

**General Topics :: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?****Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System? , on: 2015/11/21 13:29**

1) Churches must be willing to surrender all party labels, names, and partisan practices. The denominating of separatist Christian groups must cease. We must recognize that wherever God has a child, we have a brother or a sister. We have no half-brothers or half-sisters in the Lord. We are blood fellows of Jesus the Lamb.

2) Draw no party lines. If Jesus did not erect the barrier that keeps our brothers out, dismantle it. Remove the notion that salvation is found in our association with churches. Patterns and parties (churches) cannot save. Jesus is our Pattern, our Plan, and our Salvation. Churchitis is the wrong answer to the world's problems. If a solution is ever found, the world must look to Jesus not to churches.

3) Purge all ritualism and formalism from our meetings and get back to the simple, informal, mutual method of sharing with and edifying one another. Our open class meetings resemble the open meetings of the early believers, for everyone is encouraged to participate. Participation makes for spiritual growth. Pew-warming makes for spiritual retreat.

It is utterly ridiculous to speak of leaving our classrooms to go into the sanctuary to worship. Worship in the new age is never defined as moving from one location to another. If we are not worshipping in the first room, it is unlikely the situation will improve by moving to the second room. For the committed believer, worship cannot be turned on and off at will. It is his whole life.

4) The pulpit minister must go! His position is a cancer in the body of believers, preventing the various parts from functioning as God intended. The divine testimony is silent about our modern-day pastors and pulpit ministers, except they are referred to as hirelings (John 10:11-13). They need to be dismissed and encouraged to find a job.

5) Evangelical church leaders and Elders should cease accentuating extraneous issues such as The Rapture, The Battle of Armageddon, The Thousand-Year Earthly Reign, Middle East Israel, and other doctrinal supplements and start pointing the unsaved to Jesus. The innumerable magazines and books relating to these issues are causing confusion among the uncommitted and frustrating those who are reaching for a higher level of spiritual curriculum. They hunger for meat but are fed bottle milk.

Conclusion

These changes are not likely to come about overnight, for they did not develop overnight. Somewhere along the trail, change will come. The mood and the times are right for it. May God grant us wisdom as we make preparations.

<http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Reform.html>

Re: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System? - posted by savannah, on: 2015/11/21 18:25

Question: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

Answer: Absolutely Not!

The answer to the following question answers the above question.

Is the reformation of the Religious System in accordance with His purpose and/or will?

General Topics :: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/21 19:12

Question: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

My answer: I don't see this happening, to me it's a lost cause. Several years ago I gave up on that and had to make a choice. I could either completely leave the system and be a lone ranger type of Christian having no place to fellowship besides online, or I could consider this issue of the "religious system" as a non-essential one and not allow it to hinder me from fellowship. I chose the latter.

The only possibility I see in terms of change is if masses of believers completely leave the system to start a new movement. I don't see that happening unless something drastic such as severe persecution takes place in our lifetime.

Do I foresee that happening soon? I can't say for sure but there sure are signs that seem to point in that direction. In the meantime, since I don't know for sure whether we'll see that type of thing soon, I won't plan on it happening too soon. I think we still have many freedoms available in the west, particularly here in the US, and we must take advantage of those freedoms to further the gospel.

Re: , on: 2015/11/21 20:07

Yes, absolutely, I don't think the religious system CAN be reformed, either.

It doesn't like change and will resist it, especially since mammon and position over men are key elements of it.

I know there are brothers engaged in trying to reach people within the religious system and I could not help but think of our brother down under, Crusader who has a burden for those in the religious system and is even trying to bring reform to specific churches, I think. Correct me if I am misstating what you have said or what your intentions are, Crusader. I want to respect all brothers wherever God has placed them to do His work.

Even though I don't think it can be reformed and the Lord gives us instructions to leave it rather than reform it, I thought Buff Scott said some good things at <http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Reform.html>.

Let me highlight a few.

Question

Considering the rampant division within the Christian community, is reformation likely to occur?

Answer

Possibly, but change will not come easily. The "chief priests and teachers of the law," or most of today's clergy and religious leaders, will oppose reformational efforts. They will try to persuade the crowd to ask for the status quo and to have reformation put to death. It was the clergy who "persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed" (Matthew 27:20). They refused change and killed the world's greatest reformer. They executed the Prince of Peace by nailing Him to a Roman tree. They were more willing to "bosom-buddy" a murderer than to see their sects and denominations undergo reform. A repeat today would not alter the scene.

Question

Who can struggle for reform?

Answer

Only the free man. He must be free from anything that enslaves. He is not free if he is a party man. If he has yielded his will to some church or denomination or cult, he is enslaved, for he is bound to uphold his party's creeds, promote its philosophies, and fight for its growth and survival. Should he waver a little to the right or lean a little to the left, he is soon called upon the partisan carpet and told to shape up or ship out. If he refuses to shape up or line up with the party's shibboleths, he will soon find himself on the outside looking in. But this is the best thing that could happen to him! For the first time, he would meet freedom face-to-face. He could then declare with the apostle Paul, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a servant to everyone, to win as many as possible" (1 Cor. 9:19).

Question

Is it possible to free oneself from all partisan entanglements?

Answer

Of course! We can serve others better when we are free of all partisan fetters, and that is because we don't have to look over our shoulders to see if our party's chieftains are looking our way. The free man does not nor cannot represent any church, faction, denomination, or cult upon the face of this earth. He is God's representative. He answers only to his Lord, not to the chief priests and teachers of the law. He has no lords, popes, or masters to whom he must give account.

Question

Are you saying that a "free man" should not listen to or take advice from others?

Answer

We are not free if we refuse to listen to and take counsel from others whose wisdom is on a higher level than ours. Listening to and accepting counsel from others is not the same as being dictated to by the chief priests and elders. Submission to the latter will enslave us. Listening to the former will make us wiser.

Question

How can we differentiate between the two?

Answer

Look around you. Observe and evaluate. What do you see? Pewwarmers? Preacher worshippers? Spiritual deadbeats? Lukewarm and uninformed believers? If this is what you see, you're looking at a system of slavery.

Question

Are you bitter toward those who do not share your views on reform?

Answer

Goodness, no! They are no less my brothers because they are not as caught up in reformation. My ministry is reformation. This is where the good Lord has planted me. I dare not reject the brother whose ministry is in some other field or area of life, or whose divine assignment differs from mine. I know only that I must work for reform. And I cannot work for reform by rejecting those who do not agree with my efforts. But I have and will reject the system that has subjugated us.

Here is Buff's follow-up.

THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

Her Diverse Blunders and Digressions

<http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Estab.html>

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/21 21:54

Interesting quotes Julius21. I was not familiar with Buff Scott. I looked into him a bit. It seems he encourages believers to stay within denominational churches to work toward reform. I read somewhere that his idea of "coming out" is mainly concerned with a heart and mind issue, not necessarily physically coming out, unless that is unavoidable for certain reasons. I guess my only beef with him at this time is that in that article you linked to in your last post, he starts by quoting some of the US founding fathers (to support his argument), some of whom were deists and heretics. He seems to quote them as if he believes they were true Christians. Besides that he seems like a cool guy.

General Topics :: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

Re: , on: 2015/11/21 22:07

I'm sure you (using "you" generically) can find "dirt" on just about anyone. I had never heard of him either until I read his writings on national Israel and spiritual Israel and I could not see where his views differed from Scripture. I actually liked his writings. Then I found his article on "Reforming the Church", which I don't agree with 100%, but had to admit to myself that God does have his people, (our brothers and sisters) working in the system to influence individual lives. The Lord's work doesn't need reformation, so I don't see Him trying to reform something that is not of Him. I still think people should come out, but not because I say so, but because the Spirit leads them. The "system" is not something you can always clearly see, for it dwells in the heart of man. Only the Spirit of God can speak to individuals and tell them what it is they must come out of.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/21 22:35

Fair enough brother. I guess regarding this issue (the issue of whether or not Christians should fellowship in traditional churches), is one we'd have to respectfully disagree on as to how essential it is or how seriously Christians should take it.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 1:13

I know that to truly walk as Christ walked one will eventually be "persona non grata" within the system. I thought Buff's words would be a good topic for conversation as he is the only other person beside crusader that I have come across who stated that God called them to "reform the religious system." I don't think you and I disagree as I have never seen this done and don't see support for the concept in the Word of God. I personally don't see how one could survive, let alone flourish in the religious system and I don't think it is essential in the least to fellowship in anything that is not of Christ.

Then I read this
"CHURCH ADDICTION - Is Not The Answer"
<http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Church.html>

and I am thinking that maybe I misunderstood him and he is not really serious about reforming the religious system.

I need to read more about him.
His biography is very interesting;
<http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/Author.html>

and this is where he says he is coming from:
<http://www.mindspring.com/~renewal/ComingFrom.html>

Anyway, he has a lot to read and I am just "cracking the surface".

Re: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System? - posted by Lysa (), on: 2015/11/22 7:00

I believe the point is to reform people not systems. But can you name one religious system that's EVER been reformed?

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 8:29

Lisa I agree Sister. I think it's the heart that needs to be transformed by the grace of Jesus. Not the religious system. Not what we call the organized church.

Re: . Something about new wine into old wineskins, on: 2015/11/22 8:42

Brothers seems to me Jesus had something to say on reform in church systems.....

Luke 5:36-39

No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But the new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine wishes for new, for he says, "The old is good enough".

Simply my thoughts.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 9:54

It seems to me the question is more fundamental that can you reform a church system or denomination. Aside from the fact that it has never been done and I say no it cannot be done, the fundamental question should be " Are they Biblical?"

If they are not Gods will in the first place, then why would He be in the business of reforming them? God reforms and transforms people not systems designed by men in violation of Scripture.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 10:17

Agree Frank. God is transforming hearts. Not structures. The heart of the believer is where Jesus dwells. Not a structure.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 11:19

Agreed. Anyone trying to reform a system will run into a brick wall or even persecution.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/22 12:06

Again brethren, I think that for many of us, the reality is that we have no choice but to fellowship in traditional church settings (or else not fellowship at all) even though we do see some things in these settings that are not that conducive to New Testament patterns of fellowship. Personally, if I knew of a vibrant house fellowship near me I don't think I'd hesitate much to join it. From hearing certain testimonies online, I do believe that there are some good house fellowships out there, but I have not been fortunate enough to live near enough to them.

There was a time when I was looking around for that type of fellowship in my area. I visited a few house churches, but in all honesty, I found that they were just as dead as, or more so than many denominational churches. Their meetings were more participatory, so in that sense they were more patterned after New Testament meetings, but the members were just as worldly as many in the traditional churches. And they did not have a heart to reach out to the lost, just like many who are simply pew warmers in traditional churches. Also, many had this critical, bitter spirit toward the traditional churches and that's all they seemed to dwell on. It wasn't a pretty picture.

After that I figured I'd try to start a fellowship in my home but that didn't work either. I put my contact info on a house church network website and did receive a few calls and had a few visits. But again, these people who came were too focused on the things that are wrong in the traditional churches and they had no heart to reach out to the lost. And one thing led to another and my whole endeavor crumbled and came to naught.

So again, I was left with the decision of what to do in terms of fellowship, and decided to look at this issue of traditional churches as non-essential to salvation (as I'm sure many here would agree it is despite disliking traditional churches), and decided to try to find the most solid one near me to fellowship at.

So I basically recommend to believers who don't have a place where they fellowship to try to find the most solid church near them (because it's not good to be a lone Christian), whether it's a traditional church or house church.

Just my thoughts.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 12:43

Oracio,

Be encouraged, brother. It only takes one other piece of iron to sharpen another piece and Jesus said, "where two or more are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them". Just one other person who is "valiant for the truth", is such a gift from the Lord. I know how you feel, because I have been there (Jer. 9:1-4). But, the good news is that the Author of "new life" lives in you.

I know you are a street preacher so I will pray that you lead someone to the Lord and then you will have fellowship. You can then begin to sow into their life all that God has revealed to you. I was told once in my early days that "wherever you go, if you can't find fellowship, make it". Meaning, preach the gospel and lead someone to the Lord.

This happened to me one time. I was brought into a place for a season where there was no fellowship around me and one by one over the next two years, 8 guys came to the Lord. I have to say it is easier to teach new converts than to get the older ones to see beyond their ingrained, denominational mindset. They have found a "security" in what is "known" to them, and are fearful of deviating.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/22 13:04

Thanks for that encouragement Julius. I have found that many people out there on the streets (whether it's lost souls that are being seriously convicted of their sin and of their need for Christ, or new believers) are way too accustomed to traditional church settings; and that it's very hard to get them to see a gathering in a home of two or three as a real church. It's as if they think you belong to some weird cult when you try to encourage them to see church like that. The traditional way of "doing church" is really ingrained in them.

I noticed that type of thing when I was trying to do house church in my home and I used to encourage people out on the streets to visit. They would ask me where I went to church, and as soon as I told them I met in my home with a few other believers they looked at me like I'm from Mars. But I know that with God nothing is impossible. I guess I simply lost heart and gave up after not really seeing any fruit in terms of the house church thing. So again, now a days I don't take that issue that seriously as I used to.

This is the thing for me, if a traditional church has solid preaching and teaching where the Body is being fed the pure, uncompromised Word of God; and if they have a heart to reach out to their community with the gospel; and if they encourage fellowship and meetings in one another's homes on days when the "traditional meetings" are not happening, I think it's a healthy place to be despite certain other things which they may lack in.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 13:06

Well, I will say that if people have valuable, edifying relationships they should stick with them and only do as the Lord leads.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 13:34

Oracio I can relate to what you are saying. A vibrant house church is more desirable. But in absence of that a solid traditional church would be good. But unfortunately in my area a house church or solid traditional church is lacking.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/22 13:47

I hear you Bear. In that case, unfortunately one has no choice but to trust in and wait on the Lord to bring a good fellowship in one's path. Yeah, I would not recommend just joining any dead, apostate type of traditional church either. Hang in there brother. Will pray.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 14:50

Oracio writes " unfortunately one has no choice but to trust in and wait on the Lord to bring a good fellowship in one's path." I think it is a good thing to trust in and wait on the Lord wherever we are.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 14:56

I would be grateful for one alive and vibrant brother. Two brothers in agreement and unity can accomplish much. Two are better than one for if one falls... the other will lift him up.

Re: - posted by Jasmine, on: 2015/11/22 15:02

No but the scary thing for me is that I've seen people make "church" an idol. It's like the qualification for Salvation isn't Jesus Christ but going to "church". I've met people whose question isn't, "do you know the Lord Jesus Christ" but rather "what church do you go to?" As if that tells you really anything about my spiritual condition. It's in that moment that I am usually rejected when I say "I don't go to church" (Holy Spirit led me out of that system). In some cases, it gets even scarier when people go to "church" and have no clue who Jesus is. That happened with somebody in my family and it shook me to the bone. The person had positions and titles but couldn't really tell me anything about the Lord. By the grace and wisdom of God, I was able to redirect them back to Jesus Christ but it scared me. I think it was the first time I actually saw up close and personal what "mental assent" really looked like. How it played out in a person's life. So no I don't think you can reform a religious system. I just think God works in spite of it as He deals with the people in that system from the pulpit to the pew and beyond.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/22 15:24

Amen Frank, I definitely don't want to limit what God can do in terms of working out His perfect will in our lives regardless of our situations.

Amen Julius.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 15:25

So true, Jasmine. Just the fact that the term "go to church", is a term coined by the religious system and has no bearing or meaning in the NT.

We all know it means "go to a building", and that alone tells you about the mentally ascended mind set they have.

Where you "go to church" is a primary question in their spiritual interviews. It is usually the first or second question.

Praise God that the person you ministered to was open to revelation and correction.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 16:36

Jasmine writes.....

"It's like the qualification for Salvation isn't Jesus Christ but going to "church". I've met people whose question isn't, "do you know the Lord Jesus Christ" but rather "what church do you go to?" As if that tells you really anything about my spiritual condition. It's in that moment that I am usually rejected when I say "I don't go to church" (Holy Spirit led me out of that system)"

This is so true Jasmine and since coming out of that system I have experienced the same. It takes quite a while before all that nonsense is filtered out of our spirits, its so ingrained. I am reminded that the Church is the Body of Christ and not the building on the corner.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/22 19:17

Jasmine, I agree that that's a wrong, warped mindset for traditional church Christians to have. On the other side, I have also come across anti-traditional Christians who think traditional Christians are unsaved for choosing to "remain in the system". So it works both ways. Once we start judging others' salvation based on these peripheral issues it gets ugly.

Re: , on: 2015/11/22 22:33

Yes, while we can judge a false system, we cannot judge that all who partake in the false system are unsaved.

After all, Jesus is calling His disciples out of the false religious system, so obviously saved people are in it. These are our brothers and sisters.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/23 0:34

Quote:
-----After all, Jesus is calling His disciples out of the false religious system, so obviously saved people are in it. These are our brothers and sisters.

My brother, I do appreciate that you acknowledge those who fellowship in traditional churches as brothers and sisters in the Lord. I will say this as a friendly challenge though. If Jesus is calling all of His disciples who are in this "system" to come out of it physically, why is it that the vast majority of them are like, "I haven't gotten that memo from the Lord"? I think your answer may be something to the effect of (and this is where we disagree), "Those who refuse to come out are not fully following the Lord and will lose out on that, though they won't lose their salvation on account of it." But I'm like, no, I believe the Lord specifically has his remnant in these churches to use them there for His glory. I do believe He is calling some of them out (very few at the present time by the looks of things) but not all. Not all of these churches have gone apostate though many have. If we're dealing with apostate traditional churches I'd say yes, the Lord would have you to come out lest you share in their sin and destruction. Just some friendly food for thought, that's all. Peace, I'm out.

Re: - posted by Jasmine, on: 2015/11/23 2:03

@ Oracio

When it comes to the religious system, I don't tell people to stay or go. I believe every person has to be fully persuaded in their own mind as to where they are to be. When I left the religious system, I left in peace but I had to wait before the Lord for Him to get that system out of me. I'm not going into details but it's a real process and one that I continue in because there are "things" that show up from time to time. I do realize that there are saints that can be in the religious system and that system not be in them but I wasn't one of them. So for me it's really about people knowing if they are a part of God's Church through His son Jesus Christ and not just part of a "church". Also knowing where you are supposed to be because that is what the Lord would have not man.

I've been Saved for more than a minute and in all honesty I can't recall ever meeting a Christian who mentioned to me that people are unsaved for staying in the system. The closest I've come is in regards to a particular religious system but I'm not getting into that here. I will say though even with that, I've never heard of anyone trying to revoke someone's Salvation. Have you ever asked those who have an anti-church sentiment why they feel the way they do? Seeing that you're labeling Christians as "traditional church Christians", what are you calling those of us Christians who don't go to a "church"? I'm just trying to understand...

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/23 11:28

Quote:
-----@ Oracio

When it comes to the religious system, I don't tell people to stay or go. I believe every person has to be fully persuaded in their own mind as to where they are to be. When I left the religious system, I left in peace but I had to wait before the Lord for Him to get that system out of me. I'm not going into details but it's a real process and one that I continue in because there are "things" that show up from time to time. I do realize that there are saints that can be in the religious system and that system not be in them but I wasn't one of them. So for me it's really about people knowing if they are a part of God's Church through His son Jesus Christ and not just part of a "church". Also knowing where you are supposed to be because that is what the Lord would have not man.

I've been Saved for more than a minute and in all honesty I can't recall ever meeting a Christian who mentioned to me that people are unsaved for staying in the system. The closest I've come is in regards to a particular religious system but I'm not getting into that here. I will say though even with that, I've never heard of anyone trying to revoke someone's Salvation. Have you ever asked those who have an anti-church sentiment why they feel the way they do? Seeing that you're labeling Christians as "traditional church Christians", what are you calling those of us Christians who don't go to "church"? I'm just trying to understand...

Hi Jasmine, your first paragraph above was a real encouragement to read. There's nothing there I would disagree with. I'll do my best to answer the questions in your second paragraph.

You wrote, "I've been Saved for more than a minute and in all honesty I can't recall ever meeting a Christian who mentioned to me that people are unsaved for staying in the system. The closest I've come is in regards to a particular religious system but I'm not getting into that here. I will say though even with that, I've never heard of anyone trying to revoke someone's Salvation."

My answer: I was not referring to meeting these Christians in person but rather reading their writings and seeing their online "ministries". I won't provide the links to them here because they may be a stumbling block to some. These types of Christians and "ministries" are indeed out there. They go to extremes in railing against the "system" and exhorting believers to "come out of Babylon", with threatenings of perishing in hell should they refuse to "come out of her" after being warned.

You wrote, "Have you ever asked those who have an anti-church sentiment why they feel the way they do?"

My answer: I do know and understand why many feel as they do regarding traditional churches. The reasons vary, from being personally hurt by a certain church to simply seeing corruption in general. I've heard several reasons in person from many Christians. And again, the sentiment varies in degrees.

You wrote, "Seeing that you're labeling Christians as "traditional church Christians", what are you calling those of us Christians who don't go to "church"? I'm just trying to understand..."

My answer: I choose to use the terms "traditional" or "denominational" instead of "institutional" or "religious system" because the latter come across as very derogatory and offensive to many believers. I personally don't like those terms myself. Those terms seem to come across as saying that absolutely all traditional, denominational churches are of the devil, completely apostate, when nothing can be further from the truth.

As far as a term for those who don't go to church, I haven't thought of a decent one other than "anti-traditional". I've also heard the term "out of church Christians" which seems not that bad to use. If you think of a good one you prefer please let me know :). And the only reason I use any terms is because it saves time and space in explaining the two different positions.

Re: - posted by Jasmine, on: 2015/11/23 22:20

@ Oracio

Okay I see what you're saying. You're talking about websites. I've paid minimal attention to them because that's not how things happened for me. I didn't come out via the internet. It was just me and the Lord. As a matter of fact back then there really wasn't any support. I stayed pretty black and blue from getting beat up by Christians who went to "church". But I wasn't allowed to defend myself and that kept me on my knees. In the long run it worked to my good but for a season it was very painful. What was interesting was years later some of those same people who beat me up, left out of the system themselves. Then they understood better and I was no longer considered the enemy.

Lately I've been wondering if some people have changed their minds about how they feel about leaving the religious system especially considering how some "churches" have embraced another gospel, gay marriage, politics, prosperity, etc. I wonder if those of us who left the system are still viewed negatively or are some Christians rethinking this subject?

You said, "I choose to use the terms "traditional" or "denominational" instead of "institutional" or "religious system" because the latter come across as very derogatory and offensive to many believers."

General Topics :: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

I've never heard that before. Again is this something you read on line or is it something Christians have told you IRL? Also are you saying you believe the fellowship of the saints and the religious system are one in the same?

If there has to be labeling I just really prefer to say "Christians who go to church" and "Christians who don't go to church". That way things just stay very simple and respectful. Although the best scenario to me would be "these men/women have been with Jesus".

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/23 22:48

Hi Jasmine, regarding online interaction, I would not totally dismiss it as not being "real life" interaction. For example, you and I have been having a real life interaction on this forum, right? You and I are real live people who are sharing our real views on this topic. It is through forums like this one that I've partly come to understand the different sentiments of Christians who don't like attending traditional churches. Some Christians see forums like this one as their main means of fellowship or interaction with other Christians.

Quote:
-----Lately I've been wondering if some people have changed their minds about how they feel about leaving the religious system especially considering how some "churches" have embraced another gospel, gay marriage, politics, prosperity, etc. I wonder if those of us who left the system are still viewed negatively or are some Christians rethinking this subject?

Yeah, from interacting in person as well as interacting and reading online, I see sentiments of Christians who attend traditional churches toward Christians who don't attend traditional churches varying from positive to negative, probably mostly negative which I think is unfortunate.

Quote:
-----You said, "I choose to use the terms "traditional" or "denominational" instead of "institutional" or "religious system" because the latter come across as very derogatory and offensive to many believers."
I've never heard that before. Again is this something you read on line or is it something Christians have told you IRL?

My answer: both.

Quote:
----- Also are you saying you believe the fellowship of the saints and the religious system are one in the same?

Not exactly sure what you mean there. I believe that the fellowship of the saints can be found both within traditional or denominational churches and outside of them. Like Jesus said, where two or three are gathered, whether in a building, a coffee shop, a house, a cave, etc.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/23 23:08

I thought about something else after I posted my last post. Notice that Jesus didn't say, where one is gathered in My name. He said two or more. That's the ideal situation that we should all long for because that's God's ideal plan for us according to His Word. We weren't meant to walk this walk completely alone. That said, I understand that there are situations where there is no choice but for one to walk alone for a period of time according to providence. In that type of situation, the next best thing is to fellowship by phone if possible or online. But again, that's not God's ideal plan for us.

Re: , on: 2015/11/23 23:10

"Religious System" and "Institutional Church" are mild terms compared to "Bible speak". There is a reason people don't use Bible terminology. Bible terminology is more offensive than the non bible words men use. What would happen if people used the words in the scriptures? Maybe this is why Bible versions keep changing (to soften the words and make them more PC).

Bible terminology: Babylon, Whore, Harlot, Hireling, Wolf, Lovers of money, form of godliness, yoke of bondage, False teachers, False shepherds, False prophets, brood of vipers, white washed walls, etc., etc.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/23 23:15

I hear you Julius, but the false notion that some have is that all traditional churches fit those descriptions.

That's where I completely disagree with some who don't like attending traditional churches. They discount all traditional churches as totally given over to the devil and apostasy, all over peripheral matters such as using a pulpit, having a building and pews, etc.

Re: , on: 2015/11/23 23:54

I've never really met anyone except some Brethren people that think all traditional churches fit those descriptions. They think what they call the "Assemblies" are the only pattern and I could not reason with them at all. Most of those descriptions I listed are for individuals. And, just like you don't know who all the people are that are of the True Church, we can't know who are all the ones of the False Church. (Matt 13 -Wheat and Tares). God knows who they are and often we do not, because we cannot see men's hearts.

If we look into the Word with an honest heart (whole heart) we will be changed but if we look into the Word with a divided heart we will only have a religious experience.

Re: - posted by Jasmine, on: 2015/11/24 1:49

@ Oracio

I wasn't being dismissive of on-line interaction. It's just that when I speak of IRL, I'm talking about people I spent time with face to face for years. We didn't just break bread, we stayed at each other's homes. We not only prayed together, we went on retreats, and fasted together. Our children knew one another. Our relationship and conversations were not limited to a "church activity". We were doing life together as Christians. I say that also because at the time we didn't have the internet.

So to have some of those individuals treat me like the enemy when I did leave the system was very painful. It was like a death. I'm very aware that for some the internet is their lifeline to other Christians. I also understand that there is no distance in the Spirit but for me because of where I came from, there's a difference between on line and IRL. I can't say in totality why, but there is.

Why do you believe that if we don't go to "church" that we are alone? Do you think because people go to "church" that they're not alone? From what I've observed over the years, whatever can be said about those of us who don't go to "church" the same can be said about those who do. So nobody has a monopoly on any given situation. It's just sad that some people make the assumptions that they do.

Re: , on: 2015/11/24 1:53

There have been many Christians, and I would include myself, that have tried to explain that the "systems," or denominations are in and of themselves unbiblical. I have never had a satisfactory answer to the question "are denominations Biblical." Another way of putting that is "was it God's design to have the priesthood divided by name and become enemies of one another?"

Now, I have had my words twisted by deliberately obtuse men who would like to change those questions and convince others that I think people in denominations are unbiblical or evil or that denominations are evil or that I oppose leadership. May God be their judge.

We can find the Lord's design for His people in John 17. Not very complicated. What Jesus spoke in that chapter will cover

me to pass despite men. It will probably take great persecution and a counting of the cost but the process is already underway. God's children will be a witness to the gospel of the Kingdom before His coming, and then He will come.....
bro Frank

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2015/11/24 2:09

The way I see it is many people and groups are just as devious and denominational in their hearts, the brethren are just like a denomination, the brethren denomination, they hold and divide over certain doctrine, just like other denominations, the idea that all religious groups are Babylon and God is calling all Christians out, is a bad interpretation of that verse, and can easily be debated so, so dividing over a verse like that is the same thing that many other denominations do,

Re: , on: 2015/11/24 6:36

For what it's worth, in our house church, which I have been apart of for 6 years, I have never heard anyone speak in a derogative way about anyone in the institutional churches. What would be the point? Many of us have friends and family here and it is a bad witness to one another, especially the kids. We don't want to be known for what we "are against" but rather for Who we "are for".

It had always been understandable that people in the IC don't quite understand or accept why we meet in homes but we all still remain friends. At weddings and funerals we are usually 50-50 with regards to the mixture of individuals from both HC and IC. It is important to keep your relationships and not alienate others and a sure way to do it is to rail against the religious system all the time. So, we have a very good relationship with people, and I wish to underscore, people, not clergy. We seldom run into clergy. The regular people, what the clergy call "laymen" have always been more understanding than the clergy and I have seen a wider acceptance of the House Church over the last 35 years. And we are not really trying to do things that make us accepted, we just live and work and treat people with respect and love, not taking advantage of them in any way. And they see that we don't alienate them. We often have visitors, some don't come back but others do. When they meet with us they see that nothing weird is taking place and they are usually very blessed.

Here in this forum we extend to one another much more freedom to talk about issues that we never talk about in our house church meetings. In our homes, but not in our corporate gatherings. It has no place in the corporate gathering where we come together to worship the Lord and encourage one another.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/24 15:42

I guess this is the bottom line for me on this. Many Christians are completely opposed to fellowshiping at any and all traditional churches regardless of whether or not there may be a sound or healthy traditional church nearby. To them there is no such thing as a sound or healthy traditional church. If they came across a new believer (let's say online or by phone) who was not fellowshiping anywhere, they could never bring themselves to encourage that new believer to search out a healthy traditional church if no house church was available in their area. Again, this is a prevalent sentiment I've seen both online and in person from Christians who do not like traditional churches.

Now, many of these brethren will provide all manner of reasons for feeling the way they do. But to me, respectfully, it all boils down to majoring on non-essentials, again, such as meeting in a building, using a pulpit for preaching, etc.

The question was asked, what about attending a traditional church and not really "belonging" there intimately? Yes, there are some who just "go to church" on Sundays and then don't desire to fellowship more than on Sunday. But I'm like hey, at least it's something, isn't it? At least we can come together as a body of believers once a week and lift up our hearts together to the Lord in corporate praise and worship and get into the Word together corporately and then possibly fellowship more after the "service", and possibly even go out to lunch with one or two other believers to fellowship even a little further on a given Sunday.

But many brethren do not see any benefit in that because they are too opposed to all traditional churches for one reason or another. It's as if they see all traditional churches as being beneath their dignity. Again, I've seen this sentiment both in person and online. I myself used to have that same type of sentiment.

So in the end, for some of us here, we'll just have to respectfully agree to disagree as brothers and sisters in Christ.

General Topics :: Is It Possible to Reform the Religious System?

Re: , on: 2015/11/24 16:10

Oracio,

I can only speak for myself, I don't know any healthy traditional churches, because I have not been in that world for many, many years. I do know house churches so I would naturally recommend them.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2015/11/24 16:14

Fair enough brother. I do understand that it can be pretty tough in our day sometimes to find even a solid-enough traditional church with so much apostasy taking place.

Re: , on: 2015/11/24 16:19

Oracio,

It is a tough subject. I have never found a healthy one (years ago) as the system is geared to take advantage of people even if the heart of the clergy is right. And of course only God knows that.