

The Last Call

Part 5 of 7

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There are those who are promoting the current move of God in northern Europe that is reaching out around the globe as “the last reformation” of God. Some have complained that this will not be the last reformation, others that this is not a reformation but a restoration and still others that this is not even a move of God! Sounds a whole lot like how the Jews responded to Jesus! (see Jn. 7:43, etc.) When we examine what we’re really saying by the phrase “last reformation,” we must recognize that this really is a mouthful and this convenient label really doesn’t convey all that is occurring. To reform is to take pre-existing parts and rearrange them so as to make a different kind of whole. In order to be the last, there can be no further changes in the future, completion must be reached and nothing of any other source can be incorporated into the final product. For those who may be confused by the barrage of terms, the idea of restoration is about bringing something back from disuse or from the past and putting it back into use in the present time.

But if there is any legitimacy in the complaints that this “last reformation” is being mislabeled, it might indeed be better to refer to it as the “last call.” But to see this requires that we consider what is incorporated in the last reformation.

- A return to the practices of the book of Acts. This includes laying hands on sick people and seeing them recover (Acts 5:12, etc.) and speaking in tongues as the primary sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:3, 10:46, etc.)
- A return to the gospel as preached by Peter that incorporates repentance, water baptism and Spirit baptism as immediately as possible. (Acts 2:38)
- A departure from the “church” paradigm that leaves the multitudes sitting passively at the feet of the exalted “man of God” behind the pulpit and places more emphasis on one on one discipleship and personal involvement in “the work of the ministry.” (Eph. 4:12)
- A return to the recognition that demonic activity is more prevalent than modern thought allows and still requires deliverance and spiritual warfare. (Acts 16:17-18, etc.)

Thus this latest move of God incorporates a rejection of innovations that were set in place during the first and second centuries and attempts to return to and restore the practices that are plainly seen in the book of Acts and in the New Testament. In all this, we can see that both restoration and reformation are very appropriate terms but the element of rejecting the “church” paradigm remains poorly defined and even somewhat unaddressed by these labels.

You Must Be Born Again

The push for reformation and restoration is thus both valid and invalid because the question involves two kinds of people: people who have been born again and people who have not. This is a very important distinction to make because one is the enemy of God and the other

is a child of God. (Rom. 5:10, Jn. 1:12) Nor should it be overlooked that one who may be a child of God can still practice enmity against God! (Rom. 8:7, 1 Cor. 3:3) The devil and the demonic have, over the centuries, so embedded their deceptions that many people who claim to follow Christ are not truly born again, they do not live a genuinely spiritual life in Christ and they do not know that the majority of their practices are paganistic or even demonic in origin. Most “Christians” will be appalled on the day they learn that much of churchianity is, in reality, merely an expression of the Great Prostitute, Babylon (Rev. 17:5), and that this is the true source of much of the spiritually devastating innovations that were brought into the Catholic “church” in the second, third and fourth centuries.

It is in this light that we can see the call to come out that remains upon the genuine followers of Christ. We are to come out from among those who insist on remaining “Christian” idolaters (2 Cor. 6:17-18, 1 Cor. 5:11) and come out from among all the Babylonian practices, influences and idolatries (Rev. 18:4) lest we share in the judgments reserved for the sons of disobedience and for Babylon. (also see Eph. 5:6) It is in this sense that the final reformation and restoration must also be the last call to come out of all idolatrous practices. It will do no good to try to reform elements of the Great Prostitute. The Great Prostitute is a powerful demonic spirit who lures people into practicing false religion and oppresses and, if possible, eliminates with murderous fury those who expose her schemes. Her most effective stratagem is the “church” and those people who populate the “church” who have not been born again as well as those who have not renounced and rejected their enmity against God (their carnality) will resist and oppose the attempts of the people of Christ to return to their first love, Christ Himself. They will defend their right to practice religion in whatever form they desire and will tolerate all kinds of sin and debauchery believing themselves to be operating in “love” – but they will not tolerate the one who insists upon the literal and actual rule of Christ as King over His people or who insists upon practicing genuine holiness and righteousness. The “church” will tolerate a false Jesus, a false gospel and a different spirit but they will not tolerate the real Jesus, the truth or the presence and authority of the Holy Spirit. The former is their religion, the latter must be exterminated!

In contrast to the hostility of the “church” toward the true, it is not to be supposed that the genuine people of Christ must antagonize the “church” or its people in any way. The truth will do that all by itself. But we do not need to go on any kind of crusade or tare hunt or any such foolishness. We need only quiet ourselves and seat ourselves at the feet of the Master and be ready to obey Him in whatever way He places before us to do and be. Until we do that, we are not fit for His service anyway and we are equally more likely to be drawn back into some “church” activity or “ministry” that actually wars against the work the Spirit would have us do in God’s kingdom, perhaps even in our own lives as the “ministry” diverts our attention from some godly priority. We do not have to live like this. We can be free to become what Christ created us to be.

The Net

When we recognize that the final reformation (at least those elements that are truly functioning within the parameters set forth by God) will not resemble “church” in any substantial way, we are then free to reconsider what we are supposed to look like in this world. The “church” was patterned after the Roman empire – a fact which can be readily and easily seen in the robes, titles, buildings, accoutrements and symbols employed in the Catholic “church” and the “church,” in spite of manifold changes over the centuries, has never rejected all of those

deceptions inadvertently employed by the Catholic “church” but, at best, has merely modified them even as they continued to use them. But the genuine people of Christ, His ekklesia (the Greek word mis-translated “church” in most English versions), do not look anything like the top-down structures of this world.

Perhaps one of the most overlooked parables Jesus gave is the last of the “kingdom parables.” Did He give it last because it was reserved for the last days? Perhaps so because in this last parable, He says, “the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea...” (Mt. 13:47) In those days, a fisherman spent a great deal of time knotting and mending his nets. Each knot was hand-tied and constructed in such a way that the fish would not be lost once drawn into the net. It is in this light we can see that Christ’s kingdom resembles a net tied together in knots of two or three strands – and does not at all resemble the sand castles men have built in His name! (see Eccl. 4:12, Mt. 18:20) But we have been trained to believe that this which we see is that which Christ is building. And when we do happen to see that which was practiced in the book of Acts, we who have been “churched” are initially repulsed because we have been so conditioned by what we have seen in the “church” and what we would have seen in the first century seems foreign and inappropriate. But the opposite is true. This which we commonly see at “church” is not that which we see in the book of Acts – and we must not reject what we see done in the power and name of Christ just because it differs from what our favorite spiritual guru assured us was “just like what they did 2,000 years ago.” We must face the fact that most of the favored spiritual gurus of today are severely deceived.

In the end, the wicked will be separated from the just (Mt. 13:49) but those “knots” of two and three individuals who were used to bring forth an increase in the kingdom of God will not lose their reward, even if they were also ignorantly involved in some man’s sand castle scheme!

But in the last days, when the sand castle schemes are exposed for what they really are – both human and demonic enmity against God – such ignorance must turn into either blatant rebellion against God or into complete repentance before God. The truth about the “church” is readily available – from the Holy Spirit if from nowhere else! – and no one will be able to claim ignorance as an excuse for their disobedience when the ekklesia, as it regains momentum in the last reformation, rises up in power, love and holiness – just as was seen in the book of Acts and which carried residual changes into the first centuries.

The Wheat and the Tares

In the end, the tares will be removed because they are a tare – wheat will remain because they are wheat. No mistakes will be made by the angels who come to “gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and remove those who practice lawlessness.” (Mt. 13:41) The righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father in heaven. (Mt. 13:43) It will all happen – the choice as to which side we will be on throughout all this is ours to make and we must make that choice now.

Jesus said, “The tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather *out of His kingdom* all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire.” (Mt. 13:38-42)

Let us be careful to note these things:

- Tares and wheat are quite similar in outward appearance but only the wheat is a valued, usable grain.
- The tares are sown among the wheat and the differences are most apparent only when each reaches maturity.
- The wheat bearing genuine fruit will be bowed over in humility but the empty, useless weed, the tare, will stand proudly and boastfully erect making itself an easy target for first removal.
- If the tares were to be uprooted prematurely, the wheat would be damaged or lost as the tares are closely intermingled with the wheat until they both reach maturity. They are so closely intermingled, the tares are literally in the midst of those who are the sons of the kingdom of God.
- The tares are the sons of the devil while the wheat are the sons of the kingdom, the sons of God.
- The harvest is at the end of the age, a time in the not-so-distant future.
- The reapers are angels (not crusade evangelists nor guilt-driven door knockers zealous to bring in new converts or new “church” members!)
- The tares are gathered out and burned prior to the harvest at the end of the age.
- The angels gather out of Christ’s kingdom *all* things that offend and those who practice lawlessness.

The sons of the devil are, right now, existing side by side with genuine believers – and, in far too many instances, hold positions of leadership over the body of Christ! They use titles like pastor, worship leader, assistant pastor, senior pastor, elder, teacher, priest, father, deacon, apostle, prophet, armor bearer, evangelist, minister, reverend, and bishop – many of the very same words which God uses (with some important exceptions and additions) to describe the functions of leadership in the body of Christ. But what they all really have in common is that they are sons of the devil planted in close proximity to the members of the body of Christ in the hopes that they will prevent the sons of the kingdom from reaching maturity and being harvested.

As we enter the end of the age, the characteristics of the previous age will be progressively replaced by the characteristics of the coming age – that is, the final reformation of God will not be instantaneously brought into existence but rather will be a progression and transition, though it may well prove to be a short and sudden transition when viewed in perspective. So, while it is true that the angels will be the reapers and it is these heavenly beings who will ultimately do the final separation – it will not be this truth or any actions of any man that causes either the separation or the harvest – the Lord is at this time revealing and reminding us of these truths about the nature of wheat and tares because now is the time when how we respond to these truths will clearly demonstrate to the angels whether we are wheat or tares. God

is graciously reminding those who are exposed to this truth just what makes a tare a tare and what makes a wheat a wheat so that the former can repent and be changed and the latter may repent of any cross-pollinating and be purified before it is too late to do so.

Last Call

The last call to come out of all idolatrous and paganistic practices is sounding forth clearly. The midnight cry to come out and meet the Bridegroom has been heard around the world. (Mt. 25:6) The need to “purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit and to perfect holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor. 7:1) is recognized by all those who are being pulled out of the darkness of this world. The futility and frustration of sitting idly at the feet of some speaker and putting one’s resources into that man’s pocket or into some real estate money pit while the world grows darker and more wicked is felt by more and more people as the Spirit Himself is prompting His people to arise, shake off the “church” lethargy and attend to the kingdom of God.

The last call is equally a call to reformation of practices, to restoration of power and purity and to rejection of abominable deceptions. So, even if the current convenient label fails to capture all that is occurring in one statement, let those who are involved never fail to recognize the fullness of the work that is before us. It will not be capsulated in any one organization as the genuine body of Christ will arise from all kinds of places to form the net that is Christ’s kingdom. But neither will it be dominated by “church” practices, “theology” or “doctrines.” Many will be new believers who have never been exposed to “church” deceptions. Those who do come out from the “church” must be careful to be purified of all their deceptions – nothing from Babylon will be welcome in the New Jerusalem! – or else they may yet find themselves excluded from the kingdom of God and included in the tares.

The last call is not one to miss. The banquet tables for the wedding feast of the Lamb and His wife are ready for the guests to arrive. (see Mt. 22:2 and following.) We must not presume that we are going to sit at those tables just because we’ve been around the things of God, even if we’ve been around them all our lives. If we’ve not had time for God and instead been too busy playing “church” and working our own programs and agendas instead of laboring with Christ to build His kingdom, His temple, His ekklesia, then we will find that we are not on the final guest list when the door is closed. It does not have to be this way – we can enter into His kingdom now! But we can be equally certain that God is not confused about what it is that we are actually doing and being. Blessed indeed is the one whom the Master finds doing His will when He returns! (Lk. 12:43-44)

Let he who has ears hear!

Part 4 of 7: The Final Reformation, Ekklesia and the “Church”

http://paidionbooks.org/girard/church/church_pdf/tfreatc.pdf

Part 6 of 7: The Many Rs of the Final Reformation

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