

Post-Restorationism?

By James Baird

Thousands of us have believed the most biblical, common-sense approach to Christianity is restoration, i.e. a current restoration of the church as revealed from the mind of God in the New Testament. However, we are now facing charges which can best be labeled "post-restorationism." The salvos come from a wide variety of sources and include: (1) The hermeneutics of restoration is fundamentally flawed. (2) Restoration is too divisive, separating the church from the denominational world in an ecumenically minded age. (3) Restoration is much too simplistic, not leading to serious scholarship. (4) Restoration is too provincial, lacking the internal machinery for world-wide evangelism or the training of preachers. (5) Restoration originally spoke to the religious culture of its day, but history brings change and today restoration is no longer the best ideal. It is time to change.

Post-restorationism has some appeal but should be whole-heartedly rejected. When we buy into it, we turn our backs on certain convictions which are fun-

damental including the following: (1) The Bible is a complete and authoritative revelation of the will of God. (2) The reality of the church has existed in the mind of God from all eternity (**Eph. 3:10**). He purposed that the church be the pillar and ground of the truth (**1 Tim. 3:15**), make known his wisdom (**Eph. 3:10**), and bring glory to him (**Eph. 3:21**). (3) The New Testament reveals terms of entrance into the church, its work, worship, organization and the Christ-like life God desires his people to live. (4) By following the Bible's teaching the church which God purposed can exist today.

These convictions are a package. As the history of the Disciples' Movement clearly proves, to reject one, in principle, leads to a rejection of all. Weighed in the light of the consequences, the price of post-restorationism is much too great. To quote Benjamin Franklin, "We will have paid too much for the whistle."



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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Love Finds a Way

By Sewell Hall



Thoughts To Ponder

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Larry Rouse
Editor

All Christians want to bring the lost to Christ. But each of us has some handicap which causes us to feel limited in our ability to do so. It may be a weakness of knowledge or difficulty in expressing ourselves. Perhaps it is a personality deficiency or even a lack of transportation. Whatever it may be, we tend to feel that it excuses us from responsibility. Actually, our most debilitating handicap is a lack of zeal. Once zeal is stirred, love will find a way to overcome all obstacles.

Take June McNeese as an example. Just 4 years ago, June held a responsible position with a Tennessee-based company which manufactured automobile hoses. She was, however, experiencing considerable throat trouble and the problem grew steadily worse, slurring her speech,

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until she could no longer function in the office. Doctors discovered that she had dreaded Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, more popularly known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease. Rapidly it began affecting the other parts of her body until all of her limbs were paralyzed.

Her speech continued to deteriorate until now only a con-

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stant companion can understand anything she says, and then only when she uses the simplest of words. Often she must spell out very slowly what she is trying to say. Meanwhile, her sparkling eyes and the few words she is able to get across reveal a mind that is still keen and active.

If ever anyone would be excused from "personal evangelism" it would be June. Without use of her lower limbs she cannot go on her own. Without her arms and hands she cannot write. And with her damaged speech mechanism she cannot talk. But June does not look for an excuse. She looks for a way.

When a nurse was employed, one stipulation was that she would take June to worship just as long as possible. Patti, the nurse who was chosen, found the services strange and the sermons very different from what she was accustomed to in her own religious experience. Soon she was asking questions which June found very difficult to answer with the communication problem. To add to the frustration, Patti could never seem to remember her questions when Joe Olson, a gospel preacher, came to visit.

Somehow June had to find a way to get those questions answered, either by herself or by Joe. But all she had to work with were her neck muscles. Then an idea! An electric typewriter! One was borrowed to see if she could

use it. Her father cut a wooden dowel rod and placed a rubber tip on one end. Placing the other end of the rod between her teeth, June happily began typing some answers for Patti and typing questions for Joe when he came.

Patti was not easily converted. She had already changed religion once and she wanted to be sure this time. But little by little the truth, adorned by the life of her cheerful patient, did its work. Patti was baptized into Christ.

Patti is not her only convert. A Christian couple who were in error visited her on occasions. She loved them and longed to see them come closer to the truth. She successfully used her limited opportunities to teach them "the way of the Lord more perfectly." There are many others whom she hopes to reach before her time runs out. The limited life-expectancy characteristic of those with her disease makes her constantly aware, as Jesus was, that she is approaching a night "when no man can work." This lends urgency to her efforts.

Perhaps all of us would be more zealous and more diligent if we could only realize how short is the time each of us has to accomplish whatever is to be accomplished in this life. I visited June recently in her Tennessee home. I did not understand a single word she said. But, at her usual speed of 5 words a minute, she typed a message for me, perfectly capitalized and indented. "Dear brother Hall, I am very glad you could come to see me this afternoon."



Is There a Basis for Your Joy?

By Stan Cox

Do you feel good about yourself? Your relationship with God? Do you feel good about those with whom you have spiritual fellowship? Do you have joy without measure? A peace which passes understanding? Does a smile invariably crease your face when you contemplate your eternal welfare? It does? Good!...Now for the most important question. Upon what do you base all of these positive emotions?

Hopefully, you have a ready answer to this last question. The proper answer would be, "From a study of God's word, I recognize that I have been obedient to His will, and am a partaker of the blessings that are reserved for His children." Now, you might not word it in exactly the same way, but the point is that your good feelings, your emotions, are based upon an intellectual recognition. You know you have been obedient to God. You know that God has promised blessings to those who are obedient. You know that God keeps His promises. Therefore you are happy. However, many experience that same happiness without that intellectual foundation.

Emotions are peculiar in that respect. You can be happy, sad, peaceful, worried, etc., without a proper foundation. A mother can be worried about the safety of her child, when in reality the child is perfectly safe. A city can sleep peacefully in the supposed safety of its beds, not knowing an earthquake is imminent. A follower of Mohammed can glory in his certainty of an eternal reward, not knowing that salvation is to be found only through Jesus (cf. **John 14:6**). An emotion is valid only if it is based on fact. Worry is appropriate only if there is the potential of harm; a feeling of peacefulness only if there is actual safety; spiritual joy only if a

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relationship with God actually exists.

Herein resides the problem with the emotionalism prevalent among religious people today. Too many believe themselves saved, not because they have the facts, but rather because they feel good about themselves. We see that it would be unreasonable for a mother to fret about the safety of her child when she sees and knows her child is safe. Why is it so many can not see how unreasonable it is

to base their salvation upon a "feeling in my heart." There is a popular notion that the facts don't matter. That we should stop emphasizing the scripture, and just love one another. That we should emphasize the Man instead of the plan. That it does not matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere. This is simply not so.

I feel good about myself and my eternal destiny because I have obeyed the gospel of Christ. I have heard the saving gospel, and have believed it (**John 3:16**). I have repented of my sins, and have been baptized to have them washed away (**Acts 2:38**). I have confessed and am willing to confess the Lordship of Jesus before men (**Romans 10:9-10**). As such, I know that I have the hope of heaven. I worship and work with Christians who follow God's word in matters of worship, work, and daily living. We have a "thus saith the Lord" for all of our practices, and are willing always to defend what we teach and do for God.

Are you happy? It is an important question. But the second is more important. WHY? Upon what do you base that happiness? Think about it.

