



Is the Restoration Movement Over?

# Recent Church Statistics

## (Institutional and Non-Institutional)

- Churches of Christ constitute the 12th largest religious group in America
- Churches of Christ are the 6th fastest growing religious group in America.
- Churches of Christ rank 4th in the nation in total congregations.
- Churches of Christ rank 5th in the nation in the number of counties in which there is a congregation.
- Churches of Christ rank 1st in the nation in distribution of congregations
- Churches of Christ rank 1st in the nation in weekly attendance.
- Churches of Christ rank 1st in the nation in giving.

# What is the Restoration Movement?

- “The Restoration Movement (also known as the American Restoration Movement or the Stone-Campbell Movement) is a Christian movement that began on the American frontier during the Second Great Awakening (1790–1870) of the early 19th century. The movement sought to restore the church and "the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament." Members do not identify as Protestant but simply as Christian.”

# What is the Restoration Movement?

- “The Restoration Movement developed from several independent efforts to return to apostolic Christianity, but two groups, which independently developed similar approaches to the Christian faith, were particularly important. The first, led by Barton W. Stone, began at Cane Ridge, Kentucky and called themselves simply as "Christians". The second began in western Pennsylvania and West Virginia and was led by Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander Campbell; they used the name "Disciples of Christ". Both groups sought to restore the whole Christian church on the pattern set forth in the New Testament, and both believed that creeds kept Christianity divided. In 1832 they joined in fellowship with a handshake.”

# The Restoration Movement has been characterized by several key principles:

- Christianity should not be divided; Christ created one church.
- Creeds divide, but Christians should be able to find agreement by standing on the Bible itself
- Traditions divide, but Christians should be able to find common ground by following the practice of the early church.
- Names of human origin divide, but Christians should be able to find common ground by using biblical names for the church

# Watchwords used in the Restoration Movement

- "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."
- "The church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one."
- "In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things love."
- "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine."
- "Call Bible things by Bible names."

# Has The Work Of Restoration Been Completed In Our Time?

- Some say no: Rick Warren, Mike Cope, Rubel Shelley, F. LaGard Smith want a new hermeneutic, new worship, new doctrines; radicalizing the Restoration Movement
- Others say no: change agents among our own brethren who find mocking the old ways more effective than defending their new views
- Some say yes: Claimants that the work of restoration is complete when congregations bring their work, worship, organization, and doctrine of salvation in line with New Testament authority. They believe it is no longer necessary to consider new questions, and codify their understanding into a creedal form (28 questions)

## Reason Tells Us That The Work Of Restoration Is A Process That Does Not End

- Men often depart from God's way, even sound men - 1Cor. 9:27
- Each generation needs to be reminded of God's way, or they will begin to depart it - Deut. 6:12
- There is no such thing as standing still; we either move forward or risk drifting back - Heb. 2:1
- Each generation builds on the work of the generation before. No one man can know and do it all perfectly - 1Cor. 3:10-15



# A Truly Biblical Restoration Movement

- Josiah's Restoration (in this order)
- First, restored regular reading of God's word
  - 2Chron. 34:3 - "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images."
  - 2Kings 23:2 - "The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem-the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD."

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- Second, corrected worship; from the heart, sincere
  - 2Kings 23:3 - “Then the king stood by a pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant”
  - 2Chron. 35:18 - “There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

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- Third, corrected organization and offices
  - 2Kings 23:4-8

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- Fourth, corrected moral problems
  - 2Chron. 34:33 - “Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that belonged to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God.”
  - 2Kings 23:24 - “Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD”

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- Fifth, removed innovations
  - 2Kings 23:11-13

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- Sixth, worked on this all of his life
  - 2Chron. 34:33 - “All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.”

# A Truly Biblical Restoration Movement

- Why didn't it last?
  - It was built around one man
  - It was necessary for the whole nation to be committed from within themselves, not by borrowing another man's zeal or by being swept along with his enthusiasm

# A Truly Biblical Restoration Movement

- What are you doing to maintain the Restoration?
  - Have you ever just sat down and read the Bible out loud to yourself? If you can read, but choose not to read, you are no better off than the illiterate.
  - Prayed out loud? Pray more than once per day? Pray more than a series of memorized lines?
  - How much time do you make for God each week?



# A Truly Biblical Restoration Movement

- What is the NT church in Acts?
  - Not just the work, worship, organization, and salvation doctrines. Those are important things, but NOT the only important things
  - Sacrificing, hospitable, loving, dedicated, etc.
  - So, have we restored the NT church?

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Embraces the power of God
  - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...”
  - 1Cor. 1:18 - “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Embraces the power of God
  - 1Cor. 2:4-5 - “And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”
  - 2Cor. 13:4 - “For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Reaches out to gather in the lost
  - The whole book of Acts is filled with accounts of Christians engaged in the first and primary work of the church, gathering in the lost.
  - The bigots were cast out, and the lost Gentiles gathered in
  - The self-righteous were pushed aside to make room for the penitent
  - They were dedicated to sharing the gospel with everyone

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Uses everyone's abilities
  - In New Testament times, there weren't spectators in the Church. There were only contributors; 100 percent participation.
  - Not everyone is a preacher, elder or teacher, but everyone IS given something to do by God, and IS necessary to the success of the whole church - Eph. 4:11-16

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Provides loving support
  - Acts 2:42 - “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
  - The Church isn't a business. It's not an organization. It's not a social club. It's a family.

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Engages in joyful worship
  - Acts 2:46
  - It's a privilege, not a problem; it's a wonder, not a wake
  - Do you think if local congregations were full of people with glad hearts, words of praise, and hopeful lives, unbelievers would want to know why?
  - Do you want to worship with people who come in with sour faces, grumble their way through worship, and can't wait for the closing Amen?

# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Makes generous sacrifices
  - Acts 2:44-45
  - Acts 4:32-37
- Pursues growth endlessly
  - Acts 2:47
  - Acts 8:4



# A Truly Restored New Testament Church

- Have we developed those characteristics to the same extent that we have the work, worship, organization, and salvation doctrines in this local church?
- No? Then the Restoration Movement has not come to an end here.