

The Many Rs of the Final Reformation

Part 6 of 7

Neil Girrard

There are those who believe that we are standing at the front of the last reformation that will occur before the return of Christ. As exciting as this sounds, it is a bit more complicated than the idea that is conveyed in the simple phrase “the final reformation.” That is, the whole of what God is doing in these last days is not entirely encapsulated in this simple label. Instead, to grasp the entirety of God’s movement of the last days requires a few other words and concepts.

Reformation and Restoration

Let us consider what exactly “reformation” entails. It is a reforming, a restructuring of existing parts to create a new or different entity. It is in this sense that the Catholic sect of the second, third and fourth centuries reformed the way of following Christ in some very profound and fundamental ways. Rather than being structured in the pattern seen in the New Testament, particularly the book of Acts, the “church” became patterned after the Roman empire and centered primarily in the capitol city of Rome. The “church” building is known also as a basilica for this reason – this is the name of the Roman judgment hall. The “pontiff,” a title given to bishops, came from the pagan temples and signified the role of the priest as a mediator or “bridge” between the people and the gods – in many cases, the pagan priests simply changed the name of the god they represented after Constantine legitimized “Christianity.” The pulpit (Greek “ambo”) was also similarly transplanted into the new “Christian” temples funded by Constantine – both “pulpit” and “church” building are entirely absent from the New Testament as is the need for anyone else but Christ to act as mediator between men and God. (1 Tim. 2:5)

Jesus said, “I am the way... No one comes to the Father but by Me.” (Jn. 14:6) And John wrote, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (Jn. 1:12-13) But by the middle of the third century, men preached a different gospel. Cyprian, in 251 A.D., said, “No one can have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother.” (as quoted by Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol. II*, p. 173) Now *men* were required to participate in the spiritual new birth from above and anyone who did not have the approval of these mere men were not to be considered as God’s children and Christ’s brothers. The people of Christ have not yet fully recovered from this blasphemous error that is commonly called “mother church.” While men slept (failed to recognize the consequences of their actions and words – Mt. 13:25) the mother of abominations (Rev. 17:5) was brought into existence alongside the Bride (wife, people, temple, house, family) of Christ and, until recently, few have been enabled to see which was which. It is also in the sense of the need to recover from the devastating reformations done by the Catholic “church” that we can call the sixteenth century reformations incomplete and unfinished.

It is also in this light that we must differentiate between the Great Prostitute and the Bride of Christ. The “church” is built upon the pattern of the Roman empire and the pagan world of the second through fourth centuries whereas the people of Christ (Greek *ekklesia* [1577]) is simply all those who have been born again into the kingdom of God according to the plan, purpose and will of God the Father. (Jn. 3:3, 5, 1 Pet. 1:23) The “church” is defined by its buildings, clergy and religious rites, peculiar doctrines and practices – the *ekklesia* are the people who have been spiritually translated by Christ from darkness into light. (Col. 1:13, etc.) One is a

physical and carnal (fleshly) mindset, behavior and activity that requires nothing but self – the other is a spiritual transformation accomplished only in interaction with the Holy Spirit of God.

With this understanding, we can readily see that the “church,” the prostitute, will never submit to being reformed. The clergy gains too much security and identity from the “church’s” existence and they have invested far too much time, effort and money into its buildings and traditions and are too ensnared in the deceptions of the devil and demonic to be able to step away from the “church” – that is, apart from a miraculous intervention comparable to the merciful confrontation that Saul of Tarsus received on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:3-4)

In addition to the routine, institutional “church,” which has become easy enough for some to recognize its deceptions, there are also counterfeits for those who see the “church’s” errors but who do not yet know much about the right way to follow Christ and God. There are “apostles” and “prophets” whose “ministry” is *designed* by Satan and the demonic to ensnare those who fit this description. There is also a counterfeit move of miraculous power that imitates what is of God. Paul wrote, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan; with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Ths. 2:9-10) These “signs and lying wonders” are performed in the name of Christ and God (see Mt. 7:22) as surely as are the signs and miracles done by those who genuinely seek after Christ and God. There are no rules or principles by which one can know whether a particular sign or wonder is truly of God or of Satan. There is only the Holy Spirit who works in those who love truth and righteousness so as to prevent them from being deceived. He is more than capable of preserving those who truly belong to Christ and God but there is no hope for those who do not love truth and righteousness (who thereby fail to pursue God’s salvation) that they will not come under the delusions of Satan.

Thus, the people who are genuinely born again – whether in or out of the “church” – are those to whom (and whom *only!*) we can legitimately apply the word “reformation.” Those who are in the “church” that is propagated by error, hypocrisy and idolatry must come out and be separate from all unrighteousness. (2 Cor. 6:17-18, 1 Cor. 5:10-11, Rev. 18:4, 2 Tim. 2:19) Those whose practices or beliefs are not purely or completely in line with the truths of the New Testament must come into obedience to the leading of the Spirit of God. (Rom. 8:14) In this sense, then, we may indeed rightly apply the word “reformation” only to the ekklesia but in no sense whatsoever is reformation of the carnal and worldly elements of the “church” even remotely possible. Nothing – ***absolutely nothing*** – of either Egypt or Babylon will ever be welcome in the New Jerusalem!

Closely related to “reformation” is the word “restoration.” Many “theologians” reject the notion of “restoration” because it conflicts with their own peculiar doctrines and preferences. Some even try to differentiate between “reformist” and “restorationist” theology and practices even though the terms are virtually synonymous! But if there is any sense in which the word restoration can be misapplied, it would only be in the sense that we cannot turn back the hands of time and return to the first century. We simply cannot be restored to that time period.

But we can, as we submit to the Holy Spirit of God, be restored to the practices we see in the book of Acts, particularly the preaching of the gospel of repentance and the laying on of hands to see the sick recover and the demonized be delivered. (Acts 2:38, 5:12, etc.) By submitting to the Holy Spirit, we can be led into all truth (Jn. 14:26, 16:13) and no longer do we need to be enslaved by carnal doctrines, creeds and knowledge that war against the Spirit and kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:17, Rom. 8:7) We can return to our first love, our love for Christ Jesus

Himself which first exploded in our hearts when we were first born again from above. This is the love from which the original people of Christ departed (Rev. 2:4) and it is the primary attribute we need to return to in these tumultuous last days.

The power and miracles of the Holy Spirit progressively ceased as the people came under the deceptions of having a bishop standing over them and as they came into the “church” building and allowed it to be their temple instead of they themselves being the temple of God. As the people of Christ again become the priesthood of all believers (Rev. 1:6) and again go outside the camp of men’s religion to meet Jesus (Heb. 13:13), it is to be expected that we will again see the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit restored to Christ’s people.

Revival, Renewal and Return

The word “revival” does not truly belong to the notions of reformation and restoration nor is the word ever used in the Bible. But, because it enjoys popular usage, it deserves some examination. The word “revival” derives from the Latin and signifies the act of bringing to life again. It is precisely here that we must again recognize the difference between the “church” and the ekklesia. The writer of Hebrews tells us, “It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace.” (Heb. 6:4-6) It is simply *impossible* to bring someone *back* to life in Christ and this simple fact calls into question all of the “church’s” infatuation with revival meetings – especially since most “revival” meetings are only poorly disguised recruitments for new members!

Where the notion of revival (in its other dictionary meanings) lends itself to the ideas incorporated in reformation and restoration, it is simply not worth arguing over the semantics involved. It is simply enough to know there is value in pressing on past the limitations of the word “revival” and thinking instead in terms of renewal of the mind and returning to our first love rather than falling for the spiritual deceptions and inadequacies of “revival.”

Paul wrote, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2) Again we can see the warning to avoid all elements of both Egypt and Babylon (both are patterns from this world) incorporated into Paul’s instruction. As we refuse to be conformed to this world in any way, we will experience more of the work of the Holy Spirit who leads us into holiness and truth. Our minds will be renewed and we will attain to a greater awareness of what God’s will for our life is. This will affect our understanding of both our individual and corporate activities done in the name of Christ.

Because men have neglected to seek this renewal of their thinking, it has become appropriate to accept any “theology” or doctrine that suits our carnal (fleshly) preferences. In the New Testament, this is called “lawlessness.” In the Old Testament, the Israelites were described as follows: “In those days [of the judges] there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Jdgs. 21:25) Christendom, those people who purportedly profess to follow Christ, can be similarly described. Christ is not the King of the vast majority of people who claim to belong to Him. He is their vassal, their slave, their lackey to do and provide for their wants and desires as they pursue what they think they need in order to have a “good life.” Routine lip service (“God bless...”), vicarious charity, “church” attendance, tithes and offerings,

passive listening to (enduring) the “pastor’s” sermons – these are the price these people pay to keep this “Christ” who leaves them alone in their lawlessness.

The Greek word rendered “lawlessness” (“iniquity” in the KJV) is *anomia* [458] and it literally means “no law.” Since the follower of Christ has been released from all *legal* requirements of the Old Covenant (Col. 2:14, etc.), why would having “no law” be a sin for which one is dismissed from the eternal kingdom of God? (see Mt. 7:21-23) Because the idea of being lawless is that of doing whatever is right in one’s own eyes. We must be sure to note carefully that the one who does things he knows to be sinful or wrong is *not* the one the New Testament calls lawless. Such a one is simply evil or wicked. The one who is lawless does what he believes to be *right* and *good* - not because God says it is right and good but because he, the man, the individual, thinks of it as right and good. This is the fruit of the forbidden tree, the independent knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:17)

Being lawless is rejecting the Lordship of Christ and erecting one’s self as the ultimate ruler and standard for one’s life. It is this self-centered, self-defined relativism that Jesus said would abound before His return – accompanied by a near total absence of love for one another. (Mt. 24:12) The greatest of the Christian attributes – love (1 Cor. 13:13) – is laid low and slain without mercy by lawlessness. It is for this reason that lawlessness (what is right in a man’s own eyes) has nothing in common with righteousness (what is right in *God’s* eyes –2 Cor. 6:14)

So long as we walk in lawlessness, living according to what is right in our own opinions, we have no need to have our mind spiritually renewed – and this only demonstrates our complete disregard for the will of God. Only when we are as committed to pursuing the will of God as Jesus was (see Heb. 10:7, Lk. 22:42-44), will we demonstrate that Jesus is truly our first love, that is, our foremost desire and only passion in this life.

Rejection

The final reformation and restoration of the people of Christ into all that God implanted into the New Testament will require rejection. We must reject all that is of the flesh – and we must endure the rejection of men who refuse to abandon their carnal self-life.

We will be forced to reject the “church” paradigm with its “pastor”-overlord who stands in front of the door to the kingdom of heaven, neither going in themselves nor allowing others to enter in. (Mt. 23:13) We will be forced to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29) and we will be forced to reject the practice of pleasing men at the expense of pleasing God. (Gal. 1:10) Those who prefer to please men rather than God will, of necessity, oppose those who are determined that it is more important to stand with God and endure the wrath of men rather than it is to stand with men and endure the wrath of God!

We must reject all things of the flesh. It is readily recognized that sin (the things of “Egypt,” the flesh) are to be rejected by those who name the name of Christ. (2 Tim. 2:19) But we must also recognize and reject all things that are of false religious and even demonic origins (“Babylon”) lest we share in the judgments reserved for such things. (Rev. 18:4) We must reject all elements of demonic “theology” that have crept into our thinking over the centuries. (1 Tim. 4:1) We must no longer tolerate a different Jesus, a different gospel or a different spirit when someone comes along claiming to be speaking or operating in the name of Jesus. (2 Cor. 11:4) Anything less will be simply a further participation in the apostasy, the great falling away from the faith, that occurs before the return of Christ. (2 Ths. 2:3, Mt. 24:10)

As we reject all the elements of the apostasy, the false “church,” we must anticipate the rejection of man. The things of God have always been opposed by wicked and unjust men and

the end times will certainly not be any different. The major difficulty will be in the fact that many who were never truly born again or never crucified their flesh and self-life will hold great positions of power in the “church” and these will be the worst enemies of the followers of Christ – just as the Pharisees, the staunch traditionalists of the Mosaic law, were the staunchest adversaries of Christ and eventually arranged for His execution. This is inevitable and we do well to be ready to experience such opposition from those who should be (but are not) Christ’s friends.

Responsibility and Reality

Perhaps the greatest requirement – and the element that will be the most unwelcome in counterfeit “church” circles – will be that of personal responsibility. With the great liberty that comes from being a priest of God comes great responsibility. We will be held responsible for our every word and action because we are the ambassador and representative of Christ Jesus. (Mt. 12:36, 2 Cor. 5:10, 20)

Though the “church” and various “ministries” make much ado about “accountability” and being “accountable” to their “pastor,” “spiritual father,” “mentor” or some other person, the truth is these words appear *zero* times in the Bible. It is also true that if we will do or not do a certain activity when God is the only person watching, we will also certainly and simply have no compunction about lying to the person supposedly holding us accountable! The only person to whom we are going to be held to account is *God and Christ!* Paul wrote, “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Rom. 14:12) In absolutely no place in the whole of the Bible is any man ever held to account by any other man for his responsibilities toward God. There is simply no other person whom we will be able to blame for our own actions and beliefs on judgment day. We will not get away with saying “The ‘pastor’ said it was okay” or “The ‘apostle’ taught me this” and be excused from our sin and error. We will bear the consequences then and we do well to shoulder our responsibilities to God now!

The last and final reformation is all about the resurrection of Christ. But this is not just an intellectual acknowledgement of some historical fact. It is an entering into the very real power of Christ and rejoicing in all that He provides for us. If in any sense what we have is not real but counterfeit or faked (forced by expectations), then we have not found the real Christ.

We do not need to fear being deceived – we need only be diligent to repent and present ourselves regularly and progressively to the work of the cross of Christ. Peter wrote, “For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:5-8) It is this progressive growth that keeps us on the path that leads to eternal life. And just as it is not enough to simply enter the narrow gate (Mt. 7:14) so too Peter goes on to say, “If anyone does not have [these qualities], he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.” (2 Pet. 1:9)

A great multitude will one day stand in heaven and say, “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” John then writes, “And to her (the Lamb’s wife) it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Rev. 19:7-8) When the wedding feast of the Lamb commences, only those dressed in righteousness – their own acts performed in

the power of Christ (Phlp. 4:13) – will be permitted to remain. (Mt. 22:11-13) Those who are too busy with their own agendas or their own “theology” or their own “church” practice to prepare themselves according to God’s will will be those who will stand outside the door and call out asking to be let in. But the Master will say to them, “You were too busy and you did only what was right in your own eyes. The door is closed.” (Mt. 8:22, Lk. 14:24) Jesus said, “Whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.” (Lk. 12:8-9) Nothing in the New Testament says this rejection by Christ and God has to be what anyone must experience. The choice of whether to walk in what God has provided or to walk in whatever unrighteousness we prefer (2 Ths. 2:12) is ours to make now and we alone will bear the consequences or rewards of that choice.

Let he who has ears hear.

Part 5 of 7: The Last Call

http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/deeper/deeper_pdf/tlc.pdf

Part 7 of 7: The Greatest Dangers to the Final Reformation

http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/gospking/gospking_pdf/tgdtfr.pdf

Neil Girrard
Paidion Books
P.O. Box 327
Capitan, NM 88316

Website – www.paidionbooks.org

Email – paidion@paidionbooks.org

This article - <http://paidionbooks.org/girrard/deeper/tmrotfr.html>