Restoring the New Testament Church: Part One

The Point Church

*Simply***Christians**

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restoration

NOUN

the action of returning something to a former owner, place, or condition.

"the restoration of Andrew's sight"

synonyms:

repair · repairing · fixing · mending · refurbishment · reconditioning ·

the process of restoring a building, work of art, etc. to its original condition.

"the altar paintings seem in need of restoration"

the reinstatement of a previous practice, right, or situation.

"the restoration of capital punishment"

return to a former position · return to power ·

the return of a monarch to a throne, a head of state to government, or a regime to power.

"the restoration of a democratic government"

The concept of restoring the New Testament Church presupposes that there is an original standard or condition that God intended to be preserved.

The standard is the church's spiritual and enduring teaching and practice revealed and established by the Holy Spirit through Christ's apostles in the first century AD, as recorded in the New Testament Scriptures (assumes the inspiration and authority of both the apostles and the Bible).

The next two lessons will focus on whether or not God intended the original church (the church described in the New Testament) to serve as a pattern of teaching and practice for his church for all time.

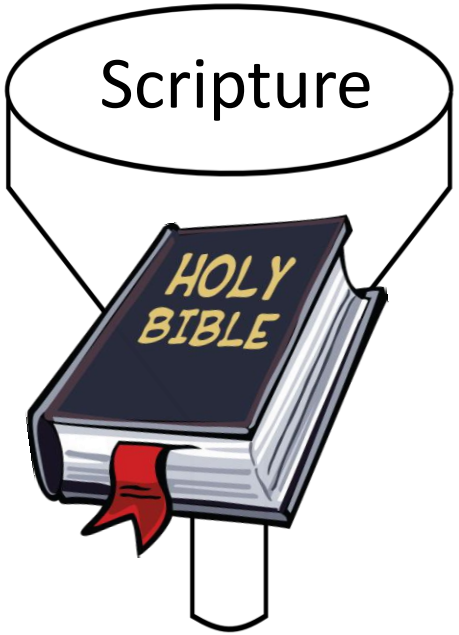
The concept of restoring the New Testament Church presupposes that there has been a departure from the original standard or condition.

The phenomenon of denominationalism and denominational creeds makes this self evident. Various churches not only teach and practice different things, but churches teach and practice things that contradict what other churches teach and practice.

It is not that the Bible reveals different and contradictory things about the teaching and practice of the New Testament church (Biblical scholars of all backgrounds are pretty much agreed about what the "primitive church" taught and practiced). But not everyone agrees the primitive church is *the* standard. Many people are using and applying different standards and authorities in addition to, or apart from, the Biblical data.

Interpretation will invariably draw upon a combination of all four, but which one is considered primary makes all the difference!

Tradition, Reason and Experience filtered through



Scripture, Reason and Experience filtered through

Scripture, Tradition, and Experience filtered through

Scripture, Tradition, and Reason filtered through

Which one trumps the rest? … Where does the buck stop?

The concept of restoring the New Testament Church presupposes that it is possible to restore the original standard or condition.

A parable of an inter-denominational gospel preaching campaign.

Can we not be “no brand” Christians? Simply Christians?

Think of it this way: What does it take to make one a member of the Roman Catholic Church? (the Bible plus ecclesiastical tradition plus apostolic succession plus papal authority …)

God’s word is the seed (Matthew 13:1-30) … plant the same seed and you will always get the same crop. Anything else is weeds.

What if we just took the Bible as our guide … plus nothing? There is no claim to special connections, knowledge or insight: this is accessible to everyone!

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To restore or not to restore is a very practical and necessary question: How are we to do church? What shall we teach? What shall we practice? We surely must teach and practice something!

Where do we look for guidance to answer these questions?

The teaching and practice of the original church established by the Holy Spirit through Christ's apostles in the first century AD has been preserved and handed down in the New Testament Scriptures … why?

Should we follow that? Should we follow something else? Why/why not? And what would that something else be?

The concept of restoring the New Testament Church presupposes that it is possible to restore the original standard or condition.

The restoration of New Testament Christianity is better conceived of as a movement rather than as an institutional or denominational stance (our denomination is truer and better than yours … beware the non-denominational denomination).

Restoration is an ongoing process of review and reform of religious teachings and practices in the light of Scripture.

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Restoration is only possible with congregationalism (autonomous congregations) as opposed to corporate denominational arrangements with creeds and headquarters governing the collective (such structures tend to resist Bible-based reform and restoration – denominational reform usually moves in the other direction – away from the primitive church – to strengthen hierarchy and/or accommodate trends in culture).

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Restoration is non-denominational and *pre-denominational.*

Trying to be Christians only is not the same as saying we are the only Christians! (that sort of judgement is God's prerogative alone).

The inherent weakness of every historical restoration movement (and there have been plenty of them) lies in restoration's strength: the commitment to being biblical in teaching and practice can make one vulnerable to pride and legalism (performance based righteousness as opposed to faith in Christ).

Small Group Discussion & Prayers