

The Change Movement & the Churches of Christ

II Peter 1: 2-3 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, **3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also

The history of man shows we humans soon depart from God's way. Adam and Eve departed and lost paradise and the tree of life. Cain departed by killing Abel. The whole earth departed bringing on the flood. The descendants of Noah soon built the tower of Babel in departing from God and universally man rapidly fell into idolatry cf: Romans 1:18ff.

Abraham was called of God and was willing to walk in God's way, Isaac remained faithful and Jacob became faithful after fleeing his brother.

Moses was willing to walk in God's way. After being faithful for a short period of time under Joshua, Israel fell away during the Judges and remained mostly idolatrous and wicked during their entire history. God raised them up prophets and they persecuted and killed them.

Finally God sent forth His Son saying surely: "they will reverence My Son." Matthew 21:33ff Him they slew and hanged upon a tree but God raised Him up and established His Church just exactly like He wanted it established. The Church is the "manifold wisdom of God" cf: Eph. 3:10 and God's "eternal purpose" cf Eph 3:11 this is God's plan from before the foundation of the world cf Eph 1:4ff.

II Timothy 3:14-4:5 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned [them]; **15** And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16** All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness:17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. II Timothy 4:1-5 I charge [thee] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

The first departure in the history of the church was how Churches were governed. The prophet Daniel said the Kingdom of God or the Churches of Christ which God would set up during the days of the Roman Empire would “break into pieces” showing self-ruling autonomous congregational government was God’s perfect plan for the Church (His People) cf:

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Autonomous congregational government was God’s way to limit the power of any man, group of men, or any congregation.

Scripture teaches that a congregation is under the everyday supervision of the evangelist

Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee

This is only until a plurality of fully qualified elders or bishops are “ordained” to have the oversight of the local congregations, again limiting the power of any man or group of men. Which we have tried our best to do here at this “Mission Point” ... for we are an inner-city congregation w/o qualified Christian family men for the eldership ...

Acts 20:28-30 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

I Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

By 150 AD men began to designate one man as the bishop and he was appointed over an area of several congregations called a diocese. Slowly this became a pyramid form of church government foreign to the Scriptures. In order to pervert a pyramid form of government, you need only pervert the head man.

We see the same phenomenon in today's "change movement" within the Churches of Christ. A highly affluent group from our Colleges and Universities are leaving the principles of the Restoration Movement ... for cause because of the fire breathers and Pharisees in order to be like all the nations round about them ... but they haven't got us all yet.

Constantine ended the last great persecution in 312 AD with the edict of Milan. Shortly he called and presided over a Church council at Nicea (ni-CEE-ah) in 325AD. Bishops then adopted the first man-made creed called the Nicene Creed.

We date the Catholic Church to 606AD when Boniface III took the title of Pope (*papa* Latin or *pappas* Greek = father) or Universal Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church. This is a title that no apostle dared to take upon himself. Instead Christ alone is the head of the Body, the Church, cf:

Colossians 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

The Roman Church teaches that Peter was the first pope and cite cf:

Matthew 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 16:17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Let's understand V:18 "... thou art Peter = petros feminine gender Greek word meaning a little stone or pebble. "and upon this rock = petra masculine gender Greek word meaning bed rock. The Church was not built upon Peter but Rather upon the bedrock good confession that Jesus " ... art the Christ the Son of the Living God." Peter was human he made mistakes as all men do ... Paul rebuked him to his face Galatians 2:11ff. Peter refused worship and confessed that he was just a man also Acts 10:25ff. Peter was no pope and no other man claimed such glory to himself for almost six hundred years.

Shortly Rome made man-made laws that Latin was to be the only language of the scriptures. Man is commanded to study the Bible cf:

II Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Slowly over time they began to change every truth of God into the "ideas and improvements" of men. Just think it takes just as much power to change a law, rule, regulation or practice of the Church as it took to enact the law, rule, regulation or practice of the Church. Who

enacted the first rules of faith found in scripture? God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the apostles and prophets. Who changed them? Men. Rome teaches a doctrine of a separate priesthood to perform the sacraments, instead the bible teaches all men are priests to God and the Bible knows nothing about the man-made word sacraments cf:

I Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches a bishop “must be” (greek dei from *de-hon* emphatic “must be” NOT SHOULD OUGHTA BE but “must be”) the husband of one wife, show me a Roman Catholic Bishop that is married cf:

I Timothy 3:1-4 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

Then the scripture tells us the common sense reason why:

I Timothy 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?). Cf: Titus 1:5-8;

Colossians 1:18 And he (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (first place).

The scriptures teach about antichrist cf:

1John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Gnosticism was the first heresy that fit this description.

Greek Catholic or Greek Orthodox split from Roman Catholic Church in 1054 AD. They kept most of the man-made doctrines of Rome excepting: They have: No Popes, Priests may be married and they have a cappella singing without musical instruments.

Pro-test-ant Re-formation

1384 John Wycliffe produced hand written translations of the bible into common English based upon Jerome's' Latin Vulgate translation. He died a natural death, but 44 years later the Catholic Pope Martin V had Wycliffe's bones dug up and burned and then scattered over the river Swift.

Lutheran Church 1530 AD Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic priest and he nailed his 96 theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg Germany showing where they conflict with scripture. Luther was especially opposed to the sale of indulgences, but, being educated by the Roman Catholics, he kept much of the Roman tradition in his new religion. If you read Luther's Augsburg confession ...

The Church of England began in 1534 AD under King Henry VIII. In 1540 he chained a copy of his bible to the pulpit in every Church in England. They kept catechisms and most of the pomp and ceremony of the Roman Catholic Church.

Presbyterian Church began under John Calvin in 1536 AD

1525-1536 William Tyndale produced an English New Testament. He used Greek, Hebrew, and Jerome's Latin Vulgate for his translation. The Catholics bought up most of Tyndale's first editions and burned them. Men who begin by burning books will end up by burning men. Tyndale used the proceeds from the Catholics for his first edition to finance the printing of his second edition in which he printed ten times as many bibles. Tyndale was hunted by the Catholics and strangled and burned at the stake in 1536. He told the Bishop" "I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the scripture than thou doest."

1535 Myles Coverdale came out with the first printed bible.

1537 Thomas Matthew & John Rogers completed a revision of Tyndale's earlier translation.

In 1539, Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. His first book was a two-volume Latin bible.

In 1560 the Geneva bible was published. It was a revision of the Great bible of 1539. It was written against Catholics by the reformers exiled in Geneva. It was the first bible to be written in printed verse. It was popular among the Puritans in the United States.

1568 the Bishops bible was a translation by scholarly bishops.

1611 The King James translation was published. It is also known as the Authorized Version. This is the most beautiful translation and is well known for its cadence and poetic style.

Baptist 1611 AD began in opposition to the Church of England.

Methodist 1739 AD John Westley began the Methodist Church.

Episcopalian church came out of the Church of England in 1739 AD

There are the American-born and invented religions such as:

Mormonism - In 1830 Joseph Smith led a pioneer movement to Utah, & established the Mormon church. He claimed to have found golden tablets that the angel "Mormoni" translated for him ... We can prove this to be false ... because there are over 500 direct quotes of the King James translation of the bible. We can prove they are quotes of the KJV because Smith didn't have sense enough to remove the italicized words. Italicized words in the KJV translation are words that the translators used to help the sentence make sense.

The Mormons have long held that blacks & other races are soulless beings, created on the 6th day.

1844 Seventh Day Adventists came out of the Miller-ite movement, in which the false prophet Miller prophesied that Jesus would return to earth in 1844, according to the 2300 days of Daniel's prophecy, figuring a day equals a year and using 457BC as the starting date. When the Lord did not return in 1844 they fragmented into several groups: the Seventh Day Adventists, whose beliefs are based upon writings Ellen G. White, worship according to Jewish ceremonial law.

Christian Scientists beliefs are based upon the writings of Mary Eddie Baker. They have established prayer rooms in which they seek God's healing, and forbid medical attention.

Jehovah Witnesses beliefs are based upon the writings Charles Taze Russell. This group, like the Miller-ites, set a date that the Lord would return in 1914. They still believe that He secretly returned in 1914, but nobody could see Him. They have their own translation of the Bible, in which they translate all of the various Old Testament Hebrew words for "God and Lord" "El, Elohim, Yhovah, & YHWH" as "Lord", which is dishonest.

Scientology is based upon the teachings of L. Ron Hubbard in which some believe God is a space man.

Restoration Movement

We all understand the meaning of restoration.

Isaiah 62:1-2 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. 2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.

Act 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Act 11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Act 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Romans 16:16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

To restore is to place back in the original condition. Some like to restore antique automobiles back to their pristine condition. Others restore antique furniture. There are technicians who restore old oil

paintings. The whole idea of restoration is to duplicate the original. To bring it back to life. There would be no need of restoration if there had not been some type of corruption from the original state.

Jer 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Suppose the game of baseball completely vanished from the earth. Then a couple of thousand years from now, someone discovered the rule book of baseball and began to read and study the game. He shares his discovery with others and following the rules of baseball they begin to play baseball. Have they established a new game? No, they simply have restored the old game of baseball.

When one begins to practice the New Testament teaching they have not established a new denomination, we simply have become what they became in the beginning when they believed the word, were baptized into Christ, and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:38-47.

Therefore, the Restoration Movement seeks to restore the original Church and the unification of all Christians in obedience to the Lord who prayed we would be one cf:

John 17:20-23 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

It is division and the love of money that has made people disinterested in hearing about God and Christianity. Paul appealed for unity when the idea of denominations first began.

I Corinthians 1:10-12 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the

same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Restore the Church united in a single body cf:

Ephesians 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 4:3-6 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Patterned After New Testament Church

We are neither Protestants, Catholics, nor Jews, but Christians only cf:

Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

The Restoration Movement developed from several different efforts to return to apostolic Christianity. During Middle Ages dissenters such as John Wycliffe & John Huss called for restoration of a primitive form of Christianity. At the heart of the Reformation was emphasis on “scripture alone” (*sola scriptura*). English Puritans who came here on the Mayflower also sought to restore a pure “primitive” church community.

Right after the American Revolution men from various backgrounds began to see the need to reject human creeds and the doctrines and traditions of men for the scriptures alone. In 1801 Barton W Stone (Presbyterian) began preaching restoration Christianity at Cane Ridge, KY and his group followed the New Testament and called themselves simply Christians cf:

I Pet 4:16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Another group began in 1809 in Penn. & W Virginia & were led by Thomas Campbell & his son Alexander (Presbyterians). They called themselves disciples of Christ. James O'Kelly (Methodist) in 1794 and Elias Smith and Abner Jones (Baptists) in 1804 led similar groups. These groups believed that the creeds of men kept Christianity divided. These groups sought to restore the whole Churches of Christ on the pattern set forth in the New Testament,

II Peter 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

A great principle of the restoration movement is the silence of scripture. We understand God often speaks with silence, therefore, Campbell said: "We speak where the Bible speaks & are silent where the Bible is silent." An example of how the Bible teaches by silence is cf:

Hebrews 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Martin Luther insisted he could do anything the scriptures did not forbid. Ulrich Zwingli said he could only do what the scriptures authorized. It has to do with how you believe God ... Did Jesus keep His promises to the apostles? Cf:

John 16:12-13 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Did the Spirit guide them into all truth or not?

Therefore the affirmation that the Bible is the full and final revelation of God to man on earth must be the next step of our reasoning.

The Bible plainly teaches do not add to the Word of God nor take away from the Word of God.

Just because a man sees nothing wrong with a belief or an act, does not mean that God approves of it. Cf:

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Colossians 2:20:23 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

NIV verse 23 “Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility ...”

NAS verse 23 “These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion ...”

I Corinthians 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

I Peter 4:11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen

One is astonished at how men presume the right to speak and act on their own initiative and they do what neither the Lord Jesus nor the Holy Spirit ever dared to do. We see them inventing and adding strange forms of worship, recasting the organization of the church, assuring people of alternative ways of obeying the gospel, and ignoring the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. Cf:

II Timothy 2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Notice Paul first generation, Timothy second generation, was expected to convey the same to “faithful men” third generation, who could then yet teach others fourth generation, the same things. Paul was not allowing for a postmodern “Change Movement” message adapting to the changing times.

We must never presume the right to act or speak in the hushed silence of God.

Respect for the silence of scripture made our forefathers refuse instrumental music in worship and they chose to not create a national organization to manage the mission work of the church.

In 1832 the Stone/Campbell Movement joined in fellowship with a handshake. There was great belief and agreement concerning congregational autonomy that each local congregation could govern itself. And that a plurality of biblically qualified elders should be appointed leaders and shepherds in local congregations. We are united in the belief that:

Jesus is The Christ, the Son of God Matthew 16:16ff

That Christians should celebrate the Lords Supper on the first day of the week cf:

Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

That immersion in water is an essential for salvation, (“essential” is a Bad Word Not Found in Scripture, Do Not Add to the Word of God). What’s wrong with letting God do all the judging?

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 6:3-6 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried

with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There are calls in the N. T. for personal and congregational repentance and restoration for those who have erred from the truth. Gal 6:1 & James 5:19ff an example of this is our Lord's word's to the Church at Ephesus cf:

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Quoted freely and paraphrased from: KJV Bible etal, Dates Wikipedia, from Jule Miller, The Spiritual Sword vol. 42 # 4