

HISTORY OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN NORTH AMERICA

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- I. The philosophical background and principles which embodies the “Restoration Movement” in North America is based upon the prayer of Jesus found in John 17:21.
 - A. This was a prayer offered by the Lord Jesus Christ shortly before His crucifixion.
 - B. The concerns of Jesus in this prayer should be carefully understood and interpreted within its proper background and context.
 1. In the “High Priestly Prayer” of Jesus during the “Upper Room Discourse” when He prayed to His Father and said: “...*that they all may be one...*” in John 17:21, His “prayer of petition” was asking for unity and love between Himself, His disciples, and His would-be followers; “NOT” denominational Churches with different religious practices and beliefs!
- II. Central ideas regarding the “prayer of petition” made by Jesus in John 17:12-21 are as follows:
 - A. “TRUTH” (John 17:17) “*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*”
 1. The unadulterated, uncompromising, and unchanging Word of God is revealed truth.
 2. One of the goals of the Restoration Movement was for the Church in North America to return to the practices and principles of New Testament worship and ways of doing things.
 3. Alexander Campbell published a series of essays entitled: “*The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.*”
 - B. “UNITY” (John 17:21) “...*that they all may be one...*”
 1. There is but “one” Church found in the New Testament Scripture and Jesus Christ is the “only” Head of the “one” New Testament Church.
 2. Based upon the marriage metaphor and symbolism provided in the New Testament Scripture, the Lord Jesus has but “one Bride” and this “one Bride” is the New Testament Church of Christ. Jesus who is the “Bridegroom” has purchased and sacrificially indemnified the New Testament Church to be His “one” and only “Bride” (Ephesians 5:25-27).
 3. Another goal of the Restoration Movement in North America was to promote Christian unity. However, those who promote a “unity in diversity” concept such as Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, and several others, argue that we ought to seek to have unity among “all” denominations while we retain our doctrinal differences. This is “NOT” the unity for which Jesus prayed and it certainly is “NOT” the idea of unity taught in the New Testament.
 4. Biblical “unity of faith” encapsulates the “oneness of belief” based upon what the Word of God authorizes. New Testament Christianity for the New Testament Church of Christ only acknowledges “one body,” “one Lord,” “one faith,” “one baptism” and just “one Church” (Ephesians 4:4; cf. 1:22-23); rendering the multiplicity of “religious faiths” and Churches we see today as being unscriptural. The Bible “NEVER” speaks of “unity in diversity” in the sense of “interdenominational fellowship.”
 - C. REMOVING DENOMINATIONAL BARRIERS – Those who promote the Restoration Movement philosophy for the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Independent Christian Churches, and the Church of Christ, desire to eliminate “all denominational barriers” and promote the

ideology of “ecumenism.” The fundamental concept of the Restoration Movement is to unite people of widely divergent beliefs by encouraging them to “agree to disagree.” This is “pseudo-fellowship” thinking that people can share in something they truly do not share.

III. Unity and truth must be in coalition rather than in confliction:

1. The ultimate goal of the Restoration Movement is to embrace “all religious beliefs” and ideas in an effort to bring people together as a united group. This premise is “NOT” what the Bible teaches. The Restoration Movement consisting of the Independent Christian Church, the Christian Church, and the Disciples of Christ, desires to ignore biblical “truth” for the sake of what they define as being “unity.”
2. The idea that balances tension between “unity” and “truth” among New Testament Christians in the New Testament Church of Christ is teaching and preaching “sound doctrine.” The Lord’s Church can “never” find itself guilty of sacrificing “truth” based on a false motif of “unity.”
3. The Restoration Movement and its advocates, postulate the credo that there are Christians in “all Churches” and not simply the New Testament Church of Christ.
4. The doctrine of “unity” and “truth” among members of the New Testament Church of Christ was emphasized in virtually all of the writings to the early Christians. If that “unity” and “truth” or “oneness” had been maintained, denominationalism would have been impossible. If the Lord Jesus Christ had desired a plethora of Churches, why did He stop with building “ONE” Church?
5. Members of the New Testament Church of Christ are taught to “*walk by the same rule and mind the same thing*” (Philippians 3:16). Members of denominational Churches such as the Independent Christian Churches are taught to walk by different rules and to mind different things. If to “*walk by the same rule and mind the same thing*” is God’s divine order for the New Testament Church of Christ and New Testament Christians, then to “walk by different rules and to mind different things” is “NOT” God’s order. Obviously, denominationalism is at variance with what the New Testament teaches.

IV. Many of the early Restoration Movement preachers were baptized into denominational Churches and some were never baptized at all.

- A. The Bible clearly says “...he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16). On the day of Pentecost, Peter said “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*” (Acts 2:38). The Ethiopian eunuch said to Philip, “...*See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized...*” (Acts 8:36-38). The case of the Philippian jailor and his house: “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway” (Acts 16:33). It is evident from the Scripture that baptism is essential for salvation.
 1. The historical record states that James O’Kelly did not believe baptism by immersion was necessary and that sprinkling would suffice. He was never immersed.
 2. “Raccoon” John Smith was baptized into the Baptist faith.
 3. Abner Jones was baptized into the Baptist faith.
 4. Elias Smith was baptized into the Baptist faith.
 5. Isaac Errett was baptized into the Church of Christ.

6. Barton Warren Stone was baptized (christened) into the Church of England.
7. Alexander Campbell was baptized by a Baptist preacher (did not accept the Baptist creed).
8. Thomas Campbell was baptized by a Baptist preacher (still retained his Presbyterian beliefs).
9. Jacob Creath, Sr., was baptized into the Baptist faith.
10. Jacob Creath, Jr., was baptized into the Baptist faith.
11. Walter Scott was baptized by an itinerant Haldanes Scottish Baptist preacher.
12. David Lipscomb was baptized into the Church of Christ.
13. Moses E. Lard was baptized by a former Methodist preacher.

V. Background Influences of the Restoration Movement's Development.

- A. The Restoration Movement was greatly influenced by many factors such as the Reformation, the philosophy of John Locke, the period of European Enlightenment, in addition to the American frontier. Locke's theory of knowledge gave rise to the philosophy of religion which had a major effect on Alexander Campbell and the development of the Restoration Movement. Locke defined the Church as a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord in order to publicly worship God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls.
- B. American Primitivism
 1. As the eighteenth-century American colonists sought to establish a new nation, they searched ancient Greek and Roman models in an attempt to establish and form a perfect government.
 2. The idea of getting back to the primitive models influenced religious thought in America.
 3. Many religious groups formed with the expressed idea of getting back to the New Testament model of Christianity.
 4. The Restoration Movement was among these primitive religious groups seeking to coalesce all religious groups into "one body of believers." Today, this concept is known as "ecumenism" which is anti-biblical, extra-biblical, and foreign to the Word of God.
- C. American Religious Pluralism.
 1. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution insured that America would not have an "established" national Church. This provided the Restoration Movement with a "free market" of belief. Consequently, the Restoration Movement would develop within this context.
 2. Three branches of Restoration Movement Churches (Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, and Independent Christian Church) advocate there are "Christians in other Churches" so long as these individuals have confessed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God and have been baptized.
 3. However, this false ideology is "NOT" what the New Testament teaches. Individuals who equate the New Testament Church of Christ (the visible kingdom) with the Universal Church (the heavenly kingdom) view those who believe there are Christians outside the body of Christ as sectarians. The New Testament Church of Christ is not a denomination; it consists of all who are saved. For anyone to purport there are Christians in other religious groups is to endorse division, denominationalism and sectarianism. By a New Testament definition, there can be no Christians outside of the New Testament Church of Christ.