

Romans 14:19 - ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace & the things by which one may edify another

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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Meeting Times:

Sunday Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:20 am
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 pm
Wednesday Bible Classes	7:00 pm

Where Have We Been and Where are We Going?

by *Wallace Alexander, via The Sower*

As early as the 14th century there arose dissatisfaction within the Roman church over the authoritarian policies of the church. Early reformers sought to work from within to correct moral and spiritual abuses that had caused the church to be described as morally bankrupt.

Later a number of men came on the scene who realized the impossibility of reform from the inside and thus made a break from the Roman church with the intense desire to correct the abuses and departures from the Scriptures. Likewise many of those attempting real reform from within were forced out and treated as heretics.

Martin Luther in Germany became one of the best known reformers when in 1517 he opposed the sale of indulgences, courageously nailing his "Ninety-Five Theses" to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany, and offering to debate anyone who differed with him on the matter. Using newly invented printing technology, he was able to make more widely known his opposition to Rome and give a major boost to reformation.

Opposition to Rome spread through Germany, Switzerland, and England -- indeed, into most of Europe. The various personalities involved, while united in opposition to Rome, had many divergent views on varied doctrinal issues. The efforts eventually resulted in denominationalism, with the divisions coming from the varying doctrines of the reformers and their followers. Denominationalism spread in Europe and then made its way to America as divergent views were brought to the new world.

Eventually from within denominationalism a number of men independently became dissatisfied with the divided state of religion and became interested, not in reformation, but in restoration by an exaltation of the Bible. James O'Kelly of the Episcopal Church and later the Methodist; Abner Jones and John Wright from the Baptists; Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell from the Presbyterians were among the first to see a need of returning to the New Testament pattern. At a meeting of sincere people

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desiring to eliminate sectarianism, Thomas suggested following the principle of "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

The result of such a policy was not immediately apparent. Long-held and cherished beliefs had to be discarded. But a great plan for unity was begun. Alexander Campbell came on the scene and, independent of his father, Thomas, had reached many of the same conclusions in his quest for unity. Many other great men of the later restoration movement continued and enhanced the work of the earlier restorationists' suggested following of the principle, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."

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With the goal of "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent," there gradually evolved a people determined to let the Bible be their guide and to do Bible things in Bible ways. They were variously called disciples or Christians or, by those who opposed the movement, "Campbellites."

Biblical teaching concerning the church, salvation, organization of the church, and the basics of the work and worship of the church were restored in the 18th and 19th centuries as those truths were taught and practiced in the first century.

Sadly, the restorationists experienced division in the 19th century primarily because of the introduction of instrumental music in worship and creation of the missionary society. The divisions ultimately resulted in "Disciples of Christ" who have hence evolved back toward denominationalism, the "Christian Churches" who remain relatively conservative while maintaining

the instrument in worship, and "Churches of Christ" rejecting the instrument in worship and seeking to keep the complete autonomy of each local congregation.

Again, sadly, the twentieth century saw divisions and polarizations within churches of Christ, while there remained the desire to "speak where the Bible speaks." Even though there was respect from the Scriptures, unanimity did not (and does not) exist concerning what the Scriptures said. Jesus' prayer for unity remains only a distant goal. But reaching that goal should be a paramount desire and aim.

Every Christian should become familiar with the history of the church and the trials the saints through the ages endured in their quest for unity based on the Scriptures. And as the church looks to the future, it should be a matter of concern to observe the direction the church is going.

The restoration principle was based on "back to the Bible." The church became unique, not just to be different, but because the guiding Authority led them to reject many traditions, false doctrines, and assumed authority of the denominational world. It was unique because of a Biblical hermeneutic that led the restorationists to see a pattern in the Bible of what the church should be. And with the Bible ever before them, they sought to be guided by its principles.

Without question, the church continues to change, to evolve. And as that evolution occurs, the question should be asked whether the changes are occurring because of a desire to be more like the New Testament pattern or a desire to be more like the denominational world around them. It is a matter of concern when hearing of some of the preaching now coming from pulpits of the church. This writer recently heard a Sunday morning discourse from the pulpit on personal financial management (No, it was not about covetousness, but about how to spend and invest your money!). So many lessons are being presented across the brotherhood that would be just as appropriate in some denomination across the street. And such pablum will not ensure the doctrinal and moral purity of the church.

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How long has it been, Brother Preacher, since you preached on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, on a hermeneutic that sees the New Testament to be a pattern for the church today, on the restoration principle, on the vicarious death of Jesus, on the necessity of repentance and baptism for salvation, on the government of the church with the roles of elders, deacons, and evangelists, on qualities of genuine spiritual worship of God, on why instrumental music is not used, on heaven and hell, on male leadership in the church, on what it means to be saved by grace through faith, and on the moral principles that will lead God's people to be pure, holy and distinct from a society that increasingly accepts the sinfulness of a godless world? How long has it been since you "preached unto them Jesus" as did Philip?

When preachers and teachers fail to deal with the great doctrinal themes that make the church distinctive, the church will gravitate toward the divided denominationalism that the great scholars of the restoration sought to avoid. That distinctiveness is important only in that it indicates an adherence to a Biblical pattern and that it indicates a "speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where the Bible is silent."

Paul's commission to Timothy is no less needed now than when the great apostle delivered it from his jail cell in Rome just before his martyrdom: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long- suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts;..." (2 Tim. 4:1- 3).

"WOULD YOU STUDY THE BIBLE . . . IF"

by Paul Johnson

William McPherson had a charge of dynamite go off in his face. He lost his eyes and the feeling in parts of his

face. He realized how much the Bible meant to him, and he needed its strength greatly. He could not read it in Braille because of his artificial hands. He tried to place his lips on the dots but they were numb. He found that he could use his tongue to decipher the Moon Type system of dashes. The metal left his lips and tongue bleeding and very sore, but he prayed to God to help him to continue to learn just one letter of the alphabet. In the 65 years that followed he read the Bible through four times with his tongue.

Would I study the Bible if the same thing happened to me that happened to Mr. McPherson? Would I have the desire, the intense desire, to know God's will that I would go through what he did to learn? I wonder if I would not rather have decided, "I can't ever read the Bible again."

Would I study the Bible if I had to get up an hour earlier each day to work it into my busy (?) schedule? Or miss my favorite TV program if, at that hour, I remembered I hadn't studied my Bible for the day . . . and wouldn't have time afterwards?

Would I study the Bible (I wish I hadn't heard of that McPherson fellow) if I didn't feel just right or if I had had a hard day at work or if I was just too tired? (I wonder how that fellow learned to read with his tongue?) Or, would I study even though I was a slow reader, and it took me all day just to read one or two chapters?

Would I study the Bible on occasions when the saints were assembled (Sunday morning, Wednesday night, etc.) if I had to go without supper till after services or walk or drive several blocks to get there?

How many "ifs" keep you from studying the Bible? Is this matter of no importance to you at all? If it is, then do something about it. That McPherson fellow – I guess his example will haunt me the rest of my life.

From the *Weekly Messenger, Westlake church of Christ*

Rev. 2:10 *Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*

In order to do this, we must do this!

Matt. 16:24 *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

News & Notes

by Jim Stauffer

Eph. 2:19-21 *“So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.”*

Psalms 1:1-6 *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; but his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the*

righteous. For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.”

Please remember to pray for and visit the sick, **Jan Patrick, Terry Czirr, Candiss Cason,** and **Jean Darnall,** the mother of **Ann Hurd.**

Matt. 25:40 *“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.”*

Our lives will truly be enriched and our souls will be secured by remembering and applying the lessons of the meeting bro. Dempsey Collins just conducted for us.

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been *“justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 3:24).

As a result of this justification we have been *“delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins”* (Colossians 1:13-14).

We therefore respect the inspired Word of God that will

completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11).

EVANGELIST & EDITOR:
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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

- **HEAR** the gospel, Romans 10:17
- **BELIEVE** in Jesus Christ, Hebrews 11:6
- **REPENT** of sin, Acts 17:30
- **CONFESS** Christ as Lord, Romans 10:9-10
- **BE BAPTIZED** for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38

