

You Need to be a Part of Restoring the New Testament Church

The Church

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus promised, I will build My church. When Jesus said, I will build, He used the future tense. So, it is safe to conclude that the church was not then in existence. It is only on the first Pentecost after His ascension that the church is spoken of as being in existence, Acts 2:47 says, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved(K.J). In case there is any question about the word church in this verse, take note, the same group of people are spoken of unequivocally as the church in Acts 4:32 and Acts 5:11. So from Pentecost (AD 33) the church was established and the pages of the New Testament are full of fascinating information about it.

The Importance of the Church

The idea of church has fallen into disrepute these days. Little fellowships are springing up everywhere, but they are not even calling themselves a church because they want to dissociate themselves from any formal notion of church. I know this is a reaction, in part, to the established churches with their cold ritualism and human traditions.

But we must never forget that the true church was designed, in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:11 says, This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus purchased the church by with His own blood (see Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23). Since the church cost the life of the Son of God it is of infinite value to God Almighty. The church, and Christ, are inseparable. He is the head of the body (Eph. 1:22-23; Col.1:18-24). The church is His bride, the fullness of Him who fills all in all (Eph. 5:22-32). All the saved are in the church (Acts 2:47). Christians (?) are making a mistake in rejecting the revelation of the church in the New Testament.

But, you say, the established churches are not the New Testament church. Quite right, they are not! So obviously what we desperately need is a restoration of the New Testament church of Christ. Is it possible to restore the church, as God wants it? Yes, it is! From the numerous references to the church in the New Testament we can learn about its doctrine, organisation and worship. We can restore God's church, for God's glory.

Back to the Original Doctrine of the Church

Jesus said to His disciples, But when he the Spirit of truth is come He will guide you into all truth (Jn.14:26). The word of Christ did not fail because before the last apostle died the faith was one for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). This faith is preserved for us in the New Testament. These writings are Inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). They contain everything pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet.1:3). This gospel is sacrosanct, tampering with it will bring one under a curse, but even though we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you let him be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). These writings alone constitute the apostles' teaching Acts 2:42. To restore the church we will have to confine ourselves to the teachings of the Bible, specifically the teachings of the New Testament.

Back to the Original Organization of the Church

There is no mention in Holy Scripture of the early church having a headquarters, a hierarchy, or a human head. What is recorded is that the apostles organized independent local congregations all over the world.

The Book of Acts, chapters 13 and 14, shows us how Paul and Barnabas established churches of Christ in almost every city they visited. After preaching in Derbe (the last outpost of their first missionary journey), they then revisited all these churches, and appointed elders (bishops) in every church (Acts14:23). These men had to have specific qualifications to be appointed. One of which was a bishop must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God)?ä (1Timothy 3:4-5). God stipulated marriage as a qualification for bishops. To restore the church of Christ, we must again have married bishops. Alongside bishops, deacons were appointed. These deacons were servants of the church. They were not clergy in the modern sense because every Christian was a priest (1 Pet.2:9). Properly qualified deacons are part of the organizational structure of the New Testament church (1Tim. 3:8-13). "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi including the bishops and deacons" (Phil.1:1), as you can see churches in ancient times followed this pattern.

To restore the church of Christ as it was, we must return to independent local congregations, governed by bishops with the help of deacons.

Back to the Original Worship of the Church

In the days of the apostles each assembly met on Sunday. "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart

the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight" (Acts 20:17). Breaking bread was not a sacrifice but was simply a memorial of Christ's death. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes (1Cor.11:26). It should not escape your notice that each member partook of both the bread and the fruit of the vine. Other important aspects of worship in the early days were singing, "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph.5:19). Prayer, this has always been an undisputed part of service to God (Acts 2:42). The saints made freewill offerings every first day of the week (1Cor.16:1-2). The preaching of the word of God has also been a part of worship from the beginning (Acts 20:7).

So when the early church worshipped, they met on Sunday to celebrate the Lord's supper; they sang hymns together, prayed together, gave of their means and were instructed out of God's holy Word. It is all so simple, so easy; how do so many get it wrong?

The Importance of Restoring the New Testament Church

The church of Christ is not some new sect born in the 20th century. It is the church, which Jesus promised to build. Peter and Paul were members of this church.

Designed to show the manifold wisdom of God to the world, the church must be as God planned it in doctrine, organisation and worship (Eph.3:10-11). By having it this way we honour God's infinite wisdom, and secure man's salvation. This is such an important work; you should feel a moral obligation to play a part in it!

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