

Revivals And Church History :: Warning: The local church

Warning: The local church - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/11/27 10:06

Need to admit some things right up front here about motivation and purpose in what is to follow.

This is some results of researching a very heavy concern of mine borne out of observation at first in regards to Witness Lee and the whole of this ministry. It is to Grafted Branch not in isolation as much as it is to everyone that comes through here.

In another thread;

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmode=flat&order0&topic_id8066&forum36&post_id&refreshGo) "recovery version" of the bible there is a great deal of expression and ground covered but would point out that it was from this that the concern began to grow more and more from the noticeable use of particular words used often, I. E. "The local church", "The Lord's Recovery", "Stream", "Flow", "Economy". But there was also a far deeper concern that was difficult to pin point and that was primarily a "suspicion" and concern for deception and manipulation and that much of this was leading to considerations that this is a cult-like, 'sect' however it may be characterized.

The motivation here is none other than a deep burden and concern for the Brethren. Have no hidden agenda, am completely disinterested in any form of defamation, character assassination, what have you. This is the same and similar expression of my own particular journey out of Word of Faith\ Prosperity constructs, that which caused a lot of undue grief to those I love and took quite a bit of unraveling (years) to sort through the mixing of truth and error and being a "Baby-Christian" and coming out of all kinds of brain numbing activities made for a lethal cocktail of confusion and emotions and relearning.

Having said all that, I must frankly add that my own experience pales by comparison after doing quite a bit of research in to this. Have read much from both 'sides' and even had gone back through the archives here in this regards. What was interesting was a more or less collective 'stance' if I may, that was a bit surprising. If anything in these earlier posts we were more defenders of Witness Lee than detractors. A particular poster that used to come in here close to two years ago with a lot of Anti-Lee rhetoric was banned from this site due to his constant and relentless postings and tirades. It was interesting to see this same name come up in another forum that I will get to in a minute and even there, where there is a strong opposing of this ministry, the results were the same.

My hope is that there would be some careful and prayer consideration as to what follows. This is far too important to just leave well enough alone and hopefully hearing from some voices that have been caught up in this ministry and who are bringing out the problems associated from their own experience will be seriously taken note of.

A helpful bit that was brought up in researching comes from

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id8225&post_id62827&order0&viewmodethread&pid0&forum23#62827) A.W. Tozer ~ On Receiving Admonition

To be fair there is a lot of confusion and in attempting to hear the other side of this is wrought with problems due to a lot of the inherent ways that this is constructed and by the definitions used. A lot of double-speak and that is the best I can characterize it due to an idea that this is 'not an organization' though it very much is, that the "Local Church" by their definition is something broad and wide and means this or that when in reality it is isolated and separate even if there is some autonomy due to 'locality'. Instead of clipping comments and segments it seems best instead to point to a few of the places and let one judge for themselves.

([http://www.concernedbrothers.com./](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/)) [http://www.concernedbrothers.com./](http://www.concernedbrothers.com/)

This link would be one from their particular perspective (the local church) and something of note that seems to crop up often, even in other realms of ministry that ought to raise red flags is the length to which some will go in explanation to defend what they regard as truth, to set perceived 'wrongs', right. We have seen it here often in KJV only constructs, other favorite Pastors, churches, denominations, it is a curious and suspect characteristic that is quite often on the defensive, often starting off from that standpoint.

Came across this board and have read through reams of thought expressed that shed a lot of light on this ministry and the dangers therein;

(<http://thebereans.net/forum/index.php?PHPSESSID=238ec4800ac0871844a3f11d1315173&board21.0>) Nee, Lee & the Church of Recovery

If anything would recommend reading at the least;

(<http://thebereans.net/forum/index.php?topic4574.0>) PUBLICATION WORK IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY 6/30/2005 To get some thought from the ministry itself.

But much more importantly would be from those who have been affected and have much to share that is of a grave concern here; (<http://thebereans.net/forum/index.php?topic4500.0>) Ex-Local Churchers: What are the things you dropped out of your system?

Another of import;

(<http://thebereans.net/forum/index.php?topic5449.0>) Spiritual Abuse and Labeling

There is quite a bit more if one is to do some digging and yes, did isolate most of this here purposefully that these voices might be heard and considered. I am sure that if one has not been caught up into constructs of this sort that it can be difficult to understand what happens when the subtleties are not overt perhaps but acquired over time and to break off of them can be incredibly damaging.

This is far too dangerous to just let alone. The earlier observations that I had as this came up again were before delving into this whole world of Witness Lee, his teaching and constructs. The noticeable traits expressed by Grafted Branch here and I cannot apologize for bringing you up in particular because it was those things which you brought that brought forth this concern. But having mentioned this, I am concerned for you brother, you have a lot of experience and are well spoken, but it is also clear that you are often speaking the language and sentiments of Witness Lee and have been apparently very much taken with all this. The 'party line' for a lack of a better expression is evident throughout your responses here. I am concerned as well as to what effect all this might have on others especially those young in this walk that can be sucked into relying on a man and his particular interpretations, visions and expressions of what constitutes "True Christianity".

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that at the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Act 20:28-31

Re: Warning: The local church - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/11/28 9:58

Quote:
-----I am concerned as well as to what effect all this might have on others especially those young in this walk that can be sucked into relying on a man and his particular interpretations, visions and expressions of what constitutes "True Christianity".

Brother Mike,

I share these same concerns and I am very glad that you posted this sensitive topic in this spirit of humility and honesty over the burden you have for the truth and for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be glorified. Please brethren whether involved in this movement or not read carefully and post prayerfully.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/11/28 10:54

Mike,

for those forum posts from the berean.net site you are going to have to log back in and cut and paste them into this thread because it times out otherwise and public viewers can't read them.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2005/11/29 5:16

Mike

completely missed this thread!! sorry.

The wikipedia has a good starting point page I think. You can see it at (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_churches) The Lord's Recovery.

Re: Warning: The local church - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/2 11:25

Quote:

-----This is far too dangerous to just let alone. The earlier observations that I had as this came up again were before delving into this whole world of Witness Lee, his teaching and constructs. The noticeable traits expressed by GraftedBranc here and I cannot apologize for bringing you up in particular because it was those things which you brought that brought forth this concern. But having mentioned this, I am concerned for you brother, you have a lot of experience and are well spoken, but it is also clear that you are often speaking the language and sentiments of Witness Lee and have been apparently very much taken with all this. The 'party line' for a lack of a better expression is evident throughout your responses here. I am concerned as well as to what effect all this might have on others especially those young in this walk that can be sucked into relying on a man and his particular interpretations, visions and expressions of what constitutes "True Christianity".

My own Christian experience began 31 years ago when I was saved as a teenager. Some of my friends as well as my brother were also saved at the same time by the preaching of the gospel of a visiting friend. For several months we simply met together with nothing but the bible, the Lord, and the Spirit with no association with any group or organization and in this time we had a great measure of reality and life.

The bible was opened up to us, we enjoyed the testimony and witness of the Spirit with our spirit that we were children of God, we witnessed to others and they were saved and began to meet with us. And we all functioned in our meetings as we were it. We had no 'ordained minister' to officiate our meetings. We just met in the name of the Lord Jesus and as the Lord said, "whenever two or more of you are gathered together in My Name, there am I in your midst. IT was the Lord who saved us and the Lord who gathered us and He was within us.

Eventually our friend returned to college and so we all went and joined the big Baptist church in our city expecting to find the reality we knew in greater measure. But alas, it was not there and we lost that experience of Christ we enjoyed as we were adopted into the "great system of Christianity". We thought that the problem must be with us.

I was enjoying the books of Watchman Nee, Jessie Penn Lewis, Aurther Pink, and others but was always disappointed to find that the great experiential truths of our union with Christ, the cross, man's tripartite being, the Tree of Life, the indwelling Christ, and such were missing in the preaching and teaching we found in the denominations.

IN the late 70s I attended a small Bible college in Greenville, SC (www.eigonline.org) established by Joseph Carroll, Author of "How to worship Jesus Christ" And there I found much of the reality and depth of teaching which I found in the great spiritual books I enjoyed.

But after this time, again, as I went back out into the great abyss of modern churchianity, these things while may be alluded to were not central in the teaching of the denominations. The system just was not designed to contain them. And I found that the experience of Christ I enjoyed at school and in my personal time with the Lord through "worshiping Jesus Christ" was generally at odds with the agenda and spirit of the churches I was in.

Nevertheless, through my time at Bible College and through my subsequent studies I did gain a good knowledge of doctrine, of Church History, the Bible, and the essential truths. I also studied the church fathers, the Puritans, Calvin, and all the great theologians of the centuries. I also found a great deal of help from the Catholic Mystics such as Madame Guyon and Molinos and because of my evangelical knowledge of doctrine and the Bible was able to separate the "good stuff" from

in the Catholicism which was their framework.

But in all these studies, my appreciation for Watchman Nee's books and teaching never waned because in these I had the witness of the Spirit with my spirit that he indeed expressed the reality of the Christian Life and the church life. His biography had deeply impressed me as a young Christian. I just did not know that the local churches existed in the United States and particularly that they met in my own city.

Not until 4 years ago, when my wife and I set foot in the first meeting of the local church in my city, did I ever experience the same reality of Christ in a corporate setting that I had known when I was first saved and met with our friends. I felt I had returned home after a long journey and was finally at rest. Within my spirit there was the testimony of the Spirit and an Amen which has not abated in 4 years. I leaned over to my wife and said, "we have found the Mother Load".

Yet for all this, I had great concern because I had read negative things concerning Witness Lee and I found terminology which I was not familiar with. I needed to be assured that the local churches were not embracing some heresy and that they genuinely represented the ministry of Watchman Nee which I had gained confidence in over the years.

So for many months I devoured the ministry materials, questioned the leading brothers, read every article in "Affirmation and Critique" which is the theological journal of the recovery. I attended the meetings, conferences, and several trainings of books of the Bible. But in these I never set aside my critical judgement but was also open to the Lord.

I studied the history, the controversies and carried on extended dialogues with those who were opposers to the recovery. I believe I can say with assurance that I left no stone unturned.

And most importantly I approached these things looking to the Lord Himself as my great Shepherd and the Spirit within me as my teacher. I am no different from any other and apart from the Lord, can be led astray. But as it is written, "if any man will do My will, he shall know of the doctrine whether or not it be of God".

What I found was that the smoking gun never emerged. It just was not there. There was no hidden agenda, no secret teaching or doctrine, nothing done in the darkness but all things were in the light. What is taught, practiced, believed can be found by all and that for free at the LSM web site.

What I have found in my study of Church history is that what brings on the most controversy, the most opposition, and the most frequent attacks by religion is not deviation from the Bible but the return to the Bible. It was true of the reformation, and it has been true in all subsequent generations where the establishment suppresses, attacks and seeks to undermine any return to biblical truth and practice and genuine spiritual life.

That some have had bad experiences with the local churches is not surprising. Individuals are all different and are at different stages in their spiritual life. Some become easily offended and some may have good grounds for offense as the church is made up of people and people err.

And the recovery has not been without its turmoils.

But the bottom line is this, Is it of God or is it not? Is the Lord in it? Is it man's recovery or is it the Lord's recovery? Is it something the crucified and resurrected Christ is doing or is it just man's doing?

Are those who have led the way in the recovery ministering their own ideas and own teachings? Or are they gifts to the church taken captive by Christ for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ?

My own conclusion is the latter. I have found not man's teaching but the Spirit's teaching and witness to the things in the Bible taught and practiced in the recovery. I have found no false doctrine, no heresy, but only that which is clear and evident in the Bible itself. I have found a maturity and balance in spiritual things. I have found the Spirit of Christ and love for the brothers. I have found the liberty of the Spirit with no external control.

And through my study of the ministry I have gained a deeper appreciation for the Lord, the Bible, and a greater understanding of the whole bible from Genesis to Revelation. And therefore of course what I write and what I post will reflect my view my understanding which I have gained from the Lord and make no apology if these things represent the view of Witness Lee, Watchman Nee, or the recovery today. I don't speak, I don't write what I don't see and don't hold as my own.

n conviction from the Lord. And I can say I am one with the ministry because I find the ministry to be one with Christ and with His Word.

As Paul said of the Thessalonians, "knowing God's choice of you because you recieved the word not in word only but in power and with much assurance and with joy in the Holy Spirit... And you became imitators of me and of the Lord.

This is just the way it works.

Graftedbranch

Re: Warning: The local church - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/2 12:47

Quote:
-----A lot of double-speak and that is the best I can characterize it due to an idea that this is 'not an organization' though it very much is, that the "Local Church" by their definition is something broad and wide and means this or that when in reality it is isolated and separate even if their is some autonomy due to 'locality'. Instead of clipping comments and segments it seems best instead to point to a few of the places and let one judge for themself.

I would suggest that the difficulty with what one might consider 'double speak' is simply a failure of some to grasp a concept.

For instance, If I asked you, "do you still beat your wife, yes or no? If you responded no, it would imply that at one time you did. If you responded yes, well, then that would not be good. But in any event, you cannot respond yes or no without incriminating yourself because the question is based on a false assumption. And there are some who would regard as "double speak" any attempt at answering which does not fall into a "yes or no category"

When this is said, When we come to the Divine revelation in the Bible, there are many terms and concepts which require understanding.

For instance when in general especially in our age, when one speaks of the church, there is a concept behind it. That is, when we come to the Bible, we find the church to be the body of Christ, a living organism with the Life of Christ as it's an imitating principle. And in 1 Cor. 14 Paul says, "And when the whole church is gathered together in one place..." showing that the church is not a place but the church gathers together in a place.

But when Christians say, "lets meet at the church" or "lets go to church" "take a left just past the church", Or, "did you see that beautiful church down the street", or "which church do you go to" it reveals a lack of revelation from the bible as to what the church actually is. Tradition and language have given "church" an unbiblical meaning and connotation.

So then, if you ask someone who meets with a "local church' Which church do you belong to, he will often look at you with a strange look because he cannot answer your question as it is posed. His first thought is, "how many churches are there? There is only one body of Christ and I just meet with the church in my city." His definition of "church is biblical. That is the church is the body of Christ and all believers are members of the body of Christ. Imagine asking Peter or Paul, 'which church do you belong to?'. They would respond, I belong to Christ. When I am in Jerusalem I meet with the church in Jerusalem. When I am in Corinth, I meet with the church in Corinth."

It cannot be denied that those who meet as a "local church" are few in relationship to the overall population of believers in the world. And that they do not represent the entirety of the body of Christ. And there is no one in any leadership or teaching function in the local churches who would ever suggest that it does.

Peter and Paul did not have this dilemma, but they labored very hard to prevent it from occurring.

"inclusive/exclusive is not double speak. It does require definition and understanding. It requires more than a superficial question.

Are you inclusive or exclusive is a false question. Inclusive of what and on what basis and exclusive of what and on what

basis is the proper question.

To say that we are inclusive of all believers simply means we stand with all believers as members of the One body of Christ.

We consider Mike Balog and Greg Gordan as members of the body of Christ and therefore members of us and we of them. We consider them brothers. We consider ourselves as sharing one Life, one Lord, one Spirit, one God and Father with them both.

And they may walk into any assembly of the local churches anywhere and partake of the Lord's table, even stand and speak and according to the life and truth they speak they will find an Amen from the saints there.

If you say, "Are you a denomination?", Then you must define "denomination". This is basic. Define your terms. What is your concept of "denomination". By definition it is any group of sect which "denominates themselves" that is takes on a particular name. That is what denomination means.

Do we denominate ourselves? No. We are not the Witness Lee church, we are not the "locality church" we are not the Watchman Nee Church. We are not the "prayerreading church" or the "calling on the Lord church" or the "all functioning members church". These may characterize us or may not. But we meet just as the church.

Is this double speak? No. It is just recognizing the proper definition of "church" from the Bible and word "denomination" from the dictionary and standing there.

This is just our stand. We refuse to denominate ourselves. We refuse to take another name other than the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. To do so invalidates the biblical meaning of "church" and denies the oneness of the body of Christ.

Do we believe we are the "only ones?" This again is a loaded question. Only what? I would say we are the only ones who meet as "the church" in our locality. No one else to my knowledge does. No one else take this position.

Are we the only believers? No. Are we the only genuine Christians? No. Do we believe we are the only ones taking the right position regarding the church? Yes. We do. We believe this is the church as the Bible reveals and we therefore believe that those who denominate themselves do not honor the Lord's body. We believe that the divisions exist because of sin and the flesh, and the Lord's body should not be divided. And it is so because of man, not because of Christ.

We believe that this is the biblical revelation of the church and the biblical ground of the church based in the revelation of the body of Christ in the New Testament. And therefore we believe that to take another ground is wrong and unbiblical. Does this make us right and others wrong? yes, In our view it does. They are wrong in the ground, but not necessarily in the personal condition or love for Christ.

Do we condemn people who do not meet with us? No. Never. We condemn the systems which divide believers. We condemn the religious systems in place which destroy the testimony of the One body of Christ. We condemn the hierarchical structures and the clergy/laity system which suppresses the functioning of the body of Christ and therefore hinders it from growing up and being built up.

Is this "double speak" No. It is clear and plain, There is no attempt to hide these things. There is no terminology coined to cast a fog around any truth or any position and we have no desire to be found acceptable with the religious systems. We don't desire to make peace with the system which is contrary to Christ.

The terminology in the recovery is not double speak but is coined to encompass and clarify what otherwise is difficult to utter.

All inclusive Christ, All inclusive compound Life Giving Spirit, The Processed and consummated Triune God, all reflect much theology and truths which are condensed and summed up with these terms. And they are helpful in expressing them.

Graftedbranch

Graftedbranch

Re: Warning: The local church - posted by Graftedbranc, on: 2006/6/2 13:11

Brother Mike,

Does not the very title of this thread, "Warning: the local church" already imply an accusation, a judgement and an insinuation?

Suppose one started a thread, "Warning: Mike Balog". or "Warning: Sermonindex". Or even "Warning: Baptist.

Is this not "character assassination" in its very title?

Would not, 'concerns about the local church' or questions about the local church' or "issues with the local church" be appropriate, or even "strong concerns about the local church", but not "Warning: the local church?"

Anyone should have the right to express concerns or questions, or issues which they disagree with, but "Warning" already implies trial and conviction.

I suggest and can testify that on this forum, I have not sought to promote Witness Lee or his ministry except in response to accusations raised by others. In fact, I rarely quote Lee except from an occasional quote from the footnotes of the RCV when appropriate, but limit myself to Watchman Nee's ministry because I recognize that he is held in high regard on this site. And while I believe Lee's ministry is more "up to date" meaning it reflects 40 more years of study, growth and maturity, its heart is contained in Watchman Nee's ministry and I believe the truths in both are found in scripture and therefore the Scripture itself is the true source of revelation and truth.

I believe that all of the things held and taught in the Lord's recovery are matters of faith and of the Bible and therefore stand in their own merit and can be discussed from the point of view of the bible's teaching and not that of any man.

Even "the ground of the church" is a matter of the bible's teaching and not a matter of any group's "special revelation" or some esoteric "vision". That is whether or not it is sound teaching depends on the bible and can be discussed as any teaching of the bible can. When we speak of "the Vision of the Bible" or "the Vision of the age" we are not referring to some special esoteric vision outside of the bible but rather the controlling vision of the Bible as Paul said to Felix, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision". And it is this Vision which is the contents of the New Testament. The Vision of Christ, the Church, the Kingdom, the body of Christ, and the New Jerusalem are the Vision of the Bible.

The same is true with all matters of the spiritual life and matters of doctrine.

And I believe that any matter can either be demonstrated by the bible or demonstrated to be unbiblical.

But when certain others take an accusing stance and begin to attack a ministry or a person, either that should be supported by biblical evidence which in turn should be open to discussion, or facts but not just be a mimic of hearsay.

My testimony is on record and the reasons I find this ministry to be what it is. If others don't agree that is their prerogative. And I don't expect anyone to embrace anything on my word.

I have thoroughly researched the recovery as I have posted and found the accusations to be false and the allegations to be based on misconceptions and misinformation. This is my own conclusion and while my own reliability has not been established I believe I have demonstrated a proper spirit toward the other posters and have worked hard to regard others as important as myself.

My views on the goal of the gospel, the New Jerusalem, God's economy, etc. are indeed the view of Lee and the recovery but I hold them not on this regard but because I too, see them clearly in the Bible and saw them before ever I came into contact with the local church or the ministry of Witness Lee. I saw them as a result of my own fellowship with Christ and study of the Word.

And if I found in the recovery any great heresy or I saw something different in the Bible, I would go my way because I am not following a man but the Lord and His Word. What I found in the recovery to my delight was the expression of these things, the clarification of these things, and the practice of these things and this is why I meet with the local church in my city.

I can also add that I am not that smart and not that clever that I can consistently hide some secret agenda or some secret foul doctrine. I speak what I have conviction about and the scripture is my source of truth and my experience of Christ is my testimony. I don't have anything else.

Graftedbranch

Re: - posted by Scroggins (), on: 2006/6/2 13:46

Unimportant...

lets not get caught up in the title of the thread but rather the heart behind it.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2006/6/2 16:15

Hi GB,

After having gone through this whole process back when this was written, it was with a great deal of hesitancy to bring it back up again, something very wearing about it.

The thing that would still be bothersome is the ease of dismissal of the other voices because your particular experience has been different.

That and the constant defending. Does it need it or can it stand on its own?

I have no axe to grind brother, just concern for that which gets drowned out.

Re: The Economy of God - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/3 14:22

Just a word regarding the "Economy of God".

This is a frequent term employed by those in the local churches and deserves a definition and an explanation.

The Word is used in the New Testament in Ephesians 1:10 referring to "the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ...", and in 1 Timothy 1:3,4 where Paul instructs Timothy to "charge certain ones not to teach different things... rather than God's economy which is in faith".

Economy is from the Greek word *oikonomia* which means household arrangement or household dispensation. The footnote reads:

"The Greek word means household law, implying distribution (the base of this word is of the same origin as that for pasture in John 10:9, implying a distribution of the pasture to the flock). It denotes a household management, a household a

administration, a house-hold government and derivatively, a dispensation, a plan, or an economy for administration (distribution): hence it is also a household economy."

God's economy as it is used in the recovery is God's intent and purpose to dispense Himself as Life into man. It is a theme from Genesis to Revelation beginning with the Tree of Life representing God's intent that man, created in His Image and as a vessel to contain Him, would eat of this tree and receive God as Life.

The issue of God's economy seen in the Old Testament and explicitly revealed in the New Testament is seen in 4 items:

1. The producing of many sons of God having His Life. As the Only begotten Son of God, Christ came as the single grain of wheat to fall into the earth to die, and in resurrection, He became the First Born Son of God imparting His Life into His regenerated believers making them sons of God, a reproduction of the single grain of wheat as the many grains.

And through the Spirit's work in the believer, the many regenerated sons of God are being conformed to the image of the First born Son of God (Romans 8:29) who is their "elder Brother" the author of their faith, and the captain of their salvation. It is He who sanctifies and them that are being sanctified as the many sons being brought to glory.

2. The producing of the Body of Christ. That is the body of Christ is made up of all those who have His Life and Christ as the Head dispenses His Life into His members to be His expression as the church on the earth. The body of Christ is His enlargement in resurrection to be His expression and His testimony to exercise His dominion.

3. The Bride of Christ. This is typified by Eve who was taken out of Adam and built of his substance to become his companion, wife, and lover. In the same way, the church, which is Christ's Bride is taken from His side as He slept on the Cross to be built up with His Life and Nature to be His eternal companion and lover, the wife of the Lamb.

4. The building up of the household of God. Or God's dwelling place. This is typified by the tabernacle and the temple which in the Old Testament was the place of God's dwelling. Speaking of the temple the Lord Jesus said, "My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer", and "In my Father's house are many abodes". In the New Testament we are told in Ephesians that we are all being built up into a holy temple, a dwelling place of God in spirit and in Timothy we are told by Paul how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God.

And in God's economy, the consummation of all these items is seen in Revelation 21-22 in the New Jerusalem which is the wife of the Lamb, the tabernacle of God, the house of God, and the city of God as the expression of God.

So in the recovery, the whole bible, creation, the fall, redemption, regeneration, sanctification, conformation, and glorification are seen in terms of God's economy or "eternal purpose" to dispense Himself as Life into man issuing in these four things, consummated as the New Jerusalem.

This is God's Economy as seen in the recovery.

While most theologies deal with different aspects of these items in one way or another, God's economy is never brought out in its fullness or clarity.

For instance, in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Man's chief end is seen as "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

While this is not untrue, it is very incomplete. It is a very truncated view of God's overall economy and the revelation of the Bible concerning man's purpose in creation Christ's purpose in redemption, and man's ultimate destiny.

In the recovery it would be said, "the chief end of man is to be a vessel to contain God, to express God, to be one with God, to be constituted with God, to be God's dwelling place and to dwell in God as his dwelling place. To be the mutual abode of the Triune God with redeemed, regenerated, transformed, and transfigured tripartite man as the house of God, the Bride of Christ, the tabernacle of God, and the city of God as the expression of God.

Rarely in any common book on theology will the Tree of Life even be addressed, nor is Revelation and the New Jerusalem touched on. Yet the Bible begins with the one and ends with the other.

The recovery is the recovery of God's economy. And all scripture is governed by this economy and is understood in light of this economy. This is the underlying theology of the recovery (and the bible) and I believe what distinguishes it from w

hat is most commonly held and taught by the mainstream.

Graftedbranch

Re: The end of the Bible - posted by Graftedbranch, on: 2006/6/5 13:36

We have all experienced watching a film or reading a fictional book with a mysterious theme. As you read through, you are given clues, and the whole scheme begins to emerge but not till the last chapter does it all come together.

Then, upon re-reading the book or watching the film a second time, it all becomes clear. You see all the clues, you see the significance of each character and event and how it all leads to the one conclusion.

The same is true with the Divine revelation in the Bible. When you come to the last chapter, and see its consummation, then all the items in the Bible make sense. All the different elements and all the different types, shadows, and events come together. There emerges the consistent theme, the consistent teaching all leading to the one end.

The Bible, though produced through many vessels, is the product of one Author, God Himself. God is its author and its revelation is the revelation of One Author with a beginning, a middle and a conclusion.

The conclusion becomes the key to understanding the whole of the Bible's revelation. And this is God's economy.

To most, the New Jerusalem is just a curiosity. To some it is just a metaphor for "heaven". To others it is a literal, physical city which believers will dwell in.

But the Bible gives us a different picture. It is in fact the Wife of the Lamb. The Lord Jesus is not going to marry both His Bride (the church) and also marry a physical city. This is ludicrous. The New Jerusalem is the ultimate sign in the Bible.

The New Jerusalem is God's building, shown in type and shadow and picture in the Old Testament, and shown to be the body of Christ, God's building in the New. She is constituted with Gold, Silver, and precious stones signifying the Triune God. The Gold of the Father's Nature, the Silver of Christ's redemption (and eventually pearl which is the secretion of His Life), and the precious stones which are the Spirit's work produced in us by pressure and the refining fire.

This is God's building and God's economy is to build this building with living stones through His dispensing of Himself as Life into His redeemed believers.

And having this vision from the Bible unveils to us God's work in us, what He is doing, why we undergo trials, what His perfecting work in us is toward (its goal) and how we may co-operate with God in His transforming work.

It unveils the nature of the Church, and its function. It unveils all of the teaching of the epistles, Paul's burden, and all the Apostles teaching.

It shows us our relationship to all the members of the body of Christ and destroys our individualistic disposition showing us God's work to build us up as members of His Body.

It causes us to cry out to God to make us buildable materials for His building. To constitute us through the flow of His Life within us with His nature, and to produce in us precious stones through all our trials and circumstances, and to build us up with others to be His corporate building.

This vision, this understanding, and this theology is key to God's obtaining what Christ died to obtain and to enabling Him to complete what He has begun, "upon this rock I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it".

And I would add that though these things are not absent from history, or from the writings and experiences of the Saints

in all ages, the recovery is the recovery of these things in their clarity. And this is why it is called, "the Lord's recovery".

Graftedbranch