

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: What is your sphere?****What is your sphere?, on: 2013/11/20 12:17**

Today most pastors try to be all things to all men. Many complain that this is foisted upon them, but the reality in so many churches is that this is by design. It is the nature of what we now call church. God has shown us that church is where two or three or ten or 100 are gathered together in His name. The number is not important, what is important is God's definition of what church is and how it should operate.

Now we know that the Body of Christ is just that, it is a body. It was God Himself who uses this analogy and if we are to follow Him then we have to follow what He has laid down. "For the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If all the body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If all hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body as it has pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where would be the body?" (1 Cor 12:16-19)

Where is the body today brothers and sisters? Does it function as you have just read? Does your church function in the Biblical fashion or is it "one member," a pastor who does all the preaching, all the praying, all the exhorting all the prophesying, all the words of knowledge and so on? The truth is that this is the Catholic model and it is indeed a sick model. How can the body function if it operates as one member? In your church, are you merely a spectator? What does your participation look like? Paul says "We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the sphere which God appointed us." (2 Cor 10:11)

God has appointed men and women to operate within the church in the gifts He has bestowed upon them. Any system which suppresses these gifts or simply does not allow them to function is in direct conflict with that which God has ordained. And so, rather than measure themselves against the Word of God, modern pastors "measure themselves by themselves." This is not wise and God will not participate in any system that so directly violates His commands and instructions.....bro Frank

Re: What is your sphere? - posted by havok20x, on: 2013/11/20 13:39

Brother,

I agree. So what do we do?

Re: , on: 2013/11/20 15:22

Amen, bro Frank!

In an orchestra do we just hear the tuba?

Jesus Christ is the Conductor of His orchestra and He knows just when to have the violin, piano or flute play.

They all give different but very important sounds. We need them all.

The tuba cannot sound like the flute no matter how hard it tries.

Sadly, in most congregations, Jesus Christ is not the host and not even the special guest. He is relegated to the back row and many times, not even let into the congregation of believers.

Paul taught new disciples how to look to Jesus, hold fast to Jesus. He taught the centrality and headship of Christ and he demonstrated it.

What do we do?

We demonstrate in our lives that our Conductor is alive and that we are looking to Him for direction.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: What is your sphere?

Apollus, I think it is difficult for people who have grown up in a religious setting as a "benchwarmer" to understand what it means to be engaged and participating in the life of the Church.

I think this is why I love the apostle Paul, so much. With all his religious knowledge, he was able to take a back seat and always encouraged the church to be the church. Paul did not hog the show. He let the hand be the hand, the foot be the foot, and knowing the relationship between the Head and the Body, he had much trepidation when it came to interfering with what ONLY the HEAD could do.

It's ghastly when you see a knee trying to be the HEAD, or a toe trying to be the HEAD. I'm usually pretty embarrassed for them. When the body is malfunctioning or has morphed into something hideous, no one at all is seeing the TRUE HEAD. And isn't that what we all want? To see Jesus, the Life of Christ in His Body?

Re: , on: 2013/11/20 17:55

Just-in writes.....

"I think this is why I love the apostle Paul, so much. With all his religious knowledge, he was able to take a back seat and always encouraged the church to be the church. Paul did not hog the show. He let the hand be the hand, the foot be the foot, and knowing the relationship between the Head and the Body, he had much trepidation when it came to interfering with what ONLY the HEAD could do. "

Amen bro, I agree entirely with that. Now, as to the question of what to do. I believe that God is raising up a generation of saints, remnant saints who are ready to make the break and so many already have. We start by gathering together with like-minded saints in fellowship.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2013/11/21 8:46

Yes, you do have to make a break from anything that does not exalt and glorify Jesus Christ, and most religious organizations fit that bill because they are focused on men and not the Lord. I know that is very offensive to those who gather around men and unto men, but Jesus did not come to win a popularity contest.

The religious system persecuted Him for offending them and drawing disciples away from them and the kingdom that they built, and they do the same to His remnant down through the centuries. It should not surprise anyone that the "children of the flesh" will always persecute the "children of the Spirit".

Re: What is your sphere? - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2013/11/21 16:08

Frank - This reminds me something you wrote a while back, it was one of your relations in Wales, saw a vision if I remember correctly and you posted it in three parts. It is the second part that you posted that this reminds me of what you write here.

Control that's what I saw while in the church, now don't get me wrong I did grow within the church, but there was a ceiling a ceiling placed over us in the church by a man.

After all the church being invited closer to the front. So you run to the front and sit on the second row, I was full of zeal and wanted to soak up every part of the message and take it all in. Only in a rage to be told to go further back as I hadn't been in the church long enough to sit there. Strange what upset him? Wasn't that what he wanted?

For example he wanted you to win souls, so you go out and win souls, but he reacts strangely and he stops others in the church from supporting you in their discipleship.. Why? because I had to learn. But learn what, should he have not been trying to nurture that gift rather than crush it.

These are just a couple of things that went on and I saw as long as he wasn't 'threatened' in any way you would get on fine. There was room for the Spirit to operate in others as long as it was under his terms they way he wanted.

You see many Pastor's will struggle when the move of God comes as some control the people, why will they struggle as God is going to raise up the people, but he will help the shepherds to.

Re: , on: 2013/11/21 17:36

Hey bro,

Control seems to be a great part of the system of churches. I know that in very many Pentecostal circles that unless the testimony is in some way connected to the Pastor then it will rarely be heard from the platform because it does not lift him up. This only exemplifies kingdoms and thieftoms of men. The notion of Jesus truly being preminent is something that is lost to almost all of Christendom. What a beautiful thing it is when your chief role amongst the bretheren is to come along side them and support them in what The Lord has them do. Oh it is so beautiful when a man can say from the bottom of his heart that he must decrease that The Lord may increase.

The pyramid system of authority in the churches, rather than a plurality of leadership is truly erosive amongst the Body. He has His parts and He has apportioned gifts and leadership. That is why I believe The Lord is raising up a remnant generation, hungry for His presence, hungry for His preminence and hungry for the organic church we read of in Scriptures..bro Frank.

Re: , on: 2013/11/21 18:01

Music to my ears, brothers.

The reason you don't see the Body of Christ operating and functioning freely and powerfully in Christ in many congregations is because one member is trying to be all things.

1Co 12:19 And if they were all one member, where were the body?

My point exactly, Paul! "Where were the body"? It ain't no where! (excuse my eloquence).

The body is paralyzed, sitting like zombies, not knowing what their function is. How sad. Religious quadriplegics who have been rendered that way by the spirit of Control!

When Paul wrote 1 Cor 12, He really understood God's heart for His Body. He must have been in awe regarding what the Holy Spirit inspired him to write. And he wrote it while thinking of the Corinthians, no less! Now, there is an apostle of love! I know John gets that distinction but Paul stuck it out with difficult brethren in difficult circumstances and I am sure many brethren are thankful that Paul stuck with them. His testimony of love and patience echoes down through the centuries to me. Christ was truly alive and functioning in Paul. He was not functioning in Paul to be the "big shot", or draw men to him, or get rich. He really was walking as Christ walked. I cannot read any of Paul's writings and call Paul a hypocrite. He lived what he wrote.

Apollus and Colin, it is truly exciting that God is bringing healing to His Body, which has been paralyzed (by lies) for so long.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: What is your sphere?

Re: What is your sphere? - posted by RogerB (), on: 2013/11/21 22:09

That's the model I see. Really tight control even where I attend. I visited an anti baptist site once and listened to a sermon by Dan Esch. I noticed that at the end the men stood and talked and even the ladies. I like this. I remember Paul saying "By now You should all be teachers". But you can't become a teacher by listening to the minister alone. I read widely and listen to others as you do.

One of the necessities of listening to others is that many old heads have already pieced together some of the stories from the past and have the lessons to pass on. David Wilkerson was great at walking through the Bible. Zac Poonen was another. I would read the word and try to visualize the situation. Often more things would come forth. But it takes time to become a teacher. Just attending on Saturday or Sunday is not enough. One needs to be at it continually until it becomes your best friend.

I didn't mean to offend anyone about Sabbath Keeping. I have learned that all are seeking God and we are all at different levels. Some haven't mastered this or that. I don't judge. I continue to look at what Jesus said on the cross, "forgive them, they know not what they do" and that's how we should look at our brothers. We all have a lot of pride to eat as there seems to be a lot at my house. I seem to find it all the time.

Re: - posted by reformer, on: 2013/11/22 7:03

Well said just-in:

"Apollus, I think it is difficult for people who have grown up in a religious setting as a "benchwarmer" to understand what it means to be engaged and participating in the life of the Church. "

There sphere is the church system, they have grown into it and anything that "looks" as a contrast of what they have known is to them anything but christian. They ignore the history of how the church system developed and just excuse it away. Many feel just to comfortable in it, and in a way they want the comfort of knowing they don't have to do anything and being controlled and managed with in the system.

Obviously there are some benefits in the church system and not all of them are bad or wrong. But to ignore and close off other forms of fellowship and gathering as believers just shows that religion and structure has more control over them and that should be cause for examination in anyone.

Re: , on: 2013/11/22 13:43

Just-in writes.....

"The body is paralyzed, sitting like zombies, not knowing what their function is. How sad. Religious quadriplegics who have been rendered that way by the spirit of Control! "

Amen brother.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2013/11/22 17:49

Quote:

-----by RogerB on 2013/11/21 22:09:40

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Love your post, Roger.

The Church is supposed to be relational like a family (is supposed to be). I am very interactive with my kids and vice-versa. I don't sit them down each day, and expect them to be quiet for 2 hours while I dispense knowledge into their head. We both learn from each other, and we want more than head knowledge of each other, we want heart knowledge.

Hearts knitted together through love, not sermons. Sermons have their place but are not the rule. Faith, working by love is the rule. Relationship, laying down our lives, being doers of the word, not just hearers.

Re: , on: 2013/11/22 21:30

Quote:

-----by reformer on 2013/11/22 7:03:49

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Hi reformer,

I think you hit upon another "key" word which is "comfortable". There is a word that we could certainly write reams about. In contrast, Jesus is anything but comfortable, and I think you know what I mean. He is forever stretching us, testing us and otherwise causing us to NOT BE comfortable. Walking in love, forgiving, being selfless, is not comfortable to the flesh. To continue to burn hot for Him and run fast entails doing things that are not comfortable to the flesh (praying, fasting, neglecting self, etc). Yet, the dichotomy of our lives is the same as His (we are walking as He walked).

Here is the dichotomy: "Always working, yet always resting". Jesus was always engaged with His Father and with others (not Himself) and yet He was always at REST. But, if your master is the spirit of Control, you are always working (albeit, a different kind of work) and never resting.

Let's take a quick look at the ministry of the Lord as Isaiah wrote in 61:1-3. I love these verses because they also speak of the ministry of the Church, the BODY OF CHRIST. (His ministry continues, through His Church). The Key in these verses to being active and engaged is that "The Spirit of the Lord God" must be upon us. If this is not true in our lives, we may be active and engaged, but we are not engaged in HIS work.

Isa 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Preach
Bind up
Proclaim Liberty
Open the prisons
Comfort all that mourn

Give beauty (His character and grace) for ashes.

These activities will keep us all busy but these are not works of men. They are works of the Holy Spirit that please God.

So, if the Spirit of the Lord is upon us, we will be active and engaged because God is active and engaged and will not be controlled by men and He does not want His church controlled by men. I am going to be graphic here. The religious system in one sense makes the Body a quadriplegic, but in another sense, decapitates the Body and substitutes "false heads" that have no idea how to direct the Body of Christ. Only Christ, knows how to make His body work, only Christ knows all about His members and when and how to use them. When they need ministry, when they need a haircut or a trim or a good washing.

Because a "mechanical head" has taken over the body, the body has ceased to function. There is only one Head for this Body. No other head will do. And because the mechanical head cannot operate a spiritual body, then it just blusters and cackles and tries to become everything to all men. It is quite disgusting. Kind of like a Frankenstein.

The only way a mechanical (non-spiritual) head knows how to move the Body and get it engaged is CONTROL. Think about it: In Christ we LIVE, and MOVE and have our BEING. In a mechanical, non-spiritual head, you cannot live and move and have your being. And vice versa. We live in Christ and Christ lives in us. He moves us gently (green pastures, still waters) and lovingly (Shepherd) and we respond in kind.

I do not abuse my hands, feet, eyes, or any part of my body. And my head is so intrinsically linked to the members of my body that my members are moving in harmony with my head. Not so, and never so in the religious system, with a mechanical head.

Now, what is the saddest part of this (yet God uses it). The mechanical, logical, head is not imparting life to the members of the body. And, I don't know about you but if life is not being imparted then I believe death is being imparted. And because there is no life, there is an even greater need for the spirit of control to get the members "moving".

Eventually, and I said, "God uses" the dead religious system, to bring people to a place of utter despair. That's not a bad thing. Many, who have been under the mechanical head have come out and away from it, and their despair had played a big role in it. When you get so sick and tired of being sick and tired, you cry out to God, who opens your eyes and let's you see what is really going on.

So many "spectators" are living lives of quiet desperation. The problem is they are under the wrong Head and trying to draw their life from it.

Much peace to you, in Christ.

Re: , on: 2013/11/22 23:44

I just wanted to thank all the posts on this thread. There are some great thoughts and insights coming out and I appreciate them all. Your last post just-in is so in line with where I am. I am constantly reminded that almost every-time Jesus drew a crowd, whether it was teaching or healings, he invariably withdrew to be alone with His Father. Now that runs totally counter to the flesh.

If men speak at meetings and thousands show up, they extend the meetings, they cash in on the "success." They advertise the crowds and try to have it go as long as possible. Yet Jesus did not do that. He withdrew. I pray that the one place that is guaranteed that you can find me is before the throne and not before the crowd..... bro Frank

Re: , on: 2013/11/23 8:04

Yeah, I remember when a great move of God (revival) was taking place in Capernaum, that Jesus, instead of setting up shop there and making a name for Himself, He just up and left and went on His way. But, not before He ruined His future success and ministry in Capernaum by dropping some "harsh" words on them. Jesus must never have gone to Bible school and taken "How to Have a Successful Ministry and Build a Big Church - 101".

The Miraculous Catch of Fish
Luke 5:1-11

The Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5-7

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed
Matthew 8:14-15

The Paralytic was Healed
Mark 2:1-12

Woman with Issue of Blood Healed
Mark 5:25-34

Jesus Raises a Girl from the Dead
Luke 8:40-56

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men
Matthew 9:27-31

Jesus Heals the Dumb Demoniac
Matthew 9:32-34

Jesus Heals a Man with a Withered Hand
Matthew 12:9-13

A Fish Gives Jesus His Tax Money
Matthew 17:24-27

After all of that, Jesus rebuked Capernaum. He was not worried about marketing Himself or how He appeared to men. He wasn't worried about losing His "following" or the esteem of men. He never did any of the previous miracles for selfish reasons, to manipulate men to follow Him or give Him money or support His ministry.
Matthew 11:20-24

He just moved on when the Father said, "It's time to go Son". They are not receiving your words which are My words.

Matt 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

Matt 11:23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Matt 11:24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee .

Jesus must have received some bad advice from someone. Doesn't He know that if He wants to build a successful world-wide ministry that you don't "bite the hand that feeds you?" Going back to reformer's great word, you're supposed to make people comfortable.

I tell you what, if you want a huge ministry with thousands of people fawning over you, please don't follow Jesus' example. You'll be poor and destitute and hated. And we know that being poor and destitute and hated are not marks of success in YOUR ministry.

Re: Big Church - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2013/11/29 17:45

Visiting my daughter and grand children here in Texas for Thanksgiving, I can't help but notice the church buildings that excel one another in the Dallas area.

Wow.

How would you ever bring a needed message of scathing truth to one of these congregations, it must cost thousands just to keep them heated and cooled, let alone the cost of staff and infrastructure.

I am inadequate to comprehend it.

But for what it's worth, it is amazing dealing with a "churched" population as we meet people in stores and around our daughter's social circle. A bit unnerving really, so unlike the cold indifference I am used to back in California. People are so polite, smiling, they hold doors open and greet strangers with genuine affection! I hear conversations like: "At my church we..."

So... With all my disgust aimed at "the organized church" I sure prefer this to what I encounter in places where there are no churches.

Nothing's easy...

Re: , on: 2013/11/29 18:47

The Bible belt is a pleasant place to live. I live in Kansas and my friend lives in Oklahoma. If you lived in Victorian England and were wealthy, it would be a wonderful place to live, very friendly, very moral. I can only speak for myself but I do not have disgust for the organized church.....bro Frank

Re: Our sphere - posted by RogerB (), on: 2013/11/29 18:59

I've heard it said by our minister in the local church, that "no one knows how to teach the old as it relates to the new".

I understand the problem. I remember when old Methodist ministers were teachers of the word. They knew it. Those days are gone. Today kids go to college to become a minister, looking at it as just another occupation. Why I even had one tell me that everyone knows we evolved.

Satan has invaded the church. Four years of Theological school doesn't mean one is a great teacher. Neither does a DD (Dumb Dog... lol), or any other theological degree. It is God who anoints. All ministers and teachers should seek that.

I've mentioned some things to my local pastor and now he thinks I'm off the wall. No, not so. I've spent a lot of time searching and looking. I pray to the Father asking for truth and truth alone. I pray for his wisdom, his words, his understanding. The father will work with you once you surrender everything.

There are so many scriptures we read right over. We fail to ask questions to ourselves as we read, Like why this, what's this mean. For instance in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. He mentions the rich man has 5 brothers. Of course he is talking about Judah. Yes, they were rich having the things of God. All the beggars around catching the crumbs. interesting Lazarus is the same word as Abraham's servant, a very faithful man.

I'll give you another> I think it's in Colosians. "There's a spirit in man. Whoa. Were we born with a spirit in this vessel of flesh. After all God is not interested in this old flesh. It can't enter the Kingdom. But now, that spirit, well that's another story.

Ministers burn out too from a dead audience. They don't participate and other things. Most church leaders are like the ph

arisees. I have the word. They treat you like they did Jesus. "where did you get knowledge?" They didn't care for Jesus and neither do they want your God given wisdom. If not careful, you will be put on their list.

Ever see the little pamphlet, "Others can, but you can't"?

Re: A little late night ramble... - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2013/11/29 22:47

There comes a time in the pursuit of God when everything else, everyone else, and everything inside fails you. Jesus had quite a following- adoring crowds, grateful beneficiaries of miraculous healing, the affection of hundreds of innocent children. And disciples willing to go to the fires of death with him- even if it was youthful hyper-enthusiasm.

But then one night as He sweated out those drops of blood and felt the crush of a decision that would take Him alone to a brutal cross, where were they? Other places, scared, confused, angry, disillusioned.

But after the cross, everything is different. Church with all its failings and benefits is no longer the centerpoint of religious thought life.

I may have used the word "disgust" a little prematurely in my last post. Having recently left a church dedicated to grand ministry on an international scale, it really was more about simply being on a very different page in respect to everything they loved, which was always ensconced in numbers.

Dollar numbers, attendance numbers, "decisions for Christ" numbers, record numbers, you get the idea.

But the mindset this created in the church members made it impossible to fellowship in realities beyond the official teaching of the professional clergy.

I... am a nut. You should have seen the look on the face of one of the assistant pastors when I told him how Charles Finney had influenced my conversion!

"That heretic??"

And so it went.

Church people are nice enough, but too often they are content to fit into a religious social order that serves their needs and they are not open to any challenge. Pastors get the Word from God, not uneducated peons like me, or uneducated people in general.

But I do understand this, and cannot be embittered by what I cannot control. Mostly I left because I was bored and felt no charge from God to continue warming a pew. I asked God for something that would be useful to His Kingdom, and an opportunity for ministry has come. I am in a good place right now, and will only move when I get a clear call to something else.

God will call those who sit idly in church in His own way, many will get bored with status quo and a longing for the deeper things of God will stir their hearts. They will go through that dry lonely time where they feel so alone with God, anxious for fellowship and finding only God alone.

They will find an identity with Jesus that only comes through that lonely time, but hopefully they will emerge with compassion for those who also go through it and those who have no clue about going through it.

These thoughts are drifting away from the earlier direction I thought I was going, but this forum seems like a good place to express them. I have from the beginning felt like there were folks here who have been on these roads, people whose posts indicate they have been through lonely stretches of life where going to church just wasn't enough.

My sincere hope is that those seeking God will come to realize that He is there for your finding, that He longs to be found that way, that by the time you find Him you will have paid too great a price to ever go back to religion.

"The hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers will worship Him in Spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

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Perhaps it might be prudent of me to suggest that if you are currently serving in a church, continue there until you are called out. Rebellion for its own sake will not lead you to the Father.

A wise friend who went through all this long before I did had gone back to church. I asked him why?

"Because there is nothing wrong with church that wasn't wrong with me first!"

I have never forgotten those words.

Re: , on: 2013/11/30 0:32

Sidewalk writes.....

"I may have used the word "disgust" a little prematurely in my last post. Having recently left a church dedicated to grand ministry on an international scale, it really was more about simply being on a very different page in respect to everything they loved, which was always ensconced in numbers.

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"Perhaps it might be prudent of me to suggest that if you are currently serving in a church, continue there until you are called out. Rebellion for its own sake will not lead you to the Father."

Good sentiments and we agree Sidewalk. Yes, many many very nice people. The problem always arises when their cultural Christianity is challenged. Or when crossless Christianity is challenged. It has to be challenged before we can find out what is real and what is not. I wrote in an earlier post that when the most severe persecution broke out under Diocletian, then many failed to stand and what passed for the Church was divided. Those who failed to stand became established and persecuted those who stood firm. This of course is the ancient truth that those born of the flesh, once born men, persecute those born of the Spirit, twice born men, it can be no other way.

And so, yes, God is calling His own out and it must be Him that does the calling. Between that and persecution, God Himself will do the separating. Our job is to follow where He leads and love what He loves, starting with Truth. our brothers and sisters in Christ and then the world, the world that will persecute us. These are the conditions for the organic Church to grow and thrive, and not thrive in the sense that the world would use that word. Thrive in the Spirit. And as we thrive in the Spirit it attracts even more persecution..... bro Frank

Luk 6:48 He is like a man who built a house and dug deep and laid the foundation on a rock; and a flood occurring, the stream burst against that house and could not shake it; for it was founded on a rock.

Luk 6:49 But he who hears and does not perform, is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, on which the stream burst, and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.