
Subject: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [william](#) on Fri, 15 Sep 2006 02:28:28 GMT
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He has written a lot on small groups/churches, and I find myself agreeing with much of his stuff.

If anyone cares to check out the site, here is the link:

<http://www.ptmin.org>

Let me know what your thoughts are after reading some of the articles!

William

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Fri, 22 Dec 2006 02:10:14 GMT
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Some of my family were reading his stuff for a while. Plus I have some friends that are involved with them. I think I'm talking about the right person here. If I am they have a very strong belief that there is no 5/f ministry in the sense of being over the church and making a living from the church. They believe in those gifts but only as body ministry. I remember him saying much I agreed with but there was some stuff I very strongly disagreed with even to the point I didn't want to read his material anymore. I certainly don't think everyone has to line up to my standard to appreciate what they say but I felt it was just so strong I wasn't interested in anything more. I don't think they believe in anything other than house churches either. I guess what bothered me was they took their belief too far meaning its "my way or the highway" and "maybe we'll see you up there and maybe not". I'm exaggerating here but not much. He stands under a apostolic anointing but I don't believe it is the Lord. He had a big impact on someone close to my family who gave up his pentacostal pastorship to start a house church and he refuses to be called pastor anymore. Its all body ministry now. Like you said much to agree with but in my opinion there is some deception associated with it. I don't want to go so far as to say they are deceivers because they're not. I just think they go much too far with some of their doctrines and when you throw in some of the charismatic nonsense going on it results in a brew I just cannot agree with

PS. I'm going to put a note on the introduction section about who I am etc. I said something on factnet that seems to have been misinterpreted.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [william](#) on Wed, 08 Jul 2009 01:25:13 GMT
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I just received one of his eNewsletters and he had an interesting "Jesus Manifesto".

If you'll allow me to break one of the "rules/guidelines" I'll post the manifesto here and maybe it will spur some discussion!

I haven't read much of anything from him since I first started this thread back in 2006, but this caught my attention today:

Quote:

A Magna Carta

for Restoring the Supremacy of

Jesus Christ

a.k.a.

A Jesus Manifesto

for the 21st Century Church

by Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola

Christians have made the gospel about so many things â€¦ things other than Christ.

Jesus Christ is the gravitational pull that brings everything together and gives them significance, reality, and meaning. Without him, all things lose their value. Without him, all things are but detached pieces floating around in space.

It is possible to emphasize a spiritual truth, value, virtue, or gift, yet miss Christ . . . who is the embodiment and incarnation of all spiritual truth, values, virtues, and gifts.

Seek a truth, a value, a virtue, or a spiritual gift, and you have obtained something dead.

Seek Christ, embrace Christ, know Christ, and you have touched him who is Life. And in him resides all Truth, Values, Virtues and Gifts in living color. Beauty has its meaning in the beauty of Christ, in whom is found all that makes us lovely and loveable.

What is Christianity? It is Christ. Nothing more. Nothing less. Christianity is not an ideology. Christianity is not a philosophy. Christianity is the "good news" that Beauty, Truth and Goodness are found in a person. Biblical community is founded and found on the connection to that person. Conversion is more than a change in direction; it's a change in connection. Jesus' use of the ancient Hebrew word shubh, or its Aramaic equivalent, to call for "repentance" implies not viewing God from a distance, but entering into a relationship where God is command central of the human connection.

In that regard, we feel a massive disconnection in the church today. Thus this manifesto.

We believe that the major disease of the church today is JDD: Jesus Deficit Disorder. The person of Jesus is increasingly politically incorrect, and is being replaced by the language of "justice," "the kingdom of God," "values," and "leadership principles."

In this hour, the testimony that we feel God has called us to bear centers on the primacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Specifically . . .

1. The center and circumference of the Christian life is none other than the person of Christ. All other things, including things related to him and about him, are eclipsed by the sight of his peerless worth. Knowing Christ is Eternal Life. And knowing him profoundly, deeply, and in reality, as well as experiencing his unsearchable riches, is the chief pursuit of our lives, as it was for the first Christians. God is not so much about fixing things that have gone wrong in our lives as finding us in our brokenness and giving us Christ.

2. Jesus Christ cannot be separated from his teachings. Aristotle says to his disciples, "Follow my teachings." Socrates says to his disciples, "Follow my teachings." Buddha says to his disciples, "Follow my meditations." Confucius says to his disciples, "Follow my sayings." Muhammad says to his disciples, "Follow my noble pillars." Jesus says to his disciples, "Follow me." In all other religions, a follower can follow the teachings of its founder without having a relationship with that founder. Not so with Jesus Christ. The teachings of Jesus cannot be separated from Jesus himself. Jesus Christ is still alive and he embodies his teachings. It is a profound mistake, therefore, to treat Christ as simply the founder of a set of moral, ethical, or social teaching. The Lord Jesus and his teaching are one. The Medium and the Message are One. Christ is the incarnation of the Kingdom of God and the Sermon on the Mount.

3. God's grand mission and eternal purpose in the earth and in heaven centers in Christ . . . both the individual Christ (the Head) and the corporate Christ (the Body). This universe is moving

towards one final goal – the fullness of Christ where He shall fill all things with himself. To be truly missional, then, means constructing one's life and ministry on Christ. He is both the heart and bloodstream of God's plan. To miss this is to miss the plot; indeed, it is to miss everything.

4. Being a follower of Jesus does not involve imitation so much as it does implantation and impartation. Incarnation – the notion that God connects to us in baby form and human touch – is the most shocking doctrine of the Christian religion. The incarnation is both once-and-for-all and ongoing, as the One – who was and is to come – now is and lives his resurrection life in and through us. Incarnation doesn't just apply to Jesus; it applies to every one of us. Of course, not in the same sacramental way. But close. We have been given God's – Spirit – which makes Christ – real – in our lives. We have been made, as Peter puts it, – partakers of the divine nature. – How, then, in the face of so great a truth can we ask for toys and trinkets? How can we lust after lesser gifts and itch for religious and spiritual thingys? We've been touched from on high by the fires of the Almighty and given divine life. A life that has passed through death – the very resurrection life of the Son of God himself. How can we not be fired up?

To put it in a question: What was the engine, or the accelerator, of the Lord's amazing life? What was the taproot or the headwaters of his outward behavior? It was this: Jesus lived by an indwelling Father. After his resurrection, the passage has now moved. What God the Father was to Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is to you and to me. He's our indwelling Presence, and we share in the life of Jesus's own relationship with the Father. There is a vast ocean of difference between trying to compel Christians to imitate Jesus and learning how to impart an implanted Christ. The former only ends up in failure and frustration. The latter is the gateway to life and joy in our daying and our dying. We stand with Paul: – Christ lives in me. – Our life is Christ. In him do we live, breathe, and have our being. – What would Jesus do? – is not Christianity. Christianity asks: – What is Christ doing through me – through us? And how is Jesus doing it? – Following Jesus means – trust and obey – (respond), and living by his indwelling life through the power of the Spirit.

5. The – Jesus of history – cannot be disconnected from the – Christ of faith. – The Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee is the same person who indwells the church today. There is no disconnect between the Jesus of Mark's Gospel and the incredible, all-inclusive, cosmic Christ of Paul's letter to the Colossians. The Christ who lived in the first century has a pre-existence before time. He also has a post-existence after time. He is Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, A and Z, all at the same time. He stands in the future and at the end of time at the same moment that He indwells every child of God. Failure to embrace these paradoxical truths has created monumental problems and has diminished the greatness of Christ in the eyes of God's people.

6. It's possible to confuse – the cause – of Christ with the person of Christ. When the early church said – Jesus is Lord, – they did not mean – Jesus is my core value. – Jesus

isn't a cause; he is a real and living person who can be known, loved, experienced, enthroned and embodied. Focusing on his cause or mission doesn't equate focusing on or following him. It's all too possible to serve the god of serving Jesus as opposed to serving him out of an enraptured heart that's been captivated by his irresistible beauty and unfathomable love. Jesus led us to think of God differently, as relationship, as the God of all relationship.

7. Jesus Christ was not a social activist nor a moral philosopher. To pitch him that way is to drain his glory and dilute his excellence. Justice apart from Christ is a dead thing. The only battering ram that can storm the gates of hell is not the cry of Justice, but the name of Jesus. Jesus Christ is the embodiment of Justice, Peace, Holiness, Righteousness. He is the sum of all spiritual things, the "strange attractor" of the cosmos. When Jesus becomes an abstraction, faith loses its reproductive power. Jesus did not come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people live.

8. It is possible to confuse an academic knowledge or theology about Jesus with a personal knowledge of the living Christ himself. These two stand as far apart as do the hundred thousand million galaxies. The fullness of Christ can never be accessed through the frontal lobe alone. Christian faith claims to be rational, but also to reach out to touch ultimate mysteries. The cure for a big head is a big heart.

Jesus does not leave his disciples with CliffsNotes for a systematic theology. He leaves his disciples with breath and body.

Jesus does not leave his disciples with a coherent and clear belief system by which to love God and others. Jesus gives his disciples wounds to touch and hands to heal.

Jesus does not leave his disciples with intellectual belief or a "Christian worldview." He leaves his disciples with a relational faith.

Christians don't follow a book. Christians follow a person, and this library of divinely inspired books we call "The Holy Bible" best help us follow that person. The Written Word is a map that leads us to The Living Word. Or as Jesus himself put it, "All Scripture testifies of me." The Bible is not the destination; it's a compass that points to Christ, heaven's North Star.

The Bible does not offer a plan or a blueprint for living. The "good news" was not a new set of laws, or a new set of ethical injunctions, or a new and better PLAN. The "good news" was the story of a person's life, as reflected in The Apostle's Creed. The Mystery of Faith proclaims this narrative: "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again." The meaning of Christianity does not come from allegiance to complex theological doctrines, but a passionate love for a way of living in the world that revolves around following Jesus, who taught that love is what makes life a success . . . not wealth or health or anything else: but love. And God is love.

9. Only Jesus can transfix and then transfigure the void at the heart of the church. Jesus Christ cannot be separated from his church. While Jesus is distinct from his Bride, he is not separate from her. She is in fact his very own Body in the earth. God has chosen to vest all of power, authority, and life in the living Christ. And God in Christ is only known fully in and through his church. (As Paul said, "The manifold wisdom of God" which is Christ "is known through the ekklesia.")

The Christian life, therefore, is not an individual pursuit. It's a corporate journey. Knowing Christ and making him known is not an individual prospect. Those who insist on flying life solo will be brought to earth, with a crash. Thus Christ and his church are intimately joined and connected. What God has joined together, let no person put asunder. We were made for life with God; our only happiness is found in life with God. And God's own pleasure and delight is found therein as well.

10. In a world which sings, "Oh, who is this Jesus?" and a church which sings, "Oh, let's all be like Jesus," who will sing with lungs of leather, "Oh, how we love Jesus!"

If Jesus could rise from the dead, we can at least rise from our bed, get off our couches and pews, and respond to the Lord's resurrection life within us, joining Jesus in what he's up to in the world. We call on others to join us "not in removing ourselves from planet Earth, but to plant our feet more firmly on the Earth while our spirits soar in the heavens of God's pleasure and purpose. We are not of this world, but we live in this world for the Lord's rights and interests. We, collectively, as the ekklesia of God, are Christ in and to this world.

May God have a people on this earth who are a people of Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. A people of the cross. A people who are consumed with God's eternal passion, which is to make his Son preeminent, supreme, and the head over all things visible and invisible. A people who have discovered the touch of the Almighty in the face of his glorious Son. A people who wish to know only Christ and him crucified, and to let everything else fall by the wayside. A people who are laying hold of his depths, discovering his riches, touching his life, and receiving his love, and making HIM in all of his unfathomable glory known to others.

The two of us may disagree about many things "be they ecclesiology, eschatology, soteriology, not to mention economics, globalism and politics.

But in our two most recent books "From Eternity to Here and So Beautiful" we have sounded forth a united trumpet. These books are the Manifests to this Manifesto. They each present the vision that has captured our hearts and that we wish to impart to the Body of Christ " "This ONE THING I know" (Jn.9:25) that is the ONE THING that unites us all:

Jesus the Christ.

Christians donâ€™t follow Christianity; Christians follow Christ.

Christians donâ€™t preach themselves; Christians proclaim Christ.

Christians donâ€™t point people to core values; Christians point people to the cross.

Christians donâ€™t preach about Christ: Christians preach Christ.

Over 300 years ago a German pastor wrote a hymn that built around the Name above all names:

Ask ye what great thing I know, that delights and stirs me so?
What the high reward I win? Whose the name I glory in?
Jesus Christ, the crucified.

This is that great thing I know; this delights and stirs me so:
faith in him who died to save, His who triumphed oâ€™er the grave:
Jesus Christ, the crucified.

â€”

Jesus Christ â€” the crucified, resurrected, enthroned, triumphant, living Lord.

He is our Pursuit, our Passion, and our Life.

Amen.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [james](#) on Wed, 08 Jul 2009 03:36:14 GMT
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Somehow I missed this thread while calling myself having read everything written here...I know I didn't read it or I, being a baseball fan, would have remembered this guys name, Frank Viola. The Frank Viola (Sweet Music) I knew of played baseball for the Minnesota Twins.

This guy I'll have to do some reading on before forming an opinion...I do respect Hardbones and value his thoughts since he knows a bit about him.

So to answer the question you asked 3 years ago, Yes, I have heard of Frank Viola, but not this one...

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [william](#) on Wed, 08 Jul 2009 03:45:37 GMT
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I probably should have started a new thread since I was more interested in the contents of the article rather than Frank Viola. I ended up putting it here because I wanted to make sure that Hardbones comments were noted, since Viola co-authored the article.

Viola aside, what about the article. Personally I thought it was a good starting point for any group of believers!

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [james](#) on Wed, 08 Jul 2009 14:37:10 GMT
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I agree with your thoughts William as to it being a good starting point for a group of believers. But then I think, wow, how long does it take a believer to shed the traditions and doctrines of the institutional church system...to get to this 'starting' point?

I read over several of his articles and statments on his site, and there were statements made that were very true, and based on biblical principles. Even in his article on the 5-fold, while I don't agree with some of it, some of it seems sound(without doing research into the history he was refering to).

I read a message on western vs eastern medicines, one on women, another on why he left institutional religion; I checked out his tweeter following(for all he says about magnifying Jesus, it's seems a bit strange to see in bold writting...Followers of Frank Viola)...

But as far as the Manifesto, there are some deep truths there, truths that weren't discovered overnight. I sure lean more toward the small group/home assembly with Jesus being the agenda, than just 'go to church' or the devil will getcha, denominational/system of man.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?

Posted by [jismazed](#) on Sat, 11 Jul 2009 03:20:52 GMT

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Thanks for including this item, William. My brother-in-law was influenced by this kind of teaching for a number of years and dried up due to his lack of fellowship. I wondered who was writing this material. If I remember correctly, Frank Viola pitched for the Twins and Rangers and lost 20 games one year. Not that it has a bearing on the truth of this document. Here is my initial take on it, not having read any of their other material yet:

Most born-again Christians would agree with this manifesto, at least on an intellectual level. We are all about exalting Christ, not the church or values or anything else. We've been saying this since the Reformation. I know of plenty of "denominational" churches that would agree.

The exception would be in #8 when he says, "Jesus does not leave his disciples with a coherent and clear belief system by which to love God and others. Jesus gives his disciples wounds to touch and hands to heal. Jesus does not leave his disciples with intellectual belief or a 'Christian worldview.' He leaves his disciples with a relational faith." I and many others would disagree. The one does not preclude the other. Jesus gives us a clear and coherent belief system centered in Him. Ironically, the manifesto is trying to express that clear and coherent belief system. Relational faith is strengthened by good theology, and vice-versa. For example, we must ask the question, "Who is Jesus with whom we have a relationship?" If we get that question wrong, according to scripture, we are in great danger. Getting that question right according to scripture will enhance our relationship with Him.

I find in this manifesto the same attitude or tone that I see in a lot of other groups: "We are superior because no one else believes this." However, plenty of people believe it, and the group that put this out is not nearly as much of a lonely minority as they seem to think. Been there, done that, tired of that ignorance.

The question is not whether or not a relationship with Christ is the essence of Christianity. That is a given. In this context, the question is how we live and express that relationship in life. We have most of the rest of scripture to look to for the answer to that question. I will try to take some time in the next week or two to investigate how they believe we should live in Christ. Interesting reading so far.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [william](#) on Mon, 23 Nov 2009 23:36:45 GMT
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Anyone read "Pagan Christianity"?

I haven't read it but apparently it is causing a small stir within Christian circles.

I understand that he basically points out the pagan origins of many practices that are commonplace in today's church.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [james](#) on Tue, 24 Nov 2009 00:20:04 GMT
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I haven't read it either, but I read a review and watched some video commentary on it. I think my position concerning the 'church system' is pretty clear, so I probably agree with much of what he says; at least with the points raised in the review.

We know and agree with the obvious pagan practices in the church, christmas and easter... (well, most of us do...on this forum ...<grin>)

And we agree that the 'flow' of worship in most churches are scripted and there's no place for 'the gifts' or The Holy Spirit ministering. And if it is a 'charismatic' church, too often they've gone off the deep end with personal prophecies, being 'slain' in the spirit, and other 'exciting' experiences with so little emphasis placed on living holy and Godly.

But yeah, I'd agree, the 'church' today is filled with pagan influence...and if not pagan influence, certainly 'worldly' influence.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [mark1124](#) on Tue, 24 Nov 2009 11:05:16 GMT
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I am currently listening to the audio book of Pagan Christianity. So far, I think it is good. But there is something that I have a problem with concerning the book. Viola says that the epistles were written to specific churches with specific problems, which I would agree too. But he seems to

imply that the epistles do not apply as a practice which we should be doing. I need to go back over that again and perhaps read the sections in question. If I am correct in what I think he is saying, I can poke many holes in his theology. I will keep you posted and give you a further review when I finish the book.

Mark

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [james](#) on Sat, 07 May 2011 19:24:16 GMT
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I ran across this from Frank Viola on the Five Fold Ministry. I found it interesting and he had a lot of valid points that reflect what he's experienced over the last 20 years.

If anyone's interested, here's the link...

<http://frankviola.org/2010/10/27/rethinking-the-five-fold-ministry/>

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [Mark L](#) on Sun, 08 May 2011 03:06:00 GMT
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interesting link James. As William said there is much we can agree with. I couldn't help but be notice again his absoluteness. This is the way every one else is wrong.

Mark1124 should come back and give us his review of the book.

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [james](#) on Fri, 09 Sep 2011 00:08:19 GMT
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grandom wrote on Thu, 08 September 2011 12:00A very good message delivered by Frank Viola.

Jesus the Christ you never knew...

I don't know who all has listened to this, or if anyone has, but I want to remind everyone that "JESUS CHRIST DID NOT BECOME SIN PERSONIFIED nor did HE BECOME ABSOLUTE SIN." This is said at the 35:05 point of the message. I don't know what he believes about spiritual death and going to Hell and the rest of the JDS heresy or if he just got carried away in his message(they say he doesn't use notes). But my spiritual alarms went off when he said that.(the rest of his message was good, especially the statement that, "The kingdom of God is the manifestation of God's ruling presence."

Jesus did not become sin, sin personified, a sinner, or absolute sin; He was our substitute, the perfect sacrifice,(the ONLY acceptable sacrifice) The spotless LAMB of God. He bore in His body the PUNISHMENT for OUR sins. He was without sin(1John 3:5 1Peter 2:24) It was the shedding of His Holy BLOOD that appeased God's judgment against sin. (Eph.1:7 &2:13) As the OT order of sacrifice points to...without the shedding of BLOOD there is NO remission of sin.(Heb.9:22)

He, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, is Holy, spotless, and WITHOUT sin...EVER!

Subject: Re: Anybody ever heard of Frank Viola?
Posted by [grandom](#) on Fri, 09 Sep 2011 00:13:13 GMT
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Oh wow I missed that James.

I'm glad you caught it.

My bad.

In view of the heresy I missed I have deleted the link.

I wasn't calling you out or inferring anything, I just couldn't let people hear that and possibly believe it to be true. I respect a LOT of what Frank has written and agree with much of it...I want to believe he just got carried away trying to make a dramatic presentation. Either way, I felt it couldn't go unchecked. I'm leaving what I wrote, even though many won't understand what the big deal was about.

Praise The Lord, thank YOU Jesus.
