren't (to the former, the bar of measure; to the latter, above reproach, for we are prone to ignore their faults and exalt their high marks).

And so without digressing further from our subject... You concurred with that premise, at least in regard to the early church, but then you immediately concluded that that reasonable proposition (the early church was unique in nature) has brought us to "roman-lite." Can you please explain how this is so? Why their being unique defaults us to roman-lite? Or if it is a necessary result, how then that is not God's plan, for what other way could we have?

As far as the global state of things, I couldn't agree more that persecution and chaos could be the necessary ingredients to invoke some sort of awakening-type atmosphere, whether for professing Christians to get serious and/or unbelievers to come unto Christ.

You said and asked: "the "Rock" of Peter, as I read it, was THE CONFESSION, this FIRST Confession, "You are the Son of God", is what the Body of Christ is built on....can we agree on that?"

Absolutely. We are agreed. You went on to mention Hernhutt to which I would also agree was an expression of the true Church of Christ. But I would also say that there's a thousand other Hernhutt like peoples, albeit on much smaller scales (perhaps even on an individual person scale) that history has not recorded. To go back to the Old Testament Israel/Church typology, a Hernhutt would be like an Elijah. A definite, historical phenomenon. But we cannot forget that God had 7,000 other men who were completely His as well, but we get no mention of their names, and this was in a most apostate Israel under the most egregious and idolatrous king. Yet they were there, and so it is throughout history. There is always a definite group in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and large apostate professing church.

Now you did say this: "I feel I would be scaling the heights of arrogance if I was ever to breathe the attribute "true" in relation to my walk, or to a congregation I belonged to as being the "true". Implication being, others are false, and the way I see it, that's in God's Jurisdiction, mindful of the words of Gamaliel in Acts..."

With respect to the Gamaliel passage, I do not think it is out of the realm of safe exegesis to say that the Bible certainly encourages a believer to test his or her faith against criteria it lays out, and so while humility and brokenness should be our aim, let us not also treat as common what the Father has sanctified as holy by the blood of His Son. If you are His, then

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There is no shame in admitting and even rejoicing in that revelation, for it is His merit and work that saved you. He purchased you with His blood, knowing that He would not see you perfected till heaven (or second coming or....well this isn't an eschatological or glorification discussion, so whenever that may be), and yet He wanted you nonetheless. Jesus saves the unrighteous and sick, not the self-righteous and those in no need of a physician.

Perhaps, it is in retrospect that one can more safely judge fruit biblically, at least in grayer areas. I'm sure neither of us would have trouble declaring Mormonism or Jehovah's Witnesses or Muslims as thoroughly false. And this is because, yes there is a false. There is a true. Jesus said He was the true vine; there is a false one (the vine of the earth Rev. 14:18-19). So I wholly endorse a humility and modesty and caution when it comes to making claims to true and false churches, but let us not attempt to live above the scriptures which endorse distinguishing between true religion and false, for the sake of salvific purposes. We are continually exhorted to not to follow false preaching and teaching, not to deceive ourselves with our religious pretenses, and to hunger, thirst, and seek after righteousness and truth. Somewhere in that lines must be drawn.

Now I'm not trying to hammer out specifics here, as far as doctrinal and praxial differences within the realm of biblical, historical Christianity. I am merely saying that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom and life and light and you can not hide that.

I feel I'm digressing now.

I appreciate you listening to the Washer message and was in no way asking you to endorse all he stands for by acknowledging what he is presenting in that snippet. All I was asking is for you to hear the message delivered; it could have been anyone giving that word. I know Mr. Washer has a sort of iconic status, to where many hold him as infallible. I do not. I merely appreciate his high view of the Bride of Christ and the work of Christ to secure and preserve her. And I think that is what you saw. There is tares with the wheat, that shouldn't make the wheat any less wheat though, right?

All I am arguing for is that Christ's Bride is whole and she is glorious because He has redeemed and regenerated her and is committed to completing that work. That does happen within the context of a sinful world and a messy church sub-culture, as evidenced by the original church. The point of all of that dear brother was to encourage you to not lose heart. Your heart is tender, your spirit poor, your soul perhaps even mournful. The Bible calls you blessed my friend.

As for that Bonhoeffer work I haven't read it, but will put it on my list. Bonhoeffer is one I would love to dive into though. I have truthfully only got through maybe a third of *The Cost of Discipleship* and have not even cracked that copy of *Ethics* I got for Christmas a few years back. Also, just ordered the bio on him that was recently published. O Lord save me from being merely a book collector...let me be a reader!

You closed with this, "I guess that's what I long for, life together with other followers of Jesus...."communal"? to an extent, meaning nothing is "mandated". "cultish"? God forbid."

Perhaps you could expound this more? This might be the heart of why you see failure everywhere. You are longing and searching for this, but can't seem to find it.

"I've been crafting what I call the "Order of Service" as the Lord leads....it would be a worship service, more like "worship sharing", where all congregants can share with each other, heart testimony, share burdens, share Scripture, share tears, share victory, with Jesus as The Pastor."

This sounds a little like what trendy church engineers would call a small group setting. I say that only to encourage you that life is out there. People are yearning for this; it's just that broken, human people are engaging them. Please let us not live reactionary lifestyles that throw the baby out with the bathwater because mainstreamers water-down and secularize legitimate biblical concepts.

EDIT: Grammar, clarity.

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/7/20 1:42

Dear Brother Oracio,

I saw this comment you wrote:

"A couple thoughts for the brethren who believe that the title of "Pastor" is biblical. The Bible does teach that God has given pastors/teachers to His Church for its edification, just as he gave apostles, prophets and evangelists(Eph.4:7). However, those giftings, callings, or functions are nowhere described as "titles" of superiority for Christians to wear. Nowhere in the NT do we see anything like "Pastor so and so", "Evangelist so and so", "Prophet so and so", or even "Apostle so and so".

I was compelled to encourage you to re-read the introduction verses of the epistles. You will find Paul and Peter consistently appealing to their apostleship as their authority to be writing instruction to their respective audiences (which includes us too). Paul specifically and constantly defended his authority as an apostle as well: 1 Cor. 4, 1 Cor. 9, 2 Cor. 11-12. As for the authority that comes with this apostleship, Peter writes 2 Pet. 3:2. And Paul describes it in 2 Cor. 10 and 13.

I only mention this for your personal edification and that you may rightly divide the word of truth. I understand the abuse of these office titles that is prevalent today. Let us not throw the baby out with the bathwater though because certain people are abusing a biblical concept. Closely tied with Paul's apostleship was a role as spiritual father and mentor. He used the spiritual weight rightly given by the Lord in a way that Jesus used His: as a servant-leader, not a tyrant/king/etc.

Edit: Grammar

Re: - posted by phi_rho, on: 2010/7/20 2:57

I tried to put up a video, but for some reason it didn't work. How do I put them on this site? Anyways, here's the link to a recent testimony reel from World Revival Church of Kansas City.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ND80STabP8g>

Re: - posted by osandoval, on: 2010/7/20 3:21

Dear brother Paul,

You wrote,

Quote:
-----I was compelled to encourage you to re-read the introduction verses of the epistles. You will find Paul and Peter consistently appealing to their apostleship as their authority to be writing instruction to their respective audiences (which includes us too). Paul specifically and constantly defended his authority as an apostle as well: 1 Cor. 4, 1 Cor. 9, 2 Cor. 11-12. As for the authority that comes with this apostleship, Peter writes 2 Pet. 3:2. And Paul describes it in 2 Cor. 10 and 13.

Thank you for your reply. In Paul's introduction to his epistles we see statements such as "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ" and "Paul, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ". The same thing goes for Peter's epistles. But that is much different than giving themselves a "title" name. You will never find anywhere in the NT statements like "Apostle Paul" or "Apostle Peter". They simply state what function, gifting, or calling they operate in within Christ's Church. It's like me saying, "Oracio, an evangelist of Jesus Christ" instead of "Evangelist Oracio". Believe it or not there is a huge difference. A difference on which abuse of one's functional gifting hinges.

I understand that the first century apostles had a special authority over all the churches in the early church. They were clothed with divine authority as the founders of the Church of Jesus Christ and writers of the New Testament Scriptures. We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets(the NT and OT Scriptures), Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone(Eph.2:20). There is no question about that. But not even they took upon themselves a prestigious title, because the Lord had warned them not to do so(how else do you interpret Matt.23:6-12?). If the apostles themselves were careful not to place titles on themselves, how much more careful should pastors/elders be? They do not have the same level of authority that the first apostles did. The current main stream church system sets them up on a pedestal that is forbidden biblically. Case in point: in the early church there was no such thing as an elevated pulpit in a church with chairs(thrones) behind it. They met in homes of believers and shared their spiritual gifts with one another mutually. There was much participation among the brethren. There was much stirring one another up to zeal and good works for the Lord. The p

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pastors/elders were there to set things in order so that there would not be heresy allowed, and also to teach the Word of God. But they were not the only ones who were allowed to teach, because they were not the only ones who had gifts of teaching.

Was there teaching/preaching to larger crowds than would fit in a house church? Of course, but not in the regular church meetings, because they were not to be a one man show. Someone says, "what about the huge churches we read about like the church in the city of Ephesus? Surely they were too big to fit in a house". I say yes, but the churches in each city were made up of networks of small house churches. In other words, they were broken up into house churches, making each church like a closely knit family.

My main point is that in the early church the pastors/elders did not lord over the church meetings as we see today. And of course they were not perfect, but they excelled in many things of which we lack today. My hope and prayer is that we get back to the basics as much as possible, that's all. From what I've heard and read, the underground house churches in China resemble the early church in many things. Maybe it will come down to persecution being an instrument to get us back to that resemblance. Blessings to you as you seek the Lord.

Oracio

Re: A word of caution - posted by makrothumia (), on: 2010/7/20 8:25

To those who have attended the Revival Conferences and believe in the work that Sermon Index is currently involved, please consider this prayerfully.

How can this statement -

I couldn't agree more Natan4. Especially about the man-made abominable "office" held by people titled with holy names like pastor, reverend, bishop, father, my lord, eminence, his holiness, or even "brother"..... you know, the Clergy. They EXPECT to be addressed in this manner by the Laity. Been there, seen that, won't do it.

- be reconciled with the fact that nearly every speaker and message posted on this sight has come from someone who is currently or has served at some time previously in the role of pastor?

The Lord Jesus will call men into account for words that condemn the innocent. God has many of his servants, who have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, serving in the role of pastor. Those who would condemn men whom the Lord has ordained will give account one day for their words. Abuses of authority do not negate that the origin of all authority is God. Yes even shepherds - those whom the Holy Spirit has made overseers.

makrothumia

Re: - posted by osandoval, on: 2010/7/20 11:07

brothers and sisters, in light of the last post I will try and to make a few clarifications, in hope that I and others like myself would not be misunderstood(though I know that is sometimes inevitable).

I am not denying the fact that there are many sincere and godly, anointed men who operate in the role of "Pastor" within the institutional church systems of today. I would be foolish and sectarian to do so.

Our contention is the fact that the "church systems" themselves work against these godly men instead of for them and the Church. These systems help to foster certain prideful attitudes that are prevalent among the pastors of today. The pastors become victims of a faulty unbiblical system. Is it their fault? Partly yes and partly no.

What we are hoping and praying for is a radical reformation of the Church as we know it in large part. The protestant reformation brought about great advancement in the kingdom of God regarding the true gospel of Jesus Christ being restored, and the Scriptures being accessible to the common people. But with that reformation much of the baggage of Rome was brought into the Church. Instead of a man-made hierarchical priesthood we now had hierarchical man-made "pastor-hood", etc. We still kept the unbiblical "clergy/laity" system, a system that has crippled much of the Church of Jesus Christ and kept her from shining as she was meant to. Blessings.

Oracio

General Topics :: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?, on: 2010/7/21 15:57

Neil, you hit the nail on the head. I totally agree. I'm so happy that I wasn't the only one. Thanks you for posting and please post more.

The church today does not reflect God's heart.

Re: - posted by StevenL (), on: 2010/7/24 11:46

Hi. I will receive your word of caution. Thank you.

However, I've gotten over the fear of God's damnation for "lifting my hand against God's 'anointed' " long ago. That is a common tool of the "clergy" to make sure the phony office is revered and feared by the laity and to solidify the power structure within the temple.

I will respect any elder whom the Spirit has made an overseer, when I see one. Of course, the function of overseer is necessary for any gathering of the called-out.

I've been among the herds of those who've "addicted themselves to the ministry" and have found that most of the "addiction" was self-inflicted (including mine at one point.) I've seen the angry infighting over which addict was to be the God-called leader over this flock or that, the differences in "Spirit-given" opinions among the addicts, the smothering by the addicts of the actual Spirit-given giftings among the laity, the smug "please call me 'BROTHER Jim' from the addicts, the "holily" awe-inspiring voices of the addicts as they preach, or pray, or preside over their weddings and funerals (as if these were part of their God-given duties), varying their voices from the normal human timbre to showcase the gravity of their office. I could expand this to a novel, but I won't. :)

The Lord will call ALL people into account, for whatever they've said and done. His people need have no fear that speaking or acting against those who take the robe of "the Lord's Anointed" upon themselves will receive any hotter fires of hell than anyone else. The Lord will even call men into account for threatening sheep with judgement and damnation without cause.

Yes, all authority is given by God. The authority of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was given by God, and that of Alexander the Great, of the Caesars of Rome, of Hitler, even the devil who promotes the God-given "strong delusion" for those who reject the love of the Truth, which includes the authority of the false priesthood within the "church". Not all authority is to be followed. Recognized, yes, but not followed.

Thank God for the prophets and overseers who teach and preach and lead, but there are none "reverend" among them. The Lord, He is Reverend. And those among even those whose words are archived here, who crave that Title or others, are to be avoided. Possibly listened to.....even Balaam spoke true Words of God.... but not followed. We humans, saved or otherwise, have a great need/desire to be positively distinguished from others (study the word pharisee). Oh yes, YOU (anyone reading this silly discourse) have it too. This one of things we are called to OVERCOME while we're in this Fire.

That said, I really do appreciate any word of caution from a brother or sister in the Anointed. But afraid of speaking against a false priesthood? Not in the least. May all of His sheep lose that fear. God is not going to damn you. :)

Dear Paul "giggles", on: 2010/8/5 1:39

I have been truly remiss by not responding to the outpourings of the riches of your heart in Christ, forgive me.

So that may I adequately respond to your post, I'm going to cut and paste it HERE, so that our brothers and sisters may reference it. In your encouragement as to my 'heart', you give me blessings upon blessings, I doubt I could ever repay, for I know all too well, the innate darkness of my heart of stone, that Jesus is taking a pick axe to.

Your response:

"Blessings to you Neil. Your heart is something to be coveted in this hour. In humble response to your post, I submit to you:

I asked about your definition of a "winning" church only because the thread's topic is that of a failing church. If we are failing, there is the possibility we could not fail, that is, to put it crassly: win/succeed/etc. And in a way, that is almost the qu

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question behind the question or thought behind the thought. We are failing but only because we are not winning, which would look like this _____ (fill in the blank). I anticipated your response and for that I beg forgiveness for my presumption, as you didn't seem to go there.

I thought you, as many people do to show the inadequacy of the modern church, would appeal to primarily the Church of Acts and perhaps revival era churches in as secondary support to show how miserably subpar the current church is. This is why I had a point three arguing for the unique nature of the first church, as well as the distinctly human element (the sin, the sectarianism, the heresy, the legalism, etc) that most certainly shows these people were anything but perfected divines of sainthood. Most people tend to hagiography when they recount the early church, and then they compare their elevated view of it to the worst of the worst in today's church so the difference is emphasized. So without denying the awesome nature of that first church, I wanted to also convey it, that were it not for God's divine purpose of establishing them as the foundation of His church universal, they would not appear so different from us today.

I would cautiously say the same for revival era churches. I have heard many cliches from various revival preachers that revival should be the norm for the church. To that I say a resounding no. If that was the norm, then it would be the norm. Those times are also uniqueness in the history of the church that should be treasured for what they are and realized for what they aren't (to the former, the bar of measure; to the latter, above reproach, for we are prone to ignore their faults and exalt their high marks).

And so without digressing further from our subject... You concurred with that premise, at least in regard to the early church, but then you immediately concluded that that reasonable proposition (the early church was unique in nature) has brought us to "roman-lite." Can you please explain how this is so? Why their being unique defaults us to roman-lite? Or if it is a necessary result, how then that is not God's plan, for what other way could we have?

As far as the global state of things, I couldn't agree more that persecution and chaos could be the necessary ingredients to invoke some sort of awakening-type atmosphere, whether for professing Christians to get serious and/or unbelievers to come unto Christ.

You said and asked: "'the "Rock" of Peter, as I read it, was THE CONFESSION, this FIRST Confession, "You are the Son of God", is what the Body of Christ is built on....can we agree on that?'

Absolutely. We are agreed. You went on to mention Hernhutt to which I would also agree was an expression of the true Church of Christ. But I would also say that there's a thousand other Hernhutt like peoples, albeit on much smaller scales (perhaps even on an individual person scale) that history has not recorded. To go back to the Old Testament Israel/Church typology, a Hernhutt would be like an Elijah. A definite, historical phenomenon. But we cannot forget that God had 7,000 other men who were completely His as well, but we get no mention of their names, and this was in a most apostate Israel under the most egregious and idolatrous king. Yet they were there, and so it is throughout history. There is always a definite group in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and large apostate professing church.

Now you did say this: "I feel I would be scaling the heights of arrogance if I were ever to breathe the attribute "true" in relation to my walk, or to a congregation I belonged to as being the "true". Implication being, others are false, and the way I see it, that's in God's Jurisdiction, mindful of the words of Gamaliel in Acts..."

With respect to the Gamaliel passage, I do not think it is out of the realm of safe exegesis to say that the Bible certainly encourages a believer to test his or her faith against criteria it lays out, and so while humility and brokenness should be our aim, let us not also treat as common what the Father has sanctified as holy by the blood of His Son. If you are His, there is no shame in admitting and even rejoicing in that revelation, for it is His merit and work that saved you. He purchased you with His blood, knowing that He would not see you perfected till heaven (or second coming or....well this isn't an eschatological or glorification discussion, so whenever that may be), and yet He wanted you nonetheless. Jesus saves the unrighteous and sick, not the self-righteous and those in no need of a physician.

Perhaps, it is in retrospect that one can more safely judge fruit biblically, at least in grayer areas. I'm sure neither of us would have trouble declaring Mormonism or Jehovah's Witnesses or Muslims as thoroughly false. And this is because, yes there is a false. There is a true. Jesus said He was the true vine; there is a false one (the vine of the earth Rev. 14:18-19). So I wholly endorse a humility and modesty and caution when it comes to making claims to true and false churches, but let us not attempt to live above the scriptures which endorse distinguishing between true religion and false, for the sake of salvific purposes. We are continually exhorted to not to follow false preaching and teaching, not to deceive ourselves with our religious pretenses, and to hunger, thirst, and seek after righteousness and truth. Somewhere in that lines

must be drawn.

Now I'm not trying to hammer out specifics here, as far as doctrinal and praxy differences within the realm of biblical, historical Christianity. I am merely saying that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom and life and light and you can not hide that.

I feel I'm digressing now.

I appreciate you listening to the Washer message and was in no way asking you to endorse all he stands for by acknowledging what he is presenting in that snippet. All I was asking is for you to hear the message delivered; it could have been anyone giving that word. I know Mr. Washer has a sort of iconic status, to where many hold him as infallible. I do not. I merely appreciate his high view of the Bride of Christ and the work of Christ to secure and preserve her. And I think that is what you saw. There is tares with the wheat, that shouldn't make the wheat any less wheat though, right?

All I am arguing for is that Christ's Bride is whole and she is glorious because He has redeemed and regenerated her and is committed to completing that work. That does happen within the context of a sinful world and a messy church sub-culture, as evidenced by the original church. The point of all of that dear brother was to encourage you to not lose heart. Your heart is tender, your spirit poor, your soul perhaps even mournful. The Bible calls you blessed my friend.

As for that Bonhoeffer work I haven't read it, but will put it on my list. Bonhoeffer is one I would love to dive into though. I have truthfully only got through maybe a third of *The Cost of Discipleship* and have not even cracked that copy of *Ethics* I got for Christmas a few years back. Also, just ordered the bio on him that was recently published. O Lord save me from being merely a book collector...let me be a reader!

You closed with this, "i guess thats what i long for, life together with other followers of Jesus...."communal"? to an extent, meaning nothing is "mandated". "cultish"? God forbid."

Perhaps you could expound this more? This might be the heart of why you see failure everywhere. You are longing and searching for this, but can't seem to find it.

"i've been crafting what i call the "Order of Service" as the Lord leads....it would be a worship service, more like "worship sharing", where all congregants can share with each other, heart testimony, share burdens, share Scripture, share tears, share victory, with Jesus as The Pastor."

This sounds a little like what trendy church engineers would call a small group setting. I say that only to encourage you that life is out there. People are yearning for this; it's just that broken, human people are engaging them. Please let us not live reactionary lifestyles that throw the baby out with the bathwater because mainstreamers water-down and secularize legitimate biblical concepts."

(my discussion with you will be next, my love to you in Jesus, neil)

in loving response to Paul, the re-post immediately below, on: 2010/8/5 3:44

Paul,

lets talk about "winning church" first?

as God would have it, in my morning devotionals, i was in Matthew 20 this morning, the part where the mother of the Zebedee boys, apostles yes, she was asking of the Lord to get her boys the best seat in the house, to His Right and to His Left....and something just HIT me.

Within the Faith, do we all do that?

After Jesus queried her, in essence, are they willing to drink the cup I have to drink, meaning torture, scorn, humiliation...are they willing to go ALL THE WAY?

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at that point (btw i'm referencing Matthew 20:20-28) the OTHER TEN disciples heard of this "clerical jockeying of position" and they were "indignant".

Of course they were indignant, because they wanted the Left and Right, themselves but didn't have their mama's meddling. I put "clerical jockeying of position" in quotes, because that's what I wrote in a journal I've been keeping on the attributes of Revival.

But Jesus gave us the plumbline when He said to the 12,

"But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them". MT 20:25

and here's what He said to us...US.

"It shall not be so among you." MT;20:26a

THAT IS HUGE, that's how we fail, when we try to ego our way over one another in the Faith, and then Jesus charges us with the hard part....hard, but totally essential:

"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26 b-28

let me quote that again

"It shall not be so among you"

in the modern, post modern church, we always have a human tendency to be out front, to lead, to be in "leadership", and brother, I ain't preaching anarchy, but instead ask this question,

how may I serve you?

that's an easy question because it's coming from thousands of miles away, but maybe a "winning church" would be a collection of saints, each more than willing to serve the other, each more than willing to just listen to another's pain and struggle, triumphs and victories, rather than to expound, proclaim and preach.

to refrain from clerical jockeying of position.

(that's my first response to your post)

can I go further on what "winning" might look like?

and it came AGAIN from Matthew 20.

right after Jesus gave the disciples the concept of the heart of the servant, was the Lord healing the two blind men outside of Jericho.

these two poor souls must HAVE BEEN SHRIEKING, can you imagine the din and screaming, so much so, the crowd must of been saying SHUT UP!! the Bible says

"The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" Matthew 20:31

These blind men must have been so so desperate, and here's the note I wrote in my journal, it was the second of three notes I wrote this morning under the heading "Three things that hinder the church today"...and here's the second note:

"Judgement over those who need salvation SO BADLY"

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People act in so many different ways when they feel that LONGING and pulling of Jesus on their hearts, and we who may be of sober conviction and temperament, might be inclined to look down upon them and rebuke them.

Its almost like when we see the poor souls that line up for healing from the likes of a Benny Hinn, or Todd Bentley, and we might privately think to ourselves, 'what poor deluded souls could ever believe that a Hinn or Bentley carries with them the Holy Spirit, empty rain cloud wolves in sheep clothing those two are?'

What if we were in a gathering, and the most weird looking AIDS carrying transsexual prostitute, sitting in the congregation began crying and shrieking out to Jesus, "heal me!! make me whole again!! Please Jesus, please!"

First of all, I would consider us blessed indeed if we DID have a such welcoming environment that a transsexual prostitute would even join us for a gathering, but how would we react if such a dear soul was to come unglued with conviction and loudly beg mercy from God?

and then you go to verse 34, and Wonderful Jesus shows us, I love this verse (for special reason)

"And Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him." Matthew 20:34

"And Jesus in pity touched their eyes"

not trying to be contentious, but let me drag out a word with a whole lotta baggage on it.

"humanist"---I'm well aware of how the word is both perceived and used in 21st century vernacular, it carries with it the baggage of secular liberalism, and that's sad, because the way I see it, it's misused.

"and Jesus in pity" He loved them, he saw their bitter station in life, he pitied them, he took mercy upon them and HE HEALED THEM.

I see a lot of my secular friends on Facebook today hooraying that California's Prop 8 was overturned, and I'm not mad, I'm not whipped up into righteous indignation, of course this nation is falling and falling big, but there are 26 other symptomatic reasons this country is gone astray, and if the gays want to get married...let 'em! Fine, but I just felt pity for the whole mass of folk hooraying that deal.

I'm very serious about that, I felt pity, eyes so blinded, but within the Body of believers, we better start squaring away our own marriage/divorce rates, and I myself have failed miserably on that account. If some brothers want to rail against the homosexuals and the marriage thing, go for it, but just remember two words, "Ted Haggard".

As I said before, if we, for example, had the kind of gathering that would draw gay, homosexual, transsexual, however you term them, into our gatherings. I would be so thrilled in the Holy Spirit, I just beg Jesus and the Holy Spirit to convict their hearts and heal them, make them trophies of Grace..

So that's a high wire act that only God could engineer, we don't soft soap on sin, but at the same time, how could we be used of God, to draw the most hardened of sinners into our gatherings?

The third note I made was this;

I read of the Triumphal Entry, and the first thing Jesus does is go into the Temple and rip apart the money aspect, that foolish greedy tendency of man, to make a "vocation" of God.

"I'm going into the Ministry"

There is NOTHING wrong with that statement, nor is there anything wrong with a man or woman of God to be supported in their CALLED Ministry, but that's where we get into a lot of trouble.

It's true, so many of the mainline denominations, where a young man, or in other cases makes the statement, I'm going into ministry

nistry, like a "job" statement.....

or what about the hellish charade that say TBN is?

TBN makes me more "Old Testament" angry, than most obvious national sin issues, same thing when i was visiting todd bentley's website the other day, everything's about the money, and Jesus won't have it

let me look over your post.....lets talk about the Early Church, Acts....(and i need to close for today, because it is late, 2:15 AM, but i do so lovingly want to discuss and pray)

of course we can never go back. we cant go back to Jerusalem 40-70 AD, but just consider this.

Times are so bad, financially, geopolitically, there's a push to kill the middle class in America, which is what let us become so isolated from one another. Maybe God is going to rip our wealth from us, rip our abundant food from us, and we might have toband together, to share...i dont know. I might be speaking foolish.

It feels like the world is powderkeg just awaiting the match, 'religious' wars abound, resources grow scarce, we've all forgotten a lot of the old skills, how to make food, how to make paper, how to train a horse, i could on.

But what if a day comes, when the ekklesia is a gathering where we gather, because we can't do it alone anymore?

When i feel lame and heartbroken, i do dream of that lil church building in Boaz Wisconsin, and for Some Reason, Jesus comforts me with that thought.

I just took my son by there, and there are vines growing over the front doorway, and i pointed out to him, that in this town of 137, that there are three pitiful country bars, one United methodist church (no comment) and one stout, non-attended, sturdy, built in 1917 abandoned church building, and asked the dear boy, "dont you think there's something wrong with this picture?"

when i think of that little church, i want to make some money and buy it, and just give it to the Lord, beg Jesus to pastor it, and lay on my face in prayer, and that thought always comforts me, which might mean its a Calling, i dont know.

Oh dear Paul, i look over your rich post, and there is so much i want to expound on, but i'm weary.

my "yes" is that i will not again abandon a discussion you and i get into....and that includes the other posters on this thread, or any others.

May the Grace and Love of the Lord be with your spirit always, neil

Re: Dear Paul "giggles" - posted by Yeshuasboy (), on: 2010/8/5 5:29

Nathan, when you speak of the "serving one another" part as the Lord commanded, I believe, you're also making reference to the 2nd chapter of the Book Of Acts where the believers had all things in common. Indeed, that is the true body of believers.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/8/5 7:24

hi, i have to rant again...all of the critics need to get together and form an evangelistic team that shakes the world as they did in acts and quit demeaning Jesus who is the head of His church as a failure...i have seen thousands saved and filled with the Holy Spirit in my life and still see the same today...how pompous do you have to be to criticize without being broken and humbled by our own failure to be aflame with Jesus' love toward the lost and motivated to action.do not talk or type unless your worn out from praying and witnessing and demonstrating the love of Jesus...in my time with Len Ravenhill he never was negative...he was always trying to get people into action and unction.jimp

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Re: , on: 2010/8/5 14:35

jim, i recant the word i used, 'failure', or 'failing'. call me anything but 'pompous', or i venture to say by implication, 'arrogant', as if i somehow i had a handle on the right end of the stick.

may God strike me down NOW if i be anything like a hypocrite pompous arrogant, know it all, cassandra sky is falling ph follower of Jesus.

not at all....and if so, may the Lord just blast me now.

it was dear Leonard Ravenhill, who put the concept of weeping between the porch and the altar in my heart.

i know i slammed hinn, bentley, tbn, and allow me to insert this amendment into my remarks, I bless God for one soul that comes to a saving Knowledge of Jesus Christ in one of those meetings. i also pray that such saved sinners keep their hands in their pockets and save resource for a lonely pair of missionaries, or their local church congregation.

jimp, you're a wise elder from what i've read of your postings, something is just gifting me spiritual indigestation, and it's part my heart/walk with Jesus, and the other part is within ecclesiastical fences hemming one in....something should be different, and i'm just trying to wrap my heart around It.

Re: , on: 2010/8/5 16:00

Hey jimp, there were many people who considered Ravenhill negative, of course I am not one of them and rejoice to hear a prophet speak. Also dear brother Tozer was similarly criticized, but equally untrue. The charges come from the hearers. To one a message is life and to another the same message is death. I think it was Finney who warned sternly to leave those alone who would cry out to the church to walk in a deeper walk with the Lord.

Many dear brothers and sisters that I know who cry out to God week after week for the church and for the people who call themselves by the name of our God, are some of the mostly Godly people, pastors, missionaries and so on, walking close with the Lord and touching their world for Jesus. I am not talking about the angry watchmen, I am talking about the broken-hearted and those who weep in their spirits for the glory of God to cover the earth.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/8/5 17:13

hi,i also hear the voice of reason in this place we find ourselves in today with sermons of greed and error.we must remember that the gates of hell are against the church but will not prevail. there are many negatives but we should not join with the accuser of the brethren and attack but we should go, pray and give so that these negatives are overcome by a continual swell of the move of God around the earth.sheep beget sheep so go compel the lost in your area of influence to come to the one that loved beyond measure,JESUS.jimp

Re: - posted by mguldner (), on: 2010/8/5 17:36

Quote:
-----Hey jimp, there were many people who considered Ravenhill negative, of course I am not one of them and rejoice to hear a prophet speak. Also dear brother Tozer was similarly criticized, but equally untrue.

Ah and wasn't there a pack of religious leaders in the New Testament who thought that John the Baptist was out of line? :) It seems the messenger always gets the heat when they speak the message the Lord gave them. Men truly love darkness and hate Light. I enjoy very much the messages of Ravenhill and will choose to step into the Light of truth that he presented. Sometimes doing this isn't comfortable kind of like someone flipping on a light when you have been walking in the dark it temporarily blinds you but if you let your eyes adjust its much better to have light than darkness.

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Re: in loving response to Paul, the re-post immediately below - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/8/8 0:58

Dear Neil,

Of first importance it must be said: there is never any need to repay any blessings, I in my weakness have given you. As freely as I have received, will I freely give.

As to your responses, forgive my sluggishness, but I still feel as though we are talking on different planes. I am in all of what you are saying and believe that in some degree that is happening all over the world, perhaps not always in literal shamed communities, but most certainly believers spending and being spent for one another. I can testify I have seen it, and humbly, have been able to join in that blessed spiritual culture.

All in all, I read your post and just see heart. There is no room for traditional forum dialogue here, which perhaps could be a supreme blessing. I do see little tingeants I would like to pursue with you to define further from your perspective of this most refining-all-on-the-altar-ish-Psalm 42-meets-Psalm 39 place you seem to be in, but I feel they would not take shape and tone properly in this context. Alas, perhaps another time.

Thank you for responding. There are some great insights I gleaned from your pursuits in Matthew and for that I am grateful, as well as for the intimate side you displayed. Writing this and contemplating your season, among the previously mentioned Psalms (which by no means may encapsulate your heart in this state of being), I find myself drawn to this statement for you from Psalm 69:5:

"Though I have stolen nothing, I still must restore it."

Blessings.

Re: 1700 years - posted by mkal, on: 2010/8/8 20:10

Interesting points, ideas, theology, speculation....and as well the true frustration of God's remnant people - which I believe many who come to this site are of this kind of remnant. I think if we look at the current climate, such as mass murder of babies, homosexuality rising like a wicked tide over our country, unacceptable divorce rates plaguing the church, lukewarm Christianity compromising in the form of seeker-friendly, watered-down gospel which perverts the very call of Christ, etc., we can see our problem is not just doctrinal. The Pharisees had their doctrines down, but the inside of the cup was full of wickedness. We need true repentance to come to the church. How large is the prayer meeting in your church? Ravenhill said the reason we don't have revival is that we are content to live without it. This is always the case. We all are sitting and waiting for leaders and prophets to arise to speak for God, with anointing and clarity and truth...but how will these salaried employees we tithe and pay arise under such Babylonian churchianity? This is not to say there are not godly leaders out there - just so few crying in the wilderness. Example: Go to any men's group in the local churches and speak of these things....that we ought to be on our faces crying out to God, that he may spare the people, as Joel spoke. Speak of the life of overcoming sin and of how the Bible is our answer, not psychology, not a 12-step group - no; it is a one-step plan - one step to the cross of Christ that is. Do you cry over your sins and the sin of the people around you? Do you weep over the lost people in your family, the lukewarm in church? Is there a fire in your belly tonight? Speak of such things at a small group in your church and you will hear the pastor next week warning us against trying to be super-duper Christians. True, we ought to be humble and poor in spirit - but we are also called clearly to be holy as He is holy. We ignore the clear teachings of the New Testament and prefer to live with Old Testament, externals. It is time for fire to be present in the bush again...time for men like Moses who have been 40 years in the desert to see God in the flames....time for ordinary men to find extra-ordinary fire and spread it.... As laymen we shall be mocked....as ministers we shall be called, that fiery man....Oh, it is just his calling. They called men like Tozer and Ravenhill prophets because they could not think of any other reason these men so assaulted our backslidden consciences. I know this all sounds harsh and radical - but is not cancer radical? What did the people of Israel do to the prophets of their day? The prophetic spirit is arising in our country (USA), but it is a hard thing to live with complete rejection of both the world and the modern church. I am glad my dentist was radical when she did the dental work last week. She could have said, "Now Michael I don't want to offend you, so I will not focus on the problem here." No; being a good dentist, she had to perform radical procedures to deal with the tooth - to save it! I know this illustration sounds foolish, but it is just so in our churches today. Who likes a cross? A cross speaks of death. We shun it, not realizing life is on the other side. Why has the old self been crucified? Do we know it has? It is so, as Romans 6.7 tells us, that we shall no longer be slaves to sin. Our freedom requires seeing the harsh taskmaster has been cut off and our emancipation day has come by the work of Christ; this frees us from bondage to sin. You know, 50 and 100 years ago in some of the denominations and camp meetings it was common for Christians to find the "second blessing," and whatever else it was termed. God is the same God today, regardless of what our labels may

be on experience. If a higher life (higher meaning really only the normal true New Testament life) were preached we could embrace it, see it in Scripture and cry out to God for the reality...but that is not being done...crying out over sin and our country, but as well over our personal failures and need for overcoming. God waits for us to seek him in tears, in repentance in prayer, falling to the dust before him. Your theology about revival, sanctification, baptism in the Spirit and so forth matters not if there is no fire, no cleansing, no love and holiness burning in your heart or mine. The point is simple:

"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning."
Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity."

Joel 2:12-13

Dear Paul, on: 2010/8/8 20:53

you wrote:

"I do see little tingeants I would like to pursue with you to define further from your perspective of this most refining-all-on-the-altar-ish-Psalm 42-meets-Psalm 39 place you seem to be in, but I feel they would not take shape and tone properly in this context. Alas, perhaps another time. "

so i prayerfully read (ate) Psalm 42, then Psalm 39.

It was good. Only such forthtelling can come from God the Holy Spirit, and it was good. God bless you abundantly, neil

Dear Michael -mkal, on: 2010/8/8 21:54

i thank you for posting, welcome to SI.

i don't know exactly what to say, or how to respond to your post.

i do know this, and this is just me, but if i ever start to think of myself as a "remnant", i'm a liar and a fool. A fool for not fearing God, Who know's a man's heart, just as Jesus wasn't swept along by the enthusiasm of the crowd's accolades, as such:

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man".

John 2:23-25 (ESV)

and a liar i would be, arrogant liar to consider myself "remnant", which in effect places myself over ANYBODY, and God knows better about this poster.

i KNOW what you meant by "remnant", and i do not mean any offense, nor divisiveness, or ill will towards you AT ALL. (cyber discussions can be difficult, because its so easy to be misunderstood)

your wrote this:

"True, we ought to be humble and poor in spirit - but we are also called clearly to be holy as He is holy."

In all respect and agape, we've GOT to be humble, and if driven, we've GOT to be poor in spirit, which is the pathway to

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blessing from God.

But there is no way this side of Heaven, I can be as holy as He is holy without the Blood....and even then.....

I know of what you write, "sanctification", a "Deeper Work", the "second blessing", and its good and right, just as 19th century and early 20th century camp meetings must have been truly wonderful places to seek the Lord.

But you know what I feel Michael?

Calamity's coming. It has to. Things have gone too far. You mentioned several national sins, and I could tack on a few more that relate to the ravenous appetites of empire, which is what we've become as a nation, murderous, lusting after greed, power, ease, comfort, resource, etc.

and like backslidden Israel of old, God will use nations like China and Iran to salt us with fire, to truly bring us to our knees, disaster, starvation, cities on fire.

We've never had that here, in America, yet. Its coming.

and when it does, those who are left, from them, the Nehemiah's will arise, and new foundations will be built.

May God bless you and again welcome to SI, Neil

Re: Dear Michael -mkal - posted by mkal, on: 2010/8/8 23:14

I guess you are right. I should not have used the term "remnant." You mentioned words regarding how the church is backslidden today...I was only thinking of those who have been hungering for God and finding restoration and growth (personal revival you might say in some cases) - certainly not to put anyone in a higher category. Yet, what good is salt if it has lost its saltiness....this convicts us of our not being whole-hearted disciples. Again, this is not to say I, or any disciple, is better or more worthy. In fact, I think for God to do his work in us, he must show us, even as Christians, the Adamic nature which yet clings, humbling us in dust - for grace only comes to the humble. Still to be humble, does not mean we are blind or not discerning of the condition of our present day church and country. There are certainly different places where we may be, such as the NT clearly states: 1 Corinthians 3:2 "I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready." Hebrews 5:12 "In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!" Hebrews 5:11-13 Hebrews 5:14 "But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." Once again, to look at the church today and not see the terrible bondages people are in, is to blind ourselves to the immaturity and the backslidden condition. Not all are backslidden; so then, what may we call those who are living for Christ, having some measure of victory over sin and love increasing, bearing fruit and so forth? We see that our children are in different classes. We do not expect children in grade school to be at the college level. We know they are not in the same class as their elders. We do not condemn them, but we certainly want them to go on in their training. God will do the work, but he does call us to seek him and be learners. So, to be humble does not mean we think all are at the same level; All his children are in the same family and we love them, of course. "Remnant," may conjure ideas of denoting a special class of people or some pharisaic thought. So, if this is the case, it is better to see what I am saying through another lens, through becoming his instruments, holy and useful:

2 Timothy 2:20-22

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. 21 If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

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my dear Michael, on: 2010/8/9 0:57

you asked:

so then, what may we call those who are living for Christ, having some measure of victory over sin and love increasing, bearing fruit and so forth?

may i submit this?

followers of Jesus.

Re: my dear Michael - posted by mkal, on: 2010/8/9 1:04

God Bless

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by Crux, on: 2010/8/13 23:51

Actually I'm not sure about that.

Re: crux, on: 2010/8/14 0:42

i don't understand your post.

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by Crux, on: 2010/8/14 3:29

As some Pastors are and have been in the past...they have been introducing ecumenic compromise, and so are many today. That might be the answer to why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?

Re: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years? - posted by Crux, on: 2010/8/14 3:33

As some Pastors are and have been in the past...they have been introducing ecumenic compromise, and so are many today. That might be the answer to why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2010/8/14 3:39

ginnyrose on 2010/7/17 12:11:32 writes:"

You made a lot of interesting points, most of which I agree. (The one I disagree with is in the calling of a man a 'pastor'. These terms are gleaned from Paul's writings to Timothy.)"

Can you quote the verses you have in mind?

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2010/8/20 23:42

Ron,

The reference I had in mind was the one found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Actually, the KJV uses the word bishop - am not sure what the difference is between the words pastor and bishop since both are to watch out for the well-being of their 'flocks'

.

In v. 8-13 Paul gives the qualifications needed for one to be ordained to be a deacon.

In Titus 1 Paul again details the qualifications that should characterize the persons who hold the office of a bishop and elders.

In Titus 1 Paul details some of the work required of a bishop: to stop the influence and work of deceivers - v. 11-13.

Does this answer your question?

ginnyrose

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Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2010/8/21 7:11

ginnyrose

the word 'bishop' is a translation of 'episkopos' which is someone who 'watches over'. This is the function of the eldership (in the Bible always plural). There is no trace in the New Testament of the kind of 'senior/teaching elder' that is the pattern in most evangelical churches.

The word 'pastor' means 'shepherd' but the title of 'pastor' was never used in the early church. It was not the 'office' but the function that that NT concentrates on.

The change from multiple eldership to a single person 'pastorate' took place in the early part of the 2nd century. This is not part of Biblical revelation, so we need to be very careful how we define non-biblical roles and the labels we give to them.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/8/21 7:54

hi, we have been failing because the church is made up with negative unaware people who do not see the millions of people around the world getting saved and some martyred for this conversion...some imprisoned .we are failing because people will point fingers and spend hours ranting about ministries and not a few minutes praying for the same. we are failing because we complain about our churches instead of making a difference in them with our intercession, action and support and leadership. we fail because we deny the leadership of Jesus as the head of the body. we fail because we argue about what was different in the church in acts and what goes on in the church now but would not consent to bring all of our monies and belongings to the church to be held in common. we fail because we are hypocrites...the whole world sees us and knows. i am glad i do not belong to that church. jimp

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2010/8/21 14:42

Quote:

we are failing because people will point fingers and spend hours ranting about ministries and not a few minutes praying for the same.

Are you not also pointing fingers and ranting here? ;)

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2010/8/21 15:50

hi, ranting yes ... if you felt i pointed a finger at you ...you pointed it at yourself ...but i pray much more than i rant and point. i am an old man who sometimes will not leave my room for many days in a row...jimp

Re: Spotlight on our miserable failure - posted by roadsign (), on: 2010/9/5 7:54

Quote:

----- and our forefathers, their forefathers in the Faith have failed miserably.

Quote:

Hello Neil, I haven't been around much, but felt compelled to pop in and pause here. Perhaps this is a Spirit nudge - I don't know.

What you say resonates with me, having spent considerable time in the theme of church history. I too have cried out to God: Oh, God, we humans have sure messed up! And yes, for 1700 years!

Unfortunately, as far as historical data, much of what comes down the hatch is subject to human interpretation and bias. It can be extremely negative and overly objectified - as if God hasn't been around at all. Is this how God sees human history? Is he wrenching his hands because his grand plan isn't working well? Hey! Where, HAS God been!! What HAS been doing? We struggle with this, don't we? And we know it would be foolish to gloss history over with romantic glitter.

I comment on a few of your words:

Quote:

----- the child of the devil Constantine

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Yes, he sure did put a devious spin on Christianity. But then, why did it take off - and last so resiliently? Is it his fault, or did he set in motion what was already destined to be a human bent - or more specifically, the outworking and continuation of divine judgment on humanity? (Consider Romans 1 and 2)

Quote:
----- look at our very liturgy itself, its almost like "roman-lite".

Interesting, "secular" historians of the church are saying the same thing: The reformation ended up as a reinvention of the "Old Church". I would attribute this to the pervasive rejection of Luther's original invitation: to the sweet liberty found in Christ. Luther himself became, not merely a perpetrator, but a victim of this human process. He reacted against it, to his own detriment. (But then, don't we all have a tendency to do that in the face of rejection?) Luther also made the grave mistake (also a human bent) of shifting to an ecclesial focus.

Quote:
----- this is not working saints,

I chuckled when I read this, not because it is funny, but because of the "lamelessness" of such a diagnosis, as far as its effectiveness in bringing about change. A prominent psychiatrist once said to me: "People are very resistant to change, even if they know that what they are doing doesn't work. They keep doing it anyway."

Quote:
----- are we of one accord?

You will have NO difficulty gaining a following when it comes to recognizing our failing culture. Even the secular experts know that what we are doing is intensely destructive - and in fact, destroying our next generation!

The challenge now is: What do we do with the evidence? Do we do what has never worked historically: unite in the extirpation of evil - by deploying power and control? That is our bent, let's admit. We even do it with our family and church. And that has been the cause of so much of the religious conflict and war. God didn't call us to extirpate evil through our own means. We can't even purify our own evil, let alone try to eradicate evil in others.

Quote:
----- beg for re-commissioning in His Name.

Yes, this is where we can truly be of one accord: it is at the foot of the cross, where sinners, whether pagan or zealously religious find their common ground: utterly poor, wretched, naked, and pitiful. It is where the homosexual and the devout Christian find their common ground: in utter need of Christ to give them HIS LIFE.

Diane

PS If anyone knows why HTML coding doesn't work for me, let me know. Also, my account does not show any of my posting history - making it difficult to find and reenter conversations.

sister Diane, on: 2010/9/6 12:49

beloved sister,
I now recant, in its form, my initial post.

it was hasty and its of a wrong spirit, in short, i am wrong.

the evidence that i'm wrong, in that "we've" been failing God for 1700 years, is this very website, sermonindex.

all the wonderful teachings? last night listened to dear Len Ravenhill, on "The Excellency of Knowing God"!

i'm 50 years old, if anything, i MYSELF have been failing God for 50 years, time to turn that around and repent.

a hasty post i made.

in Jesus' love, neil

General Topics :: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2010/9/6 13:36

Quote:
-----You will have NO difficulty gaining a following when it comes to recognizing our failing culture. Even the secular experts know that what we are doing is intensely destructive - and in fact, destroying our next generation! The challenge now is: What do we do with the evidence? Do we do what has never worked historically: unite in the extirpation of evil - by deploying power and control? That is our bent, let's admit. We even do it with our family and church. And that has been the cause of so much of the religious conflict and war. God didn't call us to extirpate evil through our own means. We can't even purify our own evil, let alone try to eradicate evil in others.

Excellent post Diane, thank you for sharing your insight, the part I quoted above is particularly helpful.

We have missed your input around here, hope you will post more often as the Lord leads.

Also, the HTML coding hasn't worked on this site for quite some time now nor has there been the ability to view recent posting history.

In Christ,

Ron

To Ron - posted by roadsign (), on: 2010/9/6 14:30

QUOTE BY RON:

We have missed your input around here, hope you will post more often as the Lord leads.

Also, the HTML coding hasn't worked Â...

Hi Ron, your encouragement means a lot to me! I do hope to get back involved on SI. There is so much yet to share together regarding the work of God and his people.

Also, I trust technological revival is forthcoming - in the fruition of time (like spiritual revival). At least now I know it's not my computer that has been defective.

Â“In His time, in his time;
He makes all things beautiful in his time.Â”

Looking only to him,
Diane

Re: To Neil - posted by roadsign (), on: 2010/9/6 15:02

QUOTE BY NEIL: if anything, I MYSELF have been failing God for 50 years, time to turn that around and repent.

Neill!
Your words echo many of my own self-monologues. I easily fall into the self-flogging pattern, frustrated that I should be a better person by now. But then - when I look at myself, what should I expect! I am looking in the wrong place, after all! I am looking at the filthy rags and not at Christ's glorious perfection. It is a vision problem, right? Where does God tell us to look? (Col. 3:1,2)

While self-evaluation is a key requirement in the journey to maturity, the devil so easily redirects our attention towards a destructive form of navel-gazing. That shouldn't be surprising. He is, after all, a spirit of death. What comes from the Spirit is LIFE-producing. Christ has filled us with HIS abundant life.

Actually, Neil, that is a topic I am deeply absorbed in, and am working on a literary creation on that subject. What has God placed within us? And what are the implications? It is a vast subject - so vast that no "old wine skins" can contain it, least of all, my own words.

General Topics :: why have we been failing for almost 1700 years?

Yes, we are puny, weak, and fallen, but we have a great big God. And, it's about HIM!

It's time to stop navel-gazing at ourselves as horrible fallen individuals, or as the bad church, or as the despicable human race - and start looking at how much God has been doing and is doing right now in our world. We don't know a fraction of it!

Negativity is harmful to us physiologically, psychologically, and spiritually. (It is also extremely contagious) It produces harmful emotions which put bad chemicals in our system (that is a vast topic that science is now un-covering). It makes us the very people God has called us OUT from. It is an affront to God's design for humanity - and a sin against him, and his dear Son. Why should anyone want our God when they pick up these kind of vibes from us! Why should we expect him to bless us for that!

When I am finished writing "Filled with Inexpressible Joy", I will post it. You are inspiring me - driving me on, Neil! PTL!

"May the God of hope FILL (!) you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Rom. 15:13

Now, that is repentance! It's as you say - "turning around" - changing the direction of our eye sight - and living in the strength of HIS joy.

Diane