

General Topics :: The Final Chapter-The failed system of the church.

The Final Chapter-The failed system of the church., on: 2016/11/26 21:16

This is the final chapter of the book " The Fall of Christendom."

This final chapter of the book will look at the failed and fatally flawed system of church that we have labored under for centuries. I know that this is a controversial subject and I have lost friends over this but I must speak what the Lord has laid upon my heart. It is quite an audacious thing to say that the very system that most of Christendom labors under is unbiblical and flawed but there it is, that is what I believe. The mere fact that it has existed in some form or fashion for countless centuries in no way legitimizes it. If it did, then the Catholic Church would be the most legitimate church that we have.

It seems plain enough that in Scripture, Christians met in their homes and their very homes became places of worship, houses of prayer if you like. The outside world saw life in these people, saw love in these people and God Himself added to them daily. Think about all the church programs that are designed to get new members or to somehow stop the door from evolving and keep the folks who come and visit. Yet the early believers had no such programs.

What led people to the truth was the very life in those who represented it. A burning love and passion for Jesus. They had no desire to bring folks to their particular house, or tell people that they must hear their particular teacher or pastor, no their singular obsession and passion was for the one who radically transformed their lives and it was now no longer them that lived but Christ lived in them.

Therefore they were not afraid to die for Jesus, in fact, the early Church counted it as a great honor and thanked God that they were counted worthy to suffer for Him. This was the life of Christ burning in their bones, coursing through their veins, it completely dominated their whole lives, their life was about His life in them and this drew others to Jesus. God Himself was given all the honor and the glory for the drawing of others to Himself as of course it should be. Consider the words of T.A.Sparks

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The Lord has not called upon us to form churches. That is not our business. Would to God men had recognized the fact! A very different situation would obtain today from what exists, if that had been recognized. It is the Lord Who expands His Church, Who governs its growth. What we have to do is to live in the place of His appointment in the power of His resurrection. If, in the midst of others, the Lord can get but two of His children, in whom His Life is full and free, to live on the basis of that Life, and not to seek to gather others to themselves or to get them to congregate together on the basis of their acceptance of certain truths or teaching, but simply to witness to what Christ means and is to them, then He has an open way.

The Church is not increased by your going and taking a building and trying to get people to come to it, and to your meetings, and then forming them, by a church roll, into a local church. That is not the way. Growth is by Life, and this, to begin with, may be by the entering into Life of but one soul, and then after a long waiting time of another; or it may be more rapid. But the point is that it is increase because of Life. That is the growth of the Church. For the growth of His Church, the Lord must have Life channels, Life centers. I believe that, given a Life center, sooner or later one of two things will happen, that it will be abundantly manifest that Christ is fully and finally rejected there, or else there will be an adding, a growth. There is tremendous power in Life, and the Life of the Lord either kills or quickens. It depends on the attitude taken toward it. He is a savor of Life unto Life, or of death unto death. Things can never remain neutral. (T.A.Sparks)

You see brothers and sisters, life attracts life. And it is these lives that form the Body of Christ. It is not our religious clubs or denominations that form the Body of Christ, it is the life of Christ in His own that constitute the Body. The Body is scattered throughout Christendom and for the most is to be found in the religious clubs and denominations that make up Christendom today. Yet it was not always that way and it will not always be that way, indeed, with Christ at the door, there is a calling by God on His people to come out. In all the lost centuries of Catholic

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domination by denomination, rightly called the dark ages, there was a Pilgrim church, operating outside of the authority of the ruling religious establishment. This is what kept the light burning in the world through the dark ages, this was the Body of Christ. All attempts at keeping any kind of fire burning within religious establishments always failed in the end. Ultimately religion must have the authority and for Christ's own, there is one head of the Church and that is Christ. Listen to what Broadbent says in the book "The Pilgrim Church."

The histories of the monks and the friars shows that if a spiritual movement can be kept within the confines of the Roman Catholic Church or any similar system, it is doomed and must be dragged down to the level of that which it sought originally to reform. It purchases exemption from persecution at the cost of its life. Francis of Assisi and Peter Waldo were both laid hold of by the same teaching of the Lord and yielded themselves to Him with uttermost devotion. In each case the example set and the teaching given gained the hearts of large numbers and affected their whole manner of life.

The likeness turned to contrast when the one was accepted and the other rejected by the organized religion of Rome. The inward relation to the Lord may have remained the same, but the working out of the two lives differed widely. The Franciscans being absorbed into the Roman system, helped to blind men to it, while Waldo and his band of preachers directed multitudes of souls to the Scriptures, where they learned to draw for themselves fresh and inexhaustible supplies from the wells of salvation. (The Pilgrim Church, pg 117)

You see brothers and sisters, those outside of the religious structures were able to draw inexhaustible supplies from the wells of salvation. It may have looked to the world that these groups of pilgrim gatherings that had taken themselves outside of the religious system would flounder due to lack of leadership and authority and resources that the Catholic Church brought to bear, but the truth was quite the opposite. God is well able to look after His children wherever they may be and He can produce springs in the desert and cause manna to fall from the heavens as the saints make their way home to the Promised Land, to that new Heavenly

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Jerusalem. It is a narrow and difficult path of course and we can wonder oftentimes why the wicked seem to prosper and live lives of relative ease and comfort, but it is the necessary way home. We may not have ease and comfort in this world and those of the religious persuasion may sometimes seem to have many comforts here, but our journey is an eternal one, our Kingdom is not of this world. We are merely passing through, sojourners and gypsies to the world, yet God's ambassadors, pilgrims in a foreign land, looking to journey home. The travails of the road may seem very difficult sometimes, very lonely and difficult, but this will only make our arrival home all the sweeter. Listen to what Tozer says as he cries out for forgiveness for his own participation in a religious system that has robbed Christ of any true authority in the churches and has relegated Him to but a mere figurehead, a name to rubber stamp man-made programs

Myself I know my own heart it is love alone that moves me to write this. What I write here is not the sour ferment of a mind agitated by contentions with my fellow Christians. There have been no such contentions. I have not been abused, mistreated or attacked by anyone. Nor have these observations grown out of any unpleasant experiences that I have had in my association with others. My relations with my own church as well as with Christians of other denominations have been friendly, courteous and pleasant. My grief is simply the result of a condition which I believe to be almost universally prevalent among the churches.

I think also that I should acknowledge that I am myself very much involved in the situation I here deplore. As Ezra in his mighty prayer of intercession included himself among the wrongdoers, so do I. "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" (9:6). Any hard word spoken here against others must in simple honesty return upon my own head. I too have been guilty. This is written with the hope that we all may turn unto the Lord our God and sin no more against Him.

Let me state the cause of my burden. It is this: Jesus Christ has today almost no authority at all among the groups that call themselves by His name. By these I mean not the Roman Catholics, nor the liberals, nor the various quasi-Christian cults. I do mean Protestant churches generally, and I include those that protest the loudest that they are in spiritual descent from our Lord and His apostles, namely the evangelicals. (Tozer)

He takes no time to discount the Catholics and the liberals, Jehovahs and Mormons, for it should be apparent to all that t

They do not have Christ as their authority, nor do they take direct aim at Protestant churches in general and evangelicals in particular. Their system of churches is such that the life of Christ must be snuffed out in favor of the traditions and doctrines of men. Again, saints are scattered throughout all of these churches, good men and women laboring under an unbiblical system that always snuffs out the life of Christ, the authority of Christ, the pre-eminence of Christ. In the end it is done in favor of their own authority, their own traditions and their own survival. Notice that in most non-denominational churches, the pre-eminence passes from Christ to the preacher/teacher/pastor. We are living in the days of the personality cult where the man or the woman is lifted up as they rob and steal from the Word of God for their own fame and enrichment.

Now the coming of the end of ages is upon us brothers and sisters. Christ is at the door. Great darkness has covered the land and gross darkness is almost upon us. There is a gathering storm that is brewing and the likes of it has never been seen before. Great persecution has come against God's people in many parts of the world and shall now come against the saints in the west who have been living in relative peace and safety for some time. We have been living at ease in Babylon but Babylon will take back what it has given. Saints in the west will lose everything in the coming persecution prior to Christ returning.

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Those of the religious system whose hearts truly belong to the world and not to Christ will turn upon the saints as the saints begin to draw back from gross worldliness. The saints will be compelled to leave their comfort behind in a system that has done all of their studying for them, their worshipping for them, a system where they were only truly compelled to give their tithes and offerings and then sit silent as spectators while they were taught and entertained by paid professionals. This may seem like a disaster but it will be the finest thing that ever happened to the Body of Christ. Their unity, prophesied by Jesus in John 17, will finally begin to materialize and it will be forged in the fires of blood and persecution. Ungodly, un-biblical denominational divisions will begin to evaporate for the saints as they come together and glorify Christ and witness to the world. Listen to what Spurgeon says of his own Baptist denomination back in the 1850s as he looks forward to such a time:

I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ's name last forever. I look forward with pleasure to the day when there will not be a Baptist living. I hope they will soon be gone. You will say, Why? But, I say, let even England's name perish; let her be merged in one great brotherhood; let us have no England, and no France, and no Russia, and no Turkey, but let us have Christendom; and I say heartily from my soul, let nations and national distinctions perish, but let Christ's name last for ever. (C.H. Spurgeon, The Eternal Name, Sermon, May 27th, 1855).

John Wesley said, "Would to God that all party names, and unscriptural phrases and forms which have divided the Christian world, were forgot! I should rejoice if the very name (Methodist) might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion." (The Works of John Wesley).

Frank Bartleman said this of the pentecostal move of the early 1900s: "The truth must be told. Azusa began to fail the Lord also, early in her history. God showed me one day that they were going to organize! He had me get up and warn them against making a party spirit of the Pentecostal work. The baptized saints were to remain one body! Surely a party spirit cannot be Pentecostal. There can be no divisions in a true Pentecost. To formulate a separate body is but to advertise our failure, as people of God. It proves to the world that we cannot get along together, rather than causing them to believe in our salvation. That they all may be one that the world may believe! (Jn. 17.21)" (Frank Bartleman, Azusa Street).

In the Spurgeon quote, he uses his beloved England as an analogy of all the various sects and denominations of Christianity. He would see them all swallowed up for the glory of Christ's name and that name alone lifted up. All other names will fail in the coming persecution. It is only by being identified by Christ and Christ alone that one will stand in the evil day. For in that evil day only those churches and denominations who have acquiesced to the evil authorities will be able to exist. My own prayer would be that all would stand for Christ in that day and be willing to suffer and count it a worthy thing to suffer for the name of Jesus and for that and under that name alone.

The sad truth is that already so many churches and denominations have fallen at the first hurdle and yet we are merely in the birth pang stages. As the intensity increases, more and more will fall away from the truth. Yet the Body of Christ, the true Church of Christ will come forward and be counted. They will stand in unity under that name which is above every name. Their light will shine greatly as the greatest darkness the world has ever known engulfs the world in gross wickedness and violence. Like gold in the hottest fire, it will simply purify the saints.

A possible scenario for end time events

This subject can be very difficult to approach today because there have been so many crazy people claiming when the end of the world would happen. The below scenario reckons on the saints going through the great tribulation or at least a part of it. Therefore there is no particular day or hour that is looked for, rather a season, birth pangs if you like. We are told by Jesus that we should be able to discern the signs of the times, not the day nor the hour of His return. In any event, most Peoples of the world and the church have a difficult time imagining a time where Christians would be hunted down and killed for the mere fact of being Christian.

They may be able to imagine this in a Muslim world setting, but not in the West. I do not claim that the scenario below is prophetic, I merely wish to show you a logical procession of events that could lead to a world-wide persecution of the true saints.

I think we may all agree that Jesus is coming relatively soon. Where we may disagree is on the subject of rapture. Let's assume there is no rapture and Jesus is coming soon, then the saints will go through the great tribulation. The Scriptures tell us that it will be worse than anything that has ever happened before in history, in fact the Lord must shorten these days for the elects sake or we would all be dead.

Just 70 years ago, in the heart of educated and cultured Europe, in a country that pronounced itself to be Christian, an evil man arose and in six short years, killed six million Jews for the mere fact of being Jewish. He shoved them into gas chambers and then burned them in furnaces, men, women and children, sparing none. Now this is not some Biblical genocide from the ancient world, this is something that happened just 70 years ago. Now what kind of events would need to unfold for the world to turn on Christians and for there to be a coming together of the world religions into one religion?

Let's say tomorrow there is an attack by Muslim extremists on multiple cities. New York, Washington, London, Paris, Rome and Moscow are hit simultaneously with nuclear suitcase bombs. Rather than the three thousand dead of 9/11, there is one hundred thousand dead in each city. The world is repulsed and is brought together because of this great tragedy. Fundamentalists of all stripes are universally condemned and outlawed. To state publicly that there is only one true religion, only one way to heaven, becomes illegal.

Such people are denounced as those who have caused all the troubles in the world. They are seen as a cancer on society which society must rid itself of.

So society gives them a chance to renounce such beliefs. At the same time, the major religions of the world have a summit. Islam, Christianity and the Jewish faith come together for a summit in Rome. Pope Francis leads the summit because he is universally respected. When the meeting is over they announce that they can all trace their roots back to Abraham. They say they all worship the same God just in different ways. They announce that there are multiple roads to heaven and that to say otherwise is merely hate speech. They agree to drop Jesus and Mohammed from their literature and only speak in terms of God and His prophets, agreeing to stand upon what they agree on and bringing a historic unity that will usher in a new day, a new order for the world where there is equality for all.

The vast majority of the world hail this as a great turning point and rejoice in it. A small minority resist it and in the shadow of the multiple hundreds and thousands of deaths, the world hates them with a perfect hatred. They hate them more than the Germans hated the Jews. The minority cannot find work and are ultimately arrested for continuing to preach the Gospel. While they are a minority, they are still in the millions and camps are set up to imprison them because the prison system cannot contain them. An ever-growing hatred by the general public and resentment that they have to be fed and kept eventually leads to the decision to make it a capital offense punishable by death to be a fundamental Christian.

If I had time and space, I could weave into that scenario the rise of the anti-christ who orchestrates all of those events and performs signs and wonders and miracles in front of the whole world to legitimize what he and the Pope and the religious leaders are teaching and saying about the minority, the remnant who refused to bow their knees to such a world religion. I want you to imagine such a man, before the cameras of the world, healing a man blind from birth, or raising a man from the dead. The whole world will follow after such a man, and the world religious leaders who are now one would verify that he is in fact, God returned.

This is just one possible scenario of end time events. I wanted to show you that we are but one catalyst away from every

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thing changing overnight. So many of the building blocks are already in place and it is time for the saints to arise from their slumbers. We must be prepared in our hearts and minds and Spirits for what is to come. I have tried to lay out in this book fundamental truths and the fact that God is calling His remnant people. I pray that even if you do not agree with everything that I have written, or even if you do not agree with most of what I have written, that you were still blessed in the reading of this book. And so here is my challenge to all who have made it to this point in the book. I want you to stand.

To Stand In The Evil Day (The Fall of Christendom)

Re: The Final Chapter-The failed system of the church. - posted by StirltUp (), on: 2016/11/27 3:09

Thank you brother Frank for this strong word. Let it be as our Lord has purposed to all true believers.

Christ alone...our Cornerstone!

Re: , on: 2016/11/27 10:08

William writes....."Christ alone...our Cornerstone!"amen!.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2016/11/27 12:42

My wife just said to me, "you know the reason you post things on SI is that this is probably one of the few outlets you have got for spiritual interaction with the body" Sadly she is right and may well be true for many others here. Such is the state of the church in many places!

Frank, agree with most all you have written. I don't however think that meeting in a home necessarily equates to true church anymore than meeting in a building negates true church. Admittedly the home situation is more likely to restrict religiosity. I think the early church met in houses because they were outside of the Jewish synagogue society, but some did meet in rented buildings, such in Ephesus.

Re: , on: 2016/11/27 12:57

I don't think it's the venue of "where" people meet for church. But more importantly "Who: is in their midst when they are meeting.

Simply my thought.

-bbs-

Re: , on: 2016/11/27 12:58

Hi Dave, if you read that chapter, or indeed the whole book, nowhere do I mention meeting in homes as the answer. It's not the building or the location where the Body meets that is the problem, it's the system and the expectations and preconceived notions that we have that is a major part of the problem. The burning bush and the sand that surrounded it was holy because God inhabited it, His presence was there. As soon as His presence was gone it returned to being a mere bush and a few buckets of sand. His presence, I cannot emphasize this too much, His presence is the key to everything. Every gathering in the world should cancel every program and every sermon and every praise and worship service if the presence of God is not in their midst. This I would imagine would shut down all but a few gatherings. "Awww Frank, you're too radical," I hear many say. That may be so :) but I have quit apologizing for that for some time. God bless you Dave, your wife is very perceptive, she has put her finger on the exact problem. There is literally no outlet for any saint anywhere in what we call gatherings.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2016/11/27 13:00

Wow Blaine, great minds think alike or fools seldom differ. Looks like there was a mere minute between our responses :)bro Frank

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2016/11/27 13:23

Frank, sorry I was just picking up on the 2nd paragraph where you mentioned meeting in homes, maybe I read too much into it. Anyways it does not matter. The point I was making is what you and Blaine wrote subsequently.

Re: The Final Chapter-The failed system of the church., on: 2016/11/27 13:29

This is such an encouragement to the body of Christ! It's not "Church" centered or "Self" centered, but "CHRIST" centered, that is key.

Re: , on: 2016/11/27 13:30

Brothers out of the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact is established. I think the Holy Spirit has given the three of us amazing revelation.

-bbs-

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2016/11/27 13:43

Thank you brother Frank for some of your very honest thoughts towards the lack of Christ's presence in denominations.

I think the core root of the issue as brother alluded to is the Headship of Jesus Christ and the presence of Jesus in the meeting of any saints. That qualifies it to be a "Church" gathering where living stones and the chief cornerstone are assembled.

God does not put his name on a church building but rather on the hearts of His people.

I would say the system is failed when it goes on without a problem and the presence of God is not there ie a lampstand is removed.

It is clear in New Testament Scriptures that there was no option given except for God's people to gather together under godly leadership and Christ's rule and presence. It is when something is perpetuated that looks even good but has men in control and God departing that we should not desire to gather towards.

Christ is the gathering point of His people and not men, or a name of a church etc. But to say we do not even need to assemble is the other end of the pole. In the end times it will be hard to find right fellowship in this way but the Lord has His people everywhere.

Re: , on: 2016/11/28 12:52

Greg writes.....

"I would say the system is failed when it goes on without a problem and the presence of God is not there ie a lampstand is removed."

Interesting to think about the lampstand and what it means when it is removed. Have we gone so long without experiencing the actual presence of God corporately that we would even know if the lampstand was removed?bro Frank

Re: , on: 2016/11/28 16:26

Yes yes yes and a million times yes...this is a powerful and accurate word and reflects my heart in so many ways. Thank you brother Frank...finish this book soon ok? When are you going to print? Do you need help editing or anything like that...let me know.

Regarding the lampstand. I think very very few people actually understand what this really means and what this actually feels like to have Christ remove His lampstand. But it has been removed for so very long now that most believers cannot tell or even remember what the presence of God looks or feels like. So many other things have been substituted that they are mistaking these things as His presence.

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Oh how I long for His presence.

I think one way to tell when we have His presence back in a corporate setting will be deep heart felt sorrow over sin and lukewarmness and many tears. Yes many tears, both silent and loud...crying out to the Savior to not pass them by

Much tears...followed by much gladness and joy that comes in the morning. The end of all this will be a renewed inner life and a renewed local body, with much stripped away. It will be Jesus and only Jesus that captivates and leads us all.

Re: The Final Chapter-The failed system of the church., on: 2016/11/30 18:56

I agree with most of what you have written here, Appolus. However, I want to inquire about a few things. You wrote, "It seems plain enough that in Scripture, Christians met in their homes and their very homes became places of worship, houses of prayer if you like." However, the apostle Paul writes regarding holy communion in 1 Corinthians 11:23, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home..." Yes, that could mean that the meeting occurred in someone else's home. In the same letter Paul says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Cor. 14:34,35)."

I have heard it said that the men and women gathered separately in these meetings, just as the Jews did in the temple (and as Greek and Russian Orthodox Christians still do)---hence the wives keeping silence (instead of shouting across the room, "Honey, what was THAT supposed to mean?"). If such were the case then it was quite a large room, and perhaps a rented hall, and not in someone's home (unless that person were wealthy like Lydia, the seller of purple).

If gender separation in worship services were Divine mandate I think we'd have greater clarity about it in the Scriptures. We see it on some occasions (such as the Jews coming to the base of Mount Sinai to meet with the Lord in Moses' day, or the Jewish men and women mourning apart from one another when Jesus is revealed to be the Messiah at His second coming, as shown in Zechariah 12:10-14).

Lastly, do you not believe that the rapture is a separate event from the second coming of Christ? I do. I know some brothers who do not.

Re: , on: 2016/11/30 23:36

Hi Alec, you said you would agree with most of what I wrote :) I will take that :) I do not believe that men and women met separately or were separated within the house or meeting place. The word church simply means a calling, a gathering, a congregation of people coming together. I believe the larger houses would accommodate the gatherings and there would be many houses where the folks would meet in larger cities. They would come together for special occasions and meet in fields and so on. Yet in each city there would be one leadership, one set of elders. There are no plurals of the word church in regard to one town or city in all of the NT. There is only the plural used in regard to regions.

I do not believe that the rapture is a second event from the Lord's second coming. When He comes in the sky, then those who are alive and remain will join Him and those who went before us. Hope that answers some of the questions Alec.....bro Frank

Re: , on: 2016/11/30 23:38

Hi bro Mark,

The book was finished and published last May :) It can be found on Amazon but if you send me your address on Facebook private message I will gladly send you a copy.....bro Frank