

Restoration Revisited (10): Playing Nice with Others

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I. Introduction

- A. It's good to sing some of those old gospel songs... every once in awhile
1. But some of you likely grew up singing a different version of that one
 - a. *Sacred Selections* was one of 3 hymnals in our non-denomination
 - b. It had some things going for it— it's a lot smaller and lighter
 - c. Cover is textured; it makes a satisfying “Whoosh” on the rack
 2. Best thing was that it had those old Stamps-Baxter type gospel songs
 - a. I grew up with L.O. Sanderson's (“*speaks to the heart and not foot*”)
 - b. I wish in worst way we could sing *Salvation Has Been Bro't Down*
(*We tried that several years ago... and we did sing it in the worst way*)
- B. *Sacred Selections* was edited by Ellis J. Crum... and I do mean “edited”
1. Heavy-handed edits of song lyrics led book to be “*Scarred Selections*”
 - a. He changed *I Know Whom I Have Believed*; it was too premillennial
(“*Nor will I walk the vale with him but meet him in the air*”)
 - b. He even changed *Amazing Grace!* Not even Chris Tomlin does that
(“*how precious did that grace appear when I his word obeyed*”)
 - c. “*When We All get to Heaven*” became “*When Saved Get to Heaven*”
 - 1) Not everyone singing is actually going to make it to heaven
 - 2) He did leave “*When All God's Singers Get Home*” (“*If a Few...*”)
 2. Song #1 in *Sacred Selections* was by Crum's, “*Church of Christ*”
*The church of Christ follows God's word; where he does speak, there we are heard
Where he is silent, we are too; what Christ commands is what we do*
 - a. It never caught on as C-of-C anthem, but it does show self-identity
 - b. We're the right church, the church follows the NT, the NT church
 3. Years also, a family visited Sunday night on way back from funeral
 - a. An uncle died, and they told me how wonderful a man he was
 - b. He read his Bible, prayed, deacon in church, give shirt off back
 - 1) She said, “*Too bad he wasn't member of the church and is lost*”
 - 2) I was stunned, “*Well, he wasn't not a member of right church*”

II. Playing Nice with Others: The Restoration Movement

- A. We are coming down the back-stretch of series “*Restoration Revisited*”
1. I’m fifth generation C-of-C; here’s the restoration story I grew up with
 - a. Jesus established the church and left a precise pattern for it to follow
 - b. But there was great apostasy, that led to creeds, councils and clergy
 - c. The truth was lost as the traditions of men replaced the word of God
 2. Luther and Reformation came along and took on the great apostasy
 - a. He pointed people back to sola gratia, sola fide, sola scriptura
 - b. He stopped too soon; he sought to reform the church, not restore it
 - c. So the Reformation splintered into man man-made denominations
 3. Campbell and Stone began a movement to be the church in the NT
 - a. They wanted to be “Christians only” without sectarian divisions
 - b. They went back to the Bible, to “*Speak where the Bible speaks*”
 - c. They restored the true church; we became the only true Christians
- B. Well, that’s a pretty story, isn’t it? And we aren’t the only ones to tell it
1. There’ve been many similar “restoration movements” in history
 - a. Someone finds a Bible something that’s not being followed correctly
 - 1) Some saw a need to separate from the state/church (**Anabaptists**)
 - 2) Other saw a lack of interest in last things (**Plymouth Brethren**)
 - 3) Others stress Spirit in a day of rampant rationalism (**Pentecostal**)
 - 4) Whatever was lost they found, and they became the true church
 - b. Monroe Hawley lists 13 restoration movement and common traits
 - 1) **Scripture**: They all hold to a belief in sola scriptura, Bible alone
 - 2) **Church**: All stress the church as set-apart from world & apostasy
 - 3) **Baptism**: Restorations see baptism as visible sign of commitment
 - 4) **Worship**: These groups see worship and simple and participatory
 - 5) **Organization**: Value autonomy and see denominations as evil
 2. There’s one more thing they share—*they don’t play nice with others!*
 - a. If I think my church is right church, then all others must be wrong
 - b. Is there a way to be a “restored church” and play nice with others?
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III. Playing Nice with Others: Movement Toward Restoration

- A. In **John 14**, Jesus prepares the apostles for coming cross (**John 14:1-3**)
1. Not only is he preparing a place, they always know the way (**14:4**)
 - a. The word “way” is same as “road” as Damascus road (**Acts 9:17**)
 - b. The Message here has, “*You already know the road I’m taking.*”
 - c. Apostles insist they don’t know the way, but they did (**John 14:6**)
 2. Jesus is the way or road to the father—he is the truth and the life
 - a. There’s no system, scheme, strategy or structure that we must do
 - b. Peter assures us that salvation is found in no other name (**Acts 4:12**)
 - 1) We see “restoration” as us decoding and deciphering the pattern
 - 2) Then it becomes renewing, repairing, rebuilding the right system
 - c. We make it about us and what we do, our ingenuity and faithfulness
 3. That’s why we don’t play nice with others—they aren’t right like us!
- B. **Question:** What did first disciples call themselves and their movement?
1. Name “Christian” is used only 3 times in NT, and then maybe as insult
 - a. Disciples were called Christians at Antioch? (**Acts 11:26**)
 - b. Agrippa was “*almost persuaded*” to be a Christian (**Acts 26:28**)
 - c. Peter says what “*if you suffer as a Christian*” (**1 Peter 4:16**)
 2. A more common word for the church (**Acts 9:2, 19:23, 24:14, 24:22**)
 - a. “*The Way*” doesn’t mean a cappella singing. *Jesus is the way*
 - b. “*The Truth*” isn’t being right on baptism theology. *Jesus is truth*
 - c. “*The Life*” isn’t about dotting I’s and crossing T’s. *It’s about Jesus*
- C. What is restoration? It isn’t about what we do but what God does in us
1. Most common use of “*restored*” in NT is healing stories (**Matt 12:13**)
 - a. The word is literally “return” and is used of rebuilding a building
 - b. Here a man’s shriveled hand is “returned” or “restored” or “rebuilt”
 - c. He didn’t do anything to achieve it; restoration was from God
 2. Peter talks about a time when God will restore all things (**Acts 3:21**)
 - a. There is to be a time at end of time when God will restore all things
 - b. But it is God who will do that, right? He will restore all things

3. Who does Peter say would restore the persecuted church (**1 Pet 5:10**)
 - a. Sure, there were a lot of things that the church was called to do
 - 1) They were to stay alert and keep their head on a swivel (**5:8**)
 - 2) They were also to stand firm despite their struggles (**5:9**)
 - b. Do you think there were times then they struggled with that?
 - 1) Were they ever not so alert? Not serious? Not standing firm?
 - 2) Did their salvation depend on them doing everything right?
 - c. No! They didn't restore themselves; God did! (**5:10**, MESSAGE)

IV. Conclusion

- A. Years ago, at a preacher's meeting, one of the guys shared a story
 1. Guy comes in, *"Is this a true church? I mean are you faithful?"*
 - a. How do you answer that? *"No, we've been apostate awhile now"*
 - b. Before he answer the guy blurted, *"You're not— a refrigerator!"*
 - 1) True NT churches didn't have a Frigidaire in their building
 - 2) They also didn't have indoor plumbing, AC, or even a building
 2. In order to be true church, you must do Bible things in Bible ways
 - a. That means no eating in church building or Sunday School classes
 - b. If truth rests on the right system, a Frigidaire can lead to pit of hell
- B. Being a restoration church isn't about a system; it's about a Savior
 1. We'll never find system or strength to restore the church. Not our job!
 - a. Can we perfectly live the fruit of the Spirit? Sermon on Mount?
 - b. Why would we think we can get church right? Our theology right?
 - c. Our only hope is God's grace; we'd better extend grace to others
 2. We need to play well with others— get along with other believers
 - a. Can we worship with people that get things wrong? You are now!
 - b. There will be a restoration one day, but it will come from God
 - c. Until then, we look through a glass darkly... but we look to Him
 - 1) We stand at the foot of the cross point to the crucified One
 - 2) Must stand there will all who are willing to stand with us
 3. We stand there in absolute faith that the battle belongs to the Lord