

I. Introduction

- A. Let's begin with a brief history lesson... because everyone loves history!
 - 1. Religious fervor swept country in 1800 in "*Second Great Awakening*"
 - a. Baptists, Methodists & Presbyterians met in great revival meetings
 - b. One was Cain Ridge where Barton Stone preached to 10,000 in 1801
 - 2. But what happened after the Revivals ended and everyone went home?
 - a. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians couldn't share their new fervor
 - b. Each church had a creed, statements of faith members had to accept
- B. They called for non-denominational faith; Restoration Movement was born
 - 1. Barton W. Stone was a Presbyterian, though not particularly good one
 - a. He got into hot water with denomination and he fired it (or killed it)
 - b. In 1804, he wrote *Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery*
We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.
 - 1) Gave up titles; embraced what we'd call congregational autonomy
 - 2) They rejected creeds and saw "*the Bible as the only sure guide*"
 - 2. Five years later, Thomas Campbell gave his "*Declaration and Address*"
The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place who profess faith in Christ and obedience to him
 - a. Churches exist different bodies, but there must be no divisions/schism
 - b. Nothing is bound on believers except what is clearly taught in Bible
 - c. Things we infer from the Bible cannot be bound on other believers
 - d. All who accept Christ should accept all others who accept Christ
 - 3. Alexander Campbell promoted these things in his *Millennial Harbinger*
 - a. Edward Fudge sums up Campbell's dream in four basic steps—
 - 1) Millennium is surely coming soon; Jesus would come at its end
 - 2) The world must be converted before the dawn of the millennium
 - 3) Christians must unite before the world can be converted to Christ
 - 4) Unity happens when we abandon creeds and unite on Bible alone
 - b. Restoration was HOW we can come to unity to get God's work done
 - c. Unity was the GOAL of the movement; restoration was the ENGINE

- C. It wasn't long before we gave up everything except "restoring the church?"
1. **First**, are we really driven by a faith in the personal return of Christ?
 - a. Oh, we believe "*he'll be back,*" but do we often pray "*maranatha?*"
 - b. Is our preaching, ministry and evangelism driven by his 2nd coming?
 - c. Truth be known, most of us have kind of made peace with this world
 2. **Second**, are we motivated and dominated by an evangelistic fervor
 - a. Sure, we see evangelism as important, but it doesn't drive our work
 - b. Campbell saw God's work and Christ's return depend on preaching
 - c. So, he preached and wrote with a sense of urgency we often lack
 3. **Third**, we're no longer driven by quest for unity with other believers
 - a. Stone saw the unity of believers as the "polar star" of the movement
 - b. Campbell and Stone disagreed on many important doctrinal points
 - 1) But they loved Jesus and one another, so they focused on unity
 - 2) There was no creed to decide who was right, so they let God
 4. The **only** part of Campbell's dream we hold to today is RESTORATION
 - a. We aren't a denomination (part of whole); we **ARE** the NT church
 - 1) Others have creeds or professions; we've no creed but Bible
 - 2) They have preconception, assumption, tradition; we have truth
 "*We do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names*"
 - b. If we have restored the right church, that makes everyone else wrong
 - c. Family tradition as a kid was popcorn, Pepsi & Ponderosa (Bonanza)
 - 1) I once jumped up out of bed, "*I heard a Pepsi top go off!*"
 - 2) I was heartbroken when Little Joe went to Methodist church
 - 3) I was schooled early in the idea of being part of the true church
 5. Campbell's dream of uniting and restoring became sectarian nightmare
- D. We are beginning today a series I am calling "*Restoration Revisited*"
1. After today, we're not going to look at our history but our future
 - a. What would restoring the NT church really look like at Denbigh?
 - b. What if we rebooted the Restoration but then took it personally?
 - c. What if we changed our focus from the external forms and formats?
 2. What if it became what we just sang, asking God to "Restore My Soul"

II. Restoration Revisited: Changing the Source

- A. What would happen if Paul showed up in town and looked for the church?
1. He goes to Starbucks and asks, “*Where do the Christians meet here?*”
“*They meet down the street at church building*” **Paul:** “*The what building?*”
“*You know, with the worship center or auditorium*” **Paul:** “*What is that?*”
“*You know, the big room with pulpit up on the stage*” **Paul:** “*Pulpit? Stage?*”
“*You know, the place where the song leader stands*” **Paul:** “*The what leader?*”
“*Guy with pitch pipe who stands in front of praise team*” **Paul:** “*Ohhh! Roger!*”
 2. **Point:** Paul wouldn’t recognize most the things we connect to church
 - a. He didn’t have bulletins, Sunday School or 4-part harmony or PPT
 - b. They weren’t invented, but we can’t imagine church without them!
 - c. Paul’s church met in small, informal groups in private homes
 3. **Fact:** We’ve never done Bible things in Bible ways... *we’d freak out!*
 - a. Would it be OK to have discussion IN church? (**1 Cor 14:29**, NLT)
 - b. What if one person sang a song or shared a thought? (**1 Cor 14:26**)
 - c. Should we forbid people to speak in tongues? (**1 Cor 14:39**)
 - d. What if we had communion after a potluck meal (**1 Cor 11:25**)
 - 1) Jesus and the apostles at a meal together before Last Supper
 - 2) Corinth evidently followed the same “pattern” (*and messed it up*)
 4. Someone could do all of those in an attempt to restore the NT church
- B. We’re starting at the wrong end when we focus on forms and formats
1. Look at the Jerusalem church; what were some of the things they did
 - a. Where and how often did they meet together? (**Acts 2:46**)
 - b. What kind of relationship did they have together? (**Acts 4:32**)
 - c. What was it that led to their dramatic growth? (**Acts 5:13-14**)
 - d. How was the message of the gospel proclaimed (**Acts 5:42**)
 - e. What did growth look like in the very first church (**Acts 6:7**)
 2. Jerusalem sets bar pretty high; we’re better off talking about Corinth!
 - a. It’s not forms and formats; it isn’t looking like Jerusalem church
 - b. It’s not that we need to meet together every day like they did
 - c. It’s not even that God expects us to grow like they did
 3. We need to be driven by same engine driving them (**4:31, 6:3, 9:31**)
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III. Conclusion

- A. We do need a return to the Restoration Movement in the church today
1. But not one that focuses on forms and formats of the first century
 - a. True restoration has nothing to do with church music or organization
 - b. It's not about deciphering the that make us the one true church
 - c. Restoration isn't about us being right while everyone else is wrong
 2. Restoration is always a movement of God (**Psalm 85:1-4**)
 - a. Restoration doesn't happen because we get everything just right
 - b. Restoration isn't minding P's and Q's or dotting I' and crossing T's
 - c. Consider the message of songs we sang this morning—
By Christ redeemed by Christ restored we keep the supper of the Word
My hope us built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness
Restore my Spirit Lord, I need restored; my heart is weary, please help me dear Lord
Restore unto me the joy of my salvation and renew a right spirit within me.
- B. Restoration is about what God does in us, not what we do (**Psa 51:10-12**)
1. Promise of the gospel isn't that we can do Bible things in Bible ways
 - a. It is not that you join the one true church where every is exactly right
 - b. The promise of the gospel is that God will move to make you right
 2. If that sounds like something you need, then the invitation is yours!