

The Restoration Movement

The Difference between Reformation and Restoration

1. Generally speaking, the actions taken during the age of the Reformation movement tried to do precisely that—reform. The object of reformation was more often than not the Catholic Church.
2. The Restoration Movement, in contrast, sought not the reform anything, but to restore first century Christianity by restoring the New Testament pattern of worshipping and serving God

Causes of the Restoration Movement

1. The Bible was in greater circulation; therefore more and more people were able to evaluate it. Knowledge of the word of God grew, and opinions of denominational creeds fell. A cry went out to simply look to the Bible for guidance.
2. With the proliferation of denominations and their creeds, it became obvious that efforts at reforming the church were failing to restore New Testament Christianity to its purity and simplicity.
3. The sinfulness of denominationalism was also becoming obvious. It was not what Christ prayed for. Not what Paul urged in 1 Corinthians 1:10 & Ephesians 4:4
4. A rejection of the teachings of Calvinism also caused many to begin “searching the scriptures;” as they searched, they found less they liked about the current state of religious affairs and began to become more independent in their thinking.

Restoration as a Biblical Plea

1. The call for restoration is simply a call to those who have fallen from God’s will and character to repent and turn back to Him.
2. The great prophets, both major and minor, initiated restoration movements in Israel, Isaiah 1:17-20; 55:6-8; Jeremiah 3:11-13; 6:13-16; Malachi 3:7
3. Christians are appealed to in the New Testament to follow apostolic teaching, 2 Peter 3:2; 1 John 2:24; Jude 1:17; Revelation 2:5

Principles of the Restoration Movement

1. Recognition of Christ as the supreme authority in religion (Matthew 28:18) and the New Testament as the only rule of faith to be bound on men.
2. A proper understanding of the distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
3. A recognition of the New Testament pattern of the church
4. Autonomy of the local church
5. The unity of all Christians on the basis of New Testament teachings.

The History of the Restoration Movement in Scotland

1. A concern for apostolic Christianity can be traced back to 18th century Scotland with the work of two men, John Glas (1695-1773) & Robert Sandeman. Glas was a Presbyterian preacher who began to question the scripturalness of a church established by the state.
 - a. He came to oppose the state church (Church of Scotland) and endorse church autonomy.
 - b. After he was kicked out of the Church of Scotland, he and his son-in-law, Sandeman, formed the “independents.” Eventually, there were several congregations following his teachings in Scotland, England and America.
 - c. In the 19th century, this movement died out.
2. Also in Scotland, Robert Carmichael and Archibald McLean lead a mini-restoration movement.
3. Finally, Robert and James Haldane were greatly influential in turning people to simple New Testament Christianity.

Coming to America: The Restoration Movement in the Land of the Free

1. Several men lead the charge for change in America. Interestingly enough, most were ignorant of each other (at least initially), yet they often came to incredibly similar conclusions.
 - a. James O-Kelly (17??-1826) was a Methodist preacher in Virginia. Over time, eventually left the Methodist Church.
 - b. Elias Smith and Abner Jones
 - i. Smith was born in Connecticut in 1769 and was baptized by a Baptist preacher in 1779. He agreed to the Baptist Articles of Faith and became a member of Woodstock Baptist Church. Later in life, however, he began to realize the Calvinistic teachings of the Articles and turned away from them.
 - ii. In 1802, Smith and several friends began to worship in a rented hall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He wrote, “When our number was some short of twenty, we agreed to consider ourselves a church of Christ, owing him as our only Master, Lord, and lawgiver, and we agreed to consider ourselves Christians, without the addition of any unscriptural name.” By 1804, 150 met with Smith.
 - iii. In 1803, Smith met a Vermont medical doctor by the name of Abner Jones who had heard of Smith and had come to similar conclusion on his own.
 - c. Barton Stone (1772- 1844) was sprinkled in the Church of England as a child, but his zeal for liberty during and after the Revolutionary War turned him against this denomination.

- i. In August, 1801, Stone and several other Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist preachers took part in the Cane Ridge Meeting in Kentucky. It is estimated that 20,000 or 30,000 attended.
- ii. Stone and his friends then formed the Springfield Presbytery and wrote a defense of their views entitled, "The Apology of the Springfield Presbytery." They abandoned all teachings of men and followed only the Bible.
 - 1. In 1804, however, Stone and his companions dissolved the Springfield Presbytery, better understanding the new denomination they were forming. Among the thoughts of their 800 word document were:
 - a. "We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."
 - b. "We will that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage and His name one."
 - c. We will that our power of making laws for the government of the church and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."
 - d. "We will that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell."
 - e. We will, that our sister bodies read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late."
- iii. Stone came to the conclusion that baptism was by immersion. He later came to the conclusion that it was for the remission of sins and was to be administered to the sincere believer.

Questions

1. What would you say are the key differences between the reformation and restoration movements?

2. What was the plea of the early restoration leaders?

3. Who were Glas & Sanderman?

4. Who was Barton Stone?