

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." – Ephesians 5:23

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Is The "Restoration" Concept Biblical?

by Jim E. Waldron

Some years ago while my family and I lived in Pakistan I read an article in the *Karachi Morning News* under the title, "Hardy Seeds," which stated that chickweed seeds, believed to be about 1,500 years old, had been found in an archeological dig in Japan. The article, quoting from a report out of Mito, Japan, said the seeds sprouted after scientists planted them in a hot house.

This well illustrates that seed hundreds of years old can be planted today and produce after its own kind. Just so, those who plant the pure seed of the kingdom of Jesus Christ in our day can expect it to produce churches of Christ. The seed is the word of God: (Luke 8:11), and it was this seed that produced churches of Christ throughout the world in the first century. The restoration plea for the proclamation of the pure and unperverted gospel to our world is as urgent now as it has ever been. Yet, through skepticism, more than one preacher among the progressives over the past ten years has said, "If we restore the church, which one shall we restore? Corinth?"

Such a question implies a grave misunderstanding or misapplication of the plea to restore the one original apostolic church of Christ which is God's kingdom on planet earth (See Colossians 1:13).

The plea to restore Christ's church is a plea for the existence of the church fashioned according to the doctrine of Christ found in the New Testament. We, as heralds of God's message today, must obey the Spirit's injunction to Timothy in his day, when Paul admonished him to charge men "that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:3); and again, "hold the pattern of sound words" (II Timothy 1:13).

All over this world we must plant the good seed in the hearts of men and women, which will bring forth fruit after its own kind. This fruit – believers, born again of the water and the Spirit – will be formed into congregations according to the pattern (basic design) found in that seed.

When the concept of the restoration of God's religion among men began to be proclaimed in the British Isles and North America about two hundred years ago, such a concept was on solid Biblical ground. As far back as the eighth century before Christ, Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began a mighty effort to restore God's true worship among the Hebrews (See II Kings 18-20). Yet, after his death, the same thing had to be repeated just about sixty years later by his great-grandson, Josiah (II Kings 22-23).

Thus, a restoration movement is not an idea of recent times, nor is it a concept that is out of date. Josiah recognized that each succeeding generation must call men back to the pure message of God, even as he and his great-grandfather called men of their age to return to the true pattern of God's worship and service found in the law and the prophets (cf. Hebrews 8:5).

Observe what is written of Josiah: "Now it happened when the king heard the words of the book of the law (found lost in the temple) that he tore his clothes" (II Kings 22:11); and he said, "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book..." (II Kings 22:13). We, too, must recognize that each generation must call men to the pure message of God. Today, **right now**, there is a burning urgency for men of the closing years of the twentieth century to call for a world-wide restoration of the preaching of the pure gospel of Jesus in every country, city and village. This is not a plea to be what the church was in the fifties, or the thirties, or the nineteenth century, but a call for it to be what the apostles' doctrine said it should be in the first century. "Must we be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?" No! Never! Let ten thousand voices say, Never!

As the twenty-first century approaches, let us as men who understand the times (See I Chronicles 12:32), fast, pray, work and preach for the greatest world-wide restoration movement this earth has ever known. Now is the time to sow the good seed of the kingdom if we really want a harvest of Christians only, who will make up faithful local churches of Christ all around this globe. The pure seed, as old as the New Testament, will sprout (germinate) and produce after its own kind, as it did on Pentecost when about three thousand accepted it and were inducted into Christ's kingdom. They, as we must, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine..." (Acts 2:42). Faithful churches everywhere must begin to have their own intensive Bible training programs to train men to become elders, deacons and evangelists (2 Timothy 2:2), and to train women to teach other women (Titus 2:3-5). Too long have local churches depended on others to do the training. Such intensive training programs could be on Monday evenings, Saturday mornings or even on Sunday mornings from 8:00 - 10:00 where they would parallel the conventional Sunday school. Such classes would give an opportunity for ardent study with tests and memory work required. Second Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This passage is a part of the pattern for the church and must not continue to be neglected by the local church if we desire, not only to say, but demonstrate that the restoration plea is Biblical.

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OUR PLEA

No book but the Bible.
No creed but Christ.
No name but the divine.
No plea but the gospel.
No aim but to save.
In Christ – Unity.
In opinion – Liberty.
In all things – Charity.

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WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH CHRIST?

by Jerry Joseph

C-ONFESS HIM. Before becoming a Christian one must confess Christ (Matthew 10:32-33). But, after one becomes a Christian, the confessing of Christ must not stop. When we are asked to do that contrary to the Word of God and we respond by saying, "No, I cannot do that for I am a Christian," what are we doing? Are we confessing Christ? Are we letting others know that He is Lord and Master? Surely! As Christians we must confess Christ not just by our words but also by our way of life. We must let others see Christ in our lives (Galatians 2:20).

H-EAR HIM. In Matthew 17:5, God speaking about Christ, said, "...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Before becoming a Christian and afterwards, we must hear the words of the Lord. We must hear Him because He has all authority (Matthew 28:18). We know that He will lead us in the way that is good and right.

R-EMEMBER HIM. We need to remember Christ because of who He is, what He has done, is doing, and will do for us. From the book of I Peter, we find several reasons for remembering Jesus Christ:

- (1) He is coming again (1:7).

- (2) He is the redeemer (1:18-19).
- (3) He calls (2:9).
- (4) He suffered for us (2:21).
- (5) He is our example (2:21).
- (6) He is Savior (2:24).
- (7) He is Judge (4:5).

To remember Christ also means that we will remember His words (Acts 20:35).

I-MITATE HIM. Christ is our perfect example (1 Peter 2:21-23) and thus it behooves us to imitate Him in every way that is possible. He is our example...

- In Service (Matthew 20:28).
- In Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- In Speech (1 Peter 2:22).
- In Submission (John 5:30; 6:38).
- In Suffering (Hebrews 2:9, 10).
- In Subduing Temptation (Matthew 4:1-11).
- In Standing for Truth (Matthew 5-7).

S-ERVE HIM. In Romans 6:16-18, Paul points out that we are either serving sin or righteousness. To be servants of righteousness is to serve Christ. We must serve Christ with a **perfect heart** and **willing mind** (1 Chronicles 28:29; with **fear** and **reverence** (Hebrews 12:28); with **humility** (Acts 20:19); **heartily** (Colossians 3:23) and "...**always abounding in the work of the Lord**" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

T-EACH HIM TO OTHERS. In Acts 2, Peter preached Christ and three thousand obeyed the gospel. In Acts 5:42 the early disciples "...ceased not to teach and preach Jesus." Philip preached Christ (Acts 8:5, 12, 35). Paul preached Christ wherever he went (Acts 9:20). We must teach all men about Christ for only in Christ is there all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). We must be obedient to His will if Heaven is going to be our home (Matthew 7:21).

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CAN ONE BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN AND NOT BE A PART OF ANY CHURCH?

by Marvin Rickett

Many people pose this question. Not a few are actually trying to make their way to heaven and not be a member of any church. They wish to just live an individual, autonomous "Christian" life. They may keep the Ten Commandments, abstain from any really evil practices, donate to some good charities, be good family members and good citizens; but are no part of any church. May they by this obtain the favor of God and eternal life?

It is readily conceded that one may be a

good Christian and not be a part of any **denomination**. In fact, the Lord never authorized, nor approved of, anyone being a member of a denomination. The Lord never required that one be a member of a denomination. That is a far cry from admitting that one can be a good Christian and not be a part of **any church**. The Lord's church is not a denomination. The one who is a Christian **will be** a part of the Lord's church (Matthew 16:18). If he is not a member of the Lord's church, he is not a Christian in any sense. The Lord adds all the saved to His church (Acts 2:47). The saved are the only ones who are Christians.

Perhaps the confusion which prompts this question is caused by a misunderstanding of what the church is. Many view the church as a kind of a social club, an organization to hand out food from the pantry to anyone who asks and to pay rent and utility bills for those who get themselves into a bind. They see it as a group of fallible (even hypocritical) people whom one may voluntarily choose to associate with, or he may choose not to. They see that it makes demands of its members and places obligations on them of which they desire to be free.

They fail to see the church as the Bible pictures it: the blood-bought body of the saved (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:23), the object of Christ's love (Ephesians 5:25), a part of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:10, 11), the product of God's planning and inseparably tied into God's scheme of redemption (Ephesians 1:22, 23). The church is the Lord's doing, not a mere association of claimants who follow Christ based on human wisdom.

Since the church is that important to God, how can any man treat it as unimportant and optional? We ought to regard it as the Lord regarded it. Besides that, it is just a fact that a person needs the church. He needs the vitality and strength that comes through its worship and fellowship with people of like precious faith. Apart from the church, one's spiritual vitality will wither and die. He just will not thrive and live. Even with the faults which are invariably found in some church members, the church is still necessary for anyone who lives a Christian life. In answer to the question, "Can one be a good Christian and not be a part of any church?", the answer is **NO!** He must be a part of the church of Christ.

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MARK 16:16

by Tracy Dugger

Jesus stated to His apostles, **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:15-16). Surely these passages are among the clearest to understand in all the Bible. One of the important truths taught here is that baptism is necessary and essential for salvation. Not only is found in this verse an important truth, but a simple one. However, many misapply and attempt to dismiss the force of Jesus' words in verse 16. Jesus stated, **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."** On the other hand, the denominational world teaches, "He that believeth and is **not** baptized shall be saved." But as this statement is compared with verse 16, one can easily see that Jesus did not so teach.

One objection leveled against us when we teach from Mark 16:16 is that Jesus did not say, "He that believeth not **and is not baptized** shall be damned." When Curtis Porter met Glenn Tingley on this matter in public debate, Mr. Tingley responded to brother Porter's argument on Mark 16:16 by saying that it did *not* say, "He that believeth not and **is not** baptized shall be damned." Brother Porter countered in the following manner:

No. I know it did not. If it had, it would have been silly. Suppose that some of you teachers who have a class in school, would give your class this statement tomorrow: "He that eats food and digests it shall have health." You require the class to bring the negative of that on the following day. The next day Johnnie comes back with this: "He that eats food and digests it shall have health; but he that eats not and does **not digest** it shall starve." I wonder what kind of grade little Johnnie would get on that? ...Why that's silly – the very idea of digesting food that you haven't eaten. Let me tell you my friends, the man who has not believed can no more be scripturally baptized than a man can digest food that he has not eaten. It takes both eating the food and digesting the food to bring health; but eating no food alone will bring starvation; and you do not have to say, "And does not digest it." It takes both belief and baptism to bring the salvation; but

unbelief alone will bring the damnation; and you do not have to say, "And is not baptized." It takes both belief and baptism to bring salvation, but belief alone will bring condemnation. (Porter-Tingley Debate; Dehoff Publications; 1947, p. 269)

Brother Porter devastated the error of Mr. Tingley by using a simple parallel. He clearly demonstrated the proper understanding of the latter part of Mark 16:16.

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STOREROOMS

by Allen Webster

We all have them. A spare bedroom. An attic. A basement. A closet. A rented mini-warehouse room. A safe deposit box. A bank account. The place we keep valuables we cannot seem to do without.

Christians have another storeroom where their best treasures are kept out of sight. As Jesus commanded, "...lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20).

Look at these advantages.

IT HAS A GOOD LOCATION—IN HEAVEN. It is on "gold street" (Rev. 21:18), near the fountain of life (21:6). This storehouse is in a good section, where the beautiful mansions are (John 14:2). The neighbors are fine folk, all washed in the Lamb's blood and retired from their tribulations (Rev. 7:14).

Since we will soon be moving there, it is smart to use it for storage. Most people work very hard to fill storerooms down here. They will soon be forced to evacuate this world and embark on the journey from which they will not return (Heb. 9:27). Every penny invested in this world will be lost. Highwayman Death will at last wrench this world's wealth from sinner's fingers and fling them empty-handed and poverty-stricken out into the night. "There are no pockets in a shroud."

This world is only temporary (2 Cor. 4:18; Phil. 3:13, 14; Col. 3:2). A man may be a millionaire one day, and a pauper the next. He may own much of the earth today and be buried in it tomorrow. It is the height of folly to devote the strength of life to the gathering of treasures which

cannot be converted into the currency of the country to which we are going (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:10).

IT IS FREE FROM CORRUPTION—NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DOTHS CORRUPT. Treasures stored in heaven's storehouse never mildew, rot, spoil, or rust. No mothballs are needed. *Rust (brosis)* is used elsewhere in the New Testament for eating food (Physical and spiritual), but here alone it means corrosion which eats metal (Earle).

Here our clothes become tattered and threadbare. In heaven, our white robes will not become worn or out-of-style (cf. Rev. 3:5). Israel got a little taste of this as their clothes lasted for forty years (Deut. 8:4). Here lawn mowers, patio furniture, tools and even pickup trucks rust, but no corrosion will be found in heaven.

IT IS SECURE—THIEVES DO NOT BREAK THROUGH AND STEAL. Here we are forced to padlock, bolt, alarm, and guard our possessions. There are no thieves in heaven (1 Cor. 6:10), so there have never been any burglaries. It is the only absolutely safe place to store treasures. Fort Knox has nothing on heaven.

One out of six verses in the Gospel Records and sixteen of the Lord's thirty-eight parables are said to deal with money. Faith and prayer are mentioned some 500 times each in the Bible, but possessions are considered 1,000 times. With all this attention we should be one up on the Wall Street Investors! Let's put our treasures in a place where we can enjoy them forever.

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DOES IT MATTER?

by Maxie B. Boren

Many persons have said rather arrogantly something like this in their lives: **"I don't care what anyone thinks about me...I'm going to do and say what I want to do, regardless."** Such statements are pronouncements of selfishness, and reflect an unthinking and uncaring attitude. And oftentimes such declarations are a person's way of claiming "license" for improper conduct and gross misbehavior.

Be assured it **DOES MATTER** what others think of us...the Bible informs all that **"a good name is rather to be**

(Continued on page 4)

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chosen than great riches..."
 (Proverbs 22:1).

Now, if one should say humbly, **"I am going to do the best I can to always do what is right, regardless of what others might think or say"** ...that would be different. Such as that would simply be a verbalized resolve to do what is right as best one can at whatever the cost of popular opinion.

Every Christian should conduct his or her life in such a way as to have a "good name" (i.e., reputation) as a person of unimpeachable character and integrity, of truthfulness, honesty, and moral uprightness; one who is thoughtful of others, merciful and kind-hearted. **Our "manner of" lives should be "worthy of the gospel"** (Philippians 1:27 ASV).

Bedford, Tx.

Grandson: "Grandpa, why do you read the Bible every day?"

Grandpa: "Well, you might say I'm studying for my final exam."

Concentrate on helping others and grasp each opportunity to offer encouragement and assistance.

Focus on asking God for help in your decisions and not relying only on your own strength.

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN FORSAKES WORSHIP?

by Ted Knight

The following tragic consequences occur when a Christian deliberately forsakes the assemblies of the church:

- (1) Despite what you may tell yourself and others, your example shows that God and Christ are not first in your life.
- (2) You claim to be like Christ, but there is one way you are unlike him. He loved the church enough to die for it. You don't love it enough to sacrifice anything so that you might attend its services.
- (3) You tear down all the teaching of the new converts and become a poor example for them to follow. If they get to heaven some day, it will be in spite of you and not because of you.
- (4) You disappoint Jesus, who is present every time two or three gather in His name. He knows you aren't there, and He also knows why you are not there.
- (5) You leave no doubt in the minds of your faithful brethren that there are other things you enjoy more than worship and that there are earthly pleasures you prefer more than Christian fellowship.
- (6) You weaken your soul, put yourself on the side of Satan, hurt the church, discourage the preaching of the Word, and make it impossible to teach your children and neighbors how important the church is.
- (7) You disobey a plain command of God: "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together..." (Heb. 10:25). Can your neighbors willfully disobey the command to be baptized and be saved? If not, by what rule of logic can you willfully disobey the command to assemble and still expect to be saved?

Conway, AR

It is good to be a Christian and know it; it is even better to be a Christian and show it.

Do not pray for an easy life; pray to be a stronger person.

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GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (1 Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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