

“Restoring the New Testament Church”

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A brief look at five reasons why we must “restore the New Testament church” will help establish the timeliness of this year’s theme for the annual lectureship at Getwell.

Reason number one: *The churches of Christ are being swept into erroneous religious practices.* For example, a local preacher for an 800 member congregation publicly argues that the preacher is not in error that refers to himself or allows himself to be referred to as “Reverend” (cf. Ps. 111:9; Mt. 23:8-12). Also, two local congregations participated with five denominational churches in worship during the so-called “National Day of Prayer” in May and those who plead with them not to participate before and after the event took place were censured. A Bible study of the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2 and 3 reveals Christ pleading with his church to “hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Erroneous practices emerged early on that needed to stop or the churches would lose their identity as followers of Christ.

Reason number two: *The Christian Church is making a push to absorb liberal churches of Christ into its membership.* Earlier this year the North American Christian Convention, a gathering of Christian Churches that use the instrument of music in their worship, met in Louisville, Kentucky for its annual conference and drew 1,000 members of the churches of Christ into this convocation. A Bible exchange between them was intended to admit some level of fellowship between the two groups. Compromising with those in error is not the best option; returning to Bible teaching is.

Reason number three: *A dearth of evangelistic zeal has thwarted the growth of the kingdom.* The realization of social programs taking the place of Bible teaching and preaching rules the day. The longing for being servants of Christ by serving others has been replaced with the “what-does-this-congregation-have-to-offer-me-socially” approach. When the church at Ephesus grew more and more like this the Lord urged repentance and returning to the “first works” or restoring the church to its initial evangelistic zeal (Rev. 2:5).

Not only can it be done (Dan. 2:44; Mt. 16:18-19), it must be done (Mk. 8:38; Eph. 3:21).

Reason number four: *Older, well-grounded members are going on to their reward.* Many of the younger generation are unwilling to serve as preachers, elders, deacons, and teachers. The influence of current religious thinking has adversely impacted a great deal of younger Christians so that they are unskilled in the proper place and presentation of the fundamentals of the faith (Mt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:14-15; II Tim. 2:2).

Reason number five: *Competition for the precious time families have together today causes the lower priority of placement of the kingdom of heaven to be exposed.* Jesus wants first place and will not settle for any other place (Mt. 6:33; Gal. 2:20).

Five reasons briefly have been suggested that point to the overwhelming need to restore the New Testament church today. Not only can it be done (Dan. 2:44; Mt. 16:18-19), it must be done (Mk. 8:38; Eph. 3:21). The lectureship October 15-19, 2006, can be of immense value to every right thinking person who loves the Lord (Isa. 1:18).