

A New Reformation?

Over the next few lessons I want to take a look at the Reformation and its results and try to answer the question, “Do we need a new reformation in the Church?”

As we look at this question the first thing that I want to point out is that I am talking about the Church universal, the Church that Christ adds all who are saved to. This church crosses denominational boundaries.

In order to answer the question I think that we need to understand what the Reformation was about originally. At that time the canon of Scripture was not available to the common man. The Catholic Church at that time was opposed to the translation of Scripture to common languages and distribution to the masses. Their claim was that uneducated people could not rightly divide the word, they needed the guidance of the Church.

Now I’m getting ready to say something that could easily be taken out of context, but I’m going to say it anyway. The Catholic Church has been partially right in this claim. As we’ll see through this series of lessons, the results of the Reformation has been that the Scripture has become open for interpretation despite the fact that 2 Peter 1:20 tells us that it should not be. These private interpretations have led to divisions within the Church known as denominations (in this context the non-denominational churches also fit in as a denomination).

I’m going to make another statement that, if taken out of context, would be wrong. Of itself division is not necessarily bad. You see, there are things in the Scripture which are hard to be understood. The Scripture itself says so in 2 Peter 3:16. The problem comes not in the fact that people understand things differently but that churches are not Christlike in their disagreements. Sometimes division can even be helpful to the Church. For example, in Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas had a great disagreement, so much that they couldn’t work together. They wound up going their separate ways, likely reaching more people through their division.

You see, it’s when division comes contention that it’s a real problem. You see, the Church today has become so focused on disagreements with other churches that they have forgotten about the common enemy. Jesus himself said in Mark 3:25 that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Over the next few lessons I’m going to look at how these divisions are wreaking havoc in the Church. I’m going to look at some examples of how churches often judge others without knowing what they’re judging. I’m going to look at how people get caught up with pet doctrines that have been told to them by others and can quote those Scriptures that would seem to support that doctrine, while disregarding other Scriptures. What I hope that we can accomplish is pointing out that we need to take ALL of the Scriptures and put them together to find what the Truth really is. Perhaps this will also help to open up dialog where everything has been putdowns.

Finally, I hope that these lessons will prove useful to those of you who are looking for a church. I hope that this will help you to understand that there are no perfect churches because we're living in an imperfect world, but we should still find the place where God can use us for the greatest good.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. John Rich