Subject: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by william on Sun, 03 Jul 2011 03:03:21 GMT
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Grandom made this statement in another thread which got me to thinking...

Quote:But in summation if we don't study what the new testament church really was and how it operated we wont understand that really there are really very few if any true new testament church's in existence today as defined in the book.

I've created a PDF file that is an attempt to put down some things that we know concerning the definition of the Church. This is a work in progress and I'll add things (or take away things) based upon the suggestions here. I have yet to 'flesh out' the outline with Scripture references but I hope to add to the PDF as we go along.

The purpose is to clarify what we do know about His Church. Most/many of us are technically are not a part of a Church based upon what I've set forth. Since we know that Jesus is coming back for His Church, and I know that it is the desire of everyone here to be 'in that number' as the song goes, what is it going to take for this to become a reality?

Any thoughts?

Blessings,

William

File Attachments
1) The Church.pdf, downloaded 1121 times

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by james on Sun, 03 Jul 2011 14:05:52 GMT
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moulder wrote on Sat, 02 July 2011 22:03 Most/many of us are technically are not a part of a Church based upon what I've set forth. Since we know that Jesus is coming back for His Church,

and I know that it is the desire of everyone here to be 'in that number' as the song goes, what is it going to take for this to become a reality?

Any thoughts?

I read this last night when you posted it but thought I'd 'sleep on it' before commenting. And now that I sit down to do that, I find myself with the same mixed thoughts and emotions that I've struggled with for years. I'm convinced that the vast majority of what is refered to as 'the church' is in apostasy and there are many more of the denominational system of 'churches' that never were 'the church' to begin with (followers of traditions, founded on and patterned after man's interpretation rather than the example revealed in the book of Acts.)

But that doesn't absolve His disciples from obedience to His instructions to assemble together in worship and fellowship. I think I understand about the call to separate from the dead religious system...but I can't justify any position that doesn't lead a believer back into fellowship with like believers. Now since discovering 'Christian forums', I've found that there are probably thousands who are in the same position we find ourselves in. And I'm convinced that we aren't the only ones desiring to be 'in that number', who are wrestling with scripture as how to apply it to our lives at this time in the unfolding of the last days. And I see and read from other like minded believers that their only fellowship and sharing of God's Word in any depth is on these 'forums'. At least we can find others that are serious about following Jesus and have hearts to obey Him, even if we all are faced with the same dilemma of whether to stay and sit under a compromised/deluted word or separate and stand alone, hoping that we haven't allowed the experiences to jade us or let bitterness in that would lead to deception.(I mention these things because I can see some who have allowed bitterness in from their time spent in the apostate system and now their judgment is clouded so they can't rightly divide the scriptures; and that is a real possibility, I know, I've had to deal with it in my own heart)

I do believe that I am 'in that number' as a saint of God and part of His Bride, even if I never find or experience 'the assemblying together' with true Christians in this life time...but I hope to.

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by william on Sun, 03 Jul 2011 17:02:22 GMT
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Quote:I think I understand about the call to separate from the dead religious system...but I can't justify any position that doesn't lead a believer back into fellowship with like believers.

Part of the reason I wanted to outline the big picture was to see if there is something we've missed

along the way. You and Grandom in the other thread pointed out what we've always been taught--the Church isn't a building or an organization but an organism. If this is the case then what does it mean to "separate from the dead religious system"? Are we separating from the building, the organizational system/structure, or are we separating from the people? Obviously inanimate objects are not alive (I guess that is redundant!) but the people who name the name of Christ are very much alive and would constitute (however sick) an organism. Are we to separate from them?

Part of the problem is how we define the Church. On the one hand we define it as a group of 'called-out believers'--those people who qualify as 'born again'. On the other hand we complicate the definition when we throw 'organization' into the definition. We say that just any group of believers doesn't constitute a Church unless there is some sort of organization--i.e. a 'pastor', or some kind of leadership structure. No wonder we are confused!

How many believers does it take to constitute 'a Church'? Does it require a 'clergyman' and a 'lay-person' e.g. pastor and flock? Should the designation 'Church' be limited to those groups that have this organizational structure--the structure that in other places we decry so forcefully?

Isn't that the heart of the dilemma expressed in your quote above?

If we view Eph. 4:11 as an organizational pattern (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers) can we really say we have a church without having all of those ministries in place? Isn't that the way we look at it? Yet we do it inconsistently in that we don't believe that 'organization' is what constitutes a Church. We also aren't consistent in that we allow a group of believers with only one of those ministries present (a pastor) to be labeled a Church.

Do we blame God for not raising up a local Church or do we have only ourselves to blame for the lack of an assembly?

Blessings,
William

P.S. I have read the restoration of body ministry recently which has prompted me to raise these questions.

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by james on Mon, 04 Jul 2011 00:53:32 GMT
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moulder wrote on Sun, 03 July 2011 12:02Quote:I think I understand about the call to separate

from the dead religious system...but I can't justify any position that doesn't lead a believer back into fellowship with like believers.

Part of the reason I wanted to outline the big picture was to see if there is something we've missed along the way. You and Grandom in the other thread pointed out what we've always been taught--the Church isn't a building or an organization but an organism. If this is the case then what does it mean to "separate from the dead religious system"? Are we separating from the building, the organizational system/structure, or are we separating from the people? Obviously inanimate objects are not alive (I guess that is redundant!) but the people who name the name of Christ are very much alive and would constitute (however sick) an organism. Are we to separate from them?

I believe the call to come out from among them today is a call to ALL true believers. I think that is why we are seeing an increase in small house meetings across the land. You ask, "Are we to separate from them?" I say, if the assembly/denomination/church isn't following Jesus in their doctrines, if they are in idolatry (pagan holidays), if the leadership believes in a clerical hierachy, if the gifts of The Holy Spirit aren't encouraged and nurtured, if they don't walk by faith, if they teach tithing, believe in medical science, allow women in leadership roles, ect. ect. ect...yeah, I believe we should separate from them(both the assembly/church/denomination as well as the people...can we continue to love and pray for them? of course.

Part of the problem is how we define the Church. On the one hand we define it as a group of 'called-out believers'--those people who qualify as 'born again'. On the other hand we complicate the definition when we throw 'organization' into the definition. We say that just any group of believers doesn't constitute a Church unless there is some sort of organization--i.e. a 'pastor', or some kind of leadership structure. No wonder we are confused!

I don't recall ever saying that or believing it, maybe that's your defination? And while I don't have the answer at this time, I don't believe I'm confused about being able to discern the difference between an assembly that is truly the Bride/Body/Church of Jesus Christ and one that isn't.

How many believers does it take to constitute 'a Church'? Does it require a 'clergyman' and a 'lay-person' e.g. pastor and flock? Should the designation 'Church' be limited to those groups that have this organizational structure--the structure that in other places we decry so forcefully?

Maybe you're mixing up someone else's words with what you think I believe, I believe where two or more are gathered together in His(Jesus') name, there He is.

Isn't that the heart of the dilemma expressed in your quote above?

Sorry, but that isn't what I meant in speaking of the dilemma that many find themselves in. I was

speaking of whether to stay even when one knows the Word of God isn't being followed, versus leaving/separating and risking going at it alone. It's not an easy decision, especially when people have to make that choice.(traditions/family/investment of time and energy/position) Also I was speaking of more people than just our little circle, I see this more and more, people allowing bitterness to influence their views of the 'apostate/institutional/system'. They become isolated and sometimes delusional, thinking it's just them and Jesus/The Holy Spirit and no man can teach them anything and every thought they have is a direct revelation from God...that's dangerous, another reason for interaction with fellow believers...iron sharpens iron and there is the opportunity for others to judge righteously.

If we view Eph. 4:11 as an organizational pattern (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors/teachers) can we really say we have a church without all of those ministries in place? Isn't that what we do? Yet we do it inconsistently in that we don't believe that 'organization' is what constitutes a Church. We also aren't consistent in that we allow a group of believes with only one of those ministries present (a pastor) to be labeled a Church.

Oh, I see your comment below about just reading the restoration of body ministry book, so maybe you're speaking in general terms when refering to 'we' and what we allow or believe...not 'WE' as you and I...

Do we blame God for not raising up a local Church or do we have only ourselves to blame for the lack of an assembly?

Blessings,
William

P.S. I have read the restoration of body ministry recently which has prompted me to raise these questions.

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by william on Mon, 04 Jul 2011 01:12:43 GMT
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Quote:Oh, I see your comment below about just reading the restoration of body ministry book, so maybe you're speaking in general terms when refering to 'we' and what we allow or believe...not 'WE' as you and I... Smile

Right oh, James.

I was wondering why you were being so defensive!

The Restoration of Charismatic Body Ministry is what we all cut our teeth on, so when I say "we" that is what I mean.

I don't see much Charismatic Body Ministry (as outlined in the book) going on, so I'm wondering why? The reasons for the near total absence of this in our circles should be cause for concern.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by william on Mon, 04 Jul 2011 03:35:47 GMT
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Anyone else from FA circles reading this? If so, what has been your experience? Are you meeting together all the more as we see the day approaching? If so, do you consider your group an EÎºÎºÎ»Î·ÏƒÎ¹Ï…/assembly?

If there is a restoration of the Church going on (as there apparently was back in the good-old-days) where is it taking place? Maybe I'm only looking at anecdotal evidence but there doesn't seem to be much going on among those who were taught these things. You'd think that those who were taught these things would be in the forefront of this mass restoration, if it is indeed occurring.

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by william on Mon, 04 Jul 2011 04:33:50 GMT
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Goshen? Warsaw? Are you experiencing this restoration? Or is it just Alabama that has been left out?

What about Indianapolis? Paw-Paw Michigan? Peoria IL? Lexington KY? These are all places (along with many others) that had regular meetings with regular ministers who taught the Word.

Was it all an illusion? Was there really not a restoration of charismatic body ministry in these places?

Where are you, Greg Smith? Jim Brenneman? Gene Starber(sp?)? Jeff Barnett? Jerry Ervin? Steve Kinsey? Jim Oswalt? Dave Hardy(sp?)? Jim Trout? Mark Harness? Don Michler? Gary Wilson? Joe Duncan? Harry Albright? Jim Mansfield?

These all were men (along with over 50 who went forth from FA) who brought forth the Word of God and were presumably a part of the restoration of body ministry in various places in this nation. Where are you now? Do you disavow what you taught us?

Are any of you still men of God or have you all abdicated your responsibility to speak the truth? (Are you really MEN?)

Its hard to believe that there isn't some spark left that burns in your heart when you hear about the situation of God's people. Neh 1:3-4

Blessings,
William

Subject: Re: The Church... what is it? (...a work in progress)
Posted by grandom on Mon, 04 Jul 2011 11:34:04 GMT
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This probably belongs in the quote

 of the day since that`s what it is from Vance Havner.

Joshua and the elders of Israel lay on their faces and prayed after the defeat at Ai, but it did no good. There was sin in the camp and Achan had to be dealt with.

The church at Corinth prided itself in its tolerance of immorality, but Paul demanded that the offender be put out and delivered to Satan.

There is sin in the churches today and neither pious prayer meetings nor amiable tolerance will

take care of the situation. We are afraid to touch Achan and the fornicators with a forty-foot pole. There is no church discipline now, for who would discipline whom? Ananias and Sapphira are more likely to be on the official board.

Okay that being said we know the problems in the churches but as you say William, What happened to all the ministers from Fa?

In defense of Warsaw Brother Brenneman has labored long and hard since brother Freeman died. He has faced opposition from the old guard if you will from FA.Does he have the following Brother Freeman had?. No. Has he faithfully preached the word. I believe he has.

Success isnt measured in numbers as so often we try to equate success.He has with the help of the Holy Spirit held his little assembly together all these years.

As to all the other brothers I wonder as you do.The only one that still seems to be faithful is Tom Hamilton and he really want that closely entwined in FA and that was probably to his benefit. He didnt ride on brother Freemans coat tails.

I`m so thankful William that you have got this thread going and hope fully instead of being defensive we will reach an understanding finally that will benefit all.

Lord Bless
