

Prayer List

Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

www.pinolechurchofchrist.com

Vol. 13, No. 24 - March 25, 2012

Elders:

Brad Behrens - bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

Who slept on Samuel's roof when he visited with him?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Ahasuerus - Esther 1:5-6

Published by the church of Christ which meets at 755 Pinole Valley Road, Pinole, CA 94564, Phone (510) 724-1994, (Mailing address: church of Christ, P.O. Box 453, Pinole, CA 94564)

Restoring Restoration

by Dee Bowman

"If Christianity would go back to its origins, cleanse itself resolutely from the silt of time, and take its stand with fresh sincerity from the personality and ideals of its founder, who could resist it?"

That's a observation from Will Durant from an article written for the Saturday Evening Post, in August of 1939. Isn't it amazing how things don't change? The statement is as relevant to our needs today as it was when Mr. Durant wrote it. It speaks of restoration. It is a call for restoration.

But that's not the first time a call for restoration has been made. Both the Old and New Testaments are replete with calls for restoration. The Prophet Jeremiah called for a restoration when he said "Thus saith the LORD, 'Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls'" (Jer. 6:16).

Isn't it amazing how things don't change? The people then, much like the people of today, were not obliged to listen. "But they said, we will not walk therein."

Man wants his own way. He always has. It seems that no matter how many times he is called back to the truth of God, he can't stay for long. He has to dilute. He has to re-arrange. He has to make alterations. He has to do it his way.

God's truth will not tolerate such mis-management (2 Jn. 9). Whether it is done in some sincere manner or out of gross rebellion, God will not allow man to tamper with His will (Psalm 119:89).

It's hard to believe what's happened to the restoration concept in the past fifty years. I use the figure of fifty years because I've been acquainted with it for about that long. When I was a young man, the restoration motif was alive and well—in fact it was dynamic. People were constantly telling folks about the need to return to the Bible, to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.” They wanted “book-chapter-and-verse” preaching and would not be satisfied with less. They—most of them at least—could take you to that same book, chapter and verse and show you why they believed what they believed. What has happened, folks? Why am I not hearing those same thoughts expressed?

In many churches of Christ today those slogans, cries for restoration, are not being heard. In fact, in many places they've not been heard in so long a time that many people are not even familiar them. Are they no longer relevant? Do they no longer apply? Are they outmoded and antiquated?

Just how is a thing justified as scriptural today? Well, in many churches there is little effort made to give scriptural reasons for what is being done. And some preachers have gone so far afar from the restoration plea that they will tell you openly, and without shame, “what's the big deal? We're just another denomination anyhow.”

And do you know what's sad? In many cases, that's so. We have screamed out, “give us a king so we can be like the nations round about us!” (1 Sam. 8:5). Churches in many places don't call for Bible authority for what they do (1 Pet. 4:11). They do what they want to do. If they want to have women participate in leadership roles in the worship services, they do it. If they want to have a choir, they do it. If they want a “contemporary service,” one with casual worship, (complete with coffee and donuts), they have it. And when asked where is the biblical authority for such, their reply is simple:

“What's the big deal? We do lots of things for which we have no Bible authority.”

Churches in many places no longer subscribe to the Bible when it comes to the plan of salvation (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21). For instance, many deny that baptism is even essential to salvation. “Churches of Christ say that?” you say. Yes, sir. They will tell you that it's just an outward sign of the salvation that comes when one “accepts the Savior.” And they will tell you that with a degree of ecumenical pride—sometimes, even arrogantly.

Churches in many places are tainted with the seeds of metropolitanism. Local autonomy is breached with impunity. One eldership oversees the work of several different churches. The work done by churches reaches into areas of psychology, home-health care, social and benevolent organizations, much of which is funded by churches without regard to whether or not the Scriptures approve of it. Para-church organizations and colleges and universities are funded by local congregations without consideration for what the Bible says about such matters. It seems that so long as a thing is done in the name of religion, it has God's approval. Pshaw!

Could I just pose a couple or three questions?

Is the Bible the final authority regarding the plan of salvation and the work and worship of the church? Answer yes or no. Then read Romans 10:1-2 and John 14:6.

Will we be held accountable for what we teach and practice? Answer yes or no. Then read Galatians 1:6-9.

Is our plea to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent” relevant today or should we just abandon it as an old cliché? Just answer yes or no. Then read 1 Peter 4:11.

It's about time we decided whether or not the Bible is still relevant and whether or not we want to follow it. It's a matter of life or death, folks.