

F. LaGard Smith answers the question: Why do we need a restoration?

Discussion and study guides / questions / topics for your consideration.

1. Do you think that this observation is accurate: over time all organizations, organisms, everything; change or “go askew” from their original function. Is this a general rule?
 - a. What are some examples that have departed from their original purpose?
 - b. Why does this occur?
 - c. Is the Lord’s church an exception to that general rule? Why or why not?
 - d. Was the Lord’s church exceptional? (Isaiah 62.1-5; Matt 16.15-18; John 18.36; Acts 20.28; Heb 12.22-28)
 - e. Is the Lord’s church no longer exceptional?
2. Has the church departed from its original purpose?
 - a. The church is no exception of going askew – “...particularly when we know its departed from its original way of functioning”.
 - i. How would “we know”? (Acts 17.11,12)
 - ii. What was its original way of functioning? (Acts 2.40-47; Acts 4.23-37; Acts 6.1-6; Acts 11.19-21; 27-30; Acts 15.19-29; Acts 16.5)
 - iii. Why isn’t the church still functioning in the original way? Or, is it? (1 Cor 4.6)
 - iv. A building and a body (health) are used as an illustration of something that can be restored; is this analogous to the church? Eph 2.17-22; Eph 4.11-16; 1 Pet 2.4-10; 1 Cor 3.10,11)
 - b. The assumption, or premise, is that the church of today is trying to follow some teachings of the Holy Spirit that were infusing the work of the apostles and the worship of the 1st century Christians.
 - i. Is this necessarily a right/good or wrong/bad thing?
 - ii. How, or in what way, did the Holy Spirit infuse the work of the apostles? (Acts 2; Acts 4.8ff; Acts 4.31; Acts 5.12; Acts 8.39,40; Acts 9.31; Acts 10.19; Acts 10.44-48; Acts 13.9ff; Acts 16.6ff; Acts 20.22ff).

- iii. How, or in what way, did the Holy Spirit infuse the Christians' worship? (Acts 6.5ff; 1 Cor 12; 1Cor 13; 1 Cor 14)
 - iv. How does the church follow "some teaching of the Holy Spirit" if the Spirit is not manifesting Himself as He did in the apostles or the church during the apostolic era? (Acts 13.52; 1 Cor 13)
 - v. Is the church departing from these (above) or from something else?
- 3. We don't have any other way of knowing how to worship God other than what we read in scripture as to how He taught us to do that.
 - a. Is this an accurate statement? Why or why not? (John 4.21-24; 1 Cor 4.6; 2 Pet 1. 2,3)
 - b. Does this answer assume that we can know how to worship God?
 - c. Does this answer assume that God has taught us how to worship Him?
- 4. Over time, we, the creation, tend to move away from that way of worship...
 - a. What way is that? (John 4.21-24; Heb 10.19-25; Heb 13.15,16).What is one influence that can help move us away "from that way of worship"? – Culture?
 - b. How can the church engage the culture of its day without losing its way?
 - c. What traditions do we follow in the church today that have no scriptural basis?
 - d. Is culture the creature of the creation; or is the creation the creature of culture?
 - e. What other 'not good reasons' for change might there be? (2 Peter 2)
 - f. Are there any good reasons for a change in worship? (John 17.14-17; Acts 18.24-28 esp 26)
 - g. Are 'good' and 'biblical' the same?
- 5. If we were to try and focus in on the fundamental restoration issue, what do you think it is?
 - a. That the 'restoration' of which we look back on with fondness and pride...is incomplete?

- b. That 'restoration' is, by necessity, an ongoing, perpetual effort and/or requirement?
 - c. That 'restoration' has stopped and the organism is now ossified and no longer able to move and function as 'a body' is supposed to?
 - d. That 'restoration' is (or should be) worship centered?
 - e. That 'restoration' is only possible if the church remains wholly within the scriptures?
 - f. That 'restoration' centers on "that which is true" and a return to what was originally intended "for us" – in terms of worshipping God?
 - i. How do we know or find "that which is true"?
 - ii. Do only the most educated amongst us know, or could know?
 - g. That 'restoration' is trying to get back to what is God's best truth about how to worship Him?
- 6. Define or illuminate 'radical' restoration versus reforming or 'Reformation'?
 - a. How was the Restoration Movement different from the Reformation Movement?
 - b. Did the Restoration Movement achieve it's intended goal?
- 7. Was the historical processes and results of the 'restoration' a good or bad thing?
 - a. What do you think about Christ's prayer "...that they all may be one..." and the current situation of "Christendom"? (Jo 17; Eph 4. 1-16).
 - b. What do you think about Christ's prayer "...that they all may be one..." and the current situation of what we call the church of Christ? (Jo 17; 1 Cor 1-3).
- 8. Can any criticism be levied on the historical restoration?
 - a. If so, what is it?
 - b. What do you think?
 - c. What is the restoration irony posed by LaGard?
 - d. Do you think the church of Christ is a denomination?

- e. Why do you think that is used as an illustration?
 - f. What is a 'creed'?
 - g. Do you think the church of Christ has written or unwritten creeds?
 - h. Do you think, in our worship today, there are hold over practices from before the "Reformation" and "restoration"?
9. How comfortable do we feel with where we are; where the church is; where the church is going;
- a. Where are we and where is the church going?
 - b. Is thinking, knowing, and feeling the same? (Matt 4.3,4; 1 Cor 4.6; 1 Jo 5.13).
10. What do you think about these two positions?
- a. we need to get back to more fundamental ways that maybe we've overlooked;
 - b. there are some things we didn't completely restore;
 - c. If you were to agree with these posits – men and brethren, what must we do?
11. What do you think is God's best truth that He has revealed to His church as to how to worship Him? If there is a 'best' truth; are there multiple truths? Are they all acceptable and pleasing to God? (2 Cor 5.9,10)