

cont'd from front...

And by "laid out in God's word," he meant, "the whole revelation of faith and duty expressly declared in the Divine word, taken together, or in its due connection, upon every article, and not any detached sentence." In other words, what is expressly taught in context.

Some may ask, "What about inferences? Aren't there things that are not expressly stated, but are implied by the text?" The answer is a resounding, "Yes, of course there are!" But because our fellowship must bring together both the weak and the strong in the faith, we cannot expect that all people will be able to arrive at the same conclusions about these matters until they have studied and reasoned through them for a time. Campbell said:

Although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God." We cannot make our own wisdom and power of deduction the basis on which unity is established.

We can only expect the church to be on the same page about things for which we can produce a, "Thus saith the Lord, either in express terms, or by approved precedent." Matters of inference, he said, "belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church."

Eager to Maintain the Unity of the Spirit

I believe it's time we prove ourselves "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). It's time we lay down our human innovations and it's time we stop imposing our private opinions on our brethren as terms of fellowship. Scripture expressly condemns factions and divisions and I think it's time we stop allowing ourselves to be divided.

If we are going to be Christ's church – the church of Christ – we must live out what Christ prayed; we must be "one" even as He and the Father are one (John 17). Having unity within a congregation is important, but so is having unity between congregations. This is the time period the prophets of old longed to see. We are living in the Messiah's kingdom. This is supposed to be a time of peace and unity.

Elders, preachers, deacons, Christians, I encourage you to spend a little time reading Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address and contemplating whether or not you find it's premises biblical and then contemplating what steps YOU can take to help heal the divisions in the church.



Comment from Sammy Walker:

Lisa & I were Blessed to meet, & study & Commune, with Paul & Judy McCollum, a preacher of the Gospel in California. The ship had a open Non denomination Bible Study every morning on board & Paul preached one Lords Day & I Lead the group of 35 once . Y'all can imagine the burning ears as we spoke the Truth to a wide range of people, including Catholic , Mormon , Jews , 7th Day , Baptist , etc .

Are You Listening?

January 29, 2017

church of Christ at Alisal

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Salinas, California 93905-2728
(831) 424-9800 or 726-1319
Paul McCollum, preacher
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Sammy Walker
Brother in Christ
1976 Olympian
Shot Put & Weightlifting

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John 1:1-5)

MEETING UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
Listen on AM Radio 880 KKMC in Salinas, California
2nd Friday of each month @ 1:30 pm

Bible Classes..... 9:00 A.M.
Assemblies..... 10:00 A.M. & 5:00 P.M.

<http://churchofchristalisal.com/>

WEDNESDAY

Bible Class, Singing, & Prayer..... 6:30 P.M.

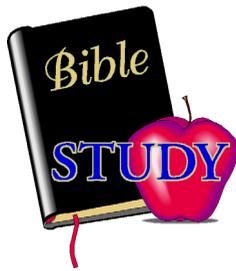
Welcome

Good Morning Brothers and Sisters!

This Week's Sermon's

A.M. - What Does The Bible say...? 1

P.M. - What Does The Bible say...? 2



Healing the Divisions Between Churches of Christ

Wes McAdams

We might say the beginning of the Restoration Movement in the United States was in 1809 when Thomas Campbell uttered these now famous words, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." This wasn't the beginning of the church, but it was the beginning of a movement to restore the "unity, peace, and purity" of Christ's church. Over 200 years later, the spiritual descendants of this movement have far too many divisions. I believe it is time to be reminded of Campbell's plea for unity.

First, I am no "Campbellite." I am simply a Christian, but I do believe Campbell's plea is biblical and I believe it is one we would do well to listen to today.

What Causes Division?

If you read through Thomas Campbell's 1809 "Declaration and Address" (which I highly recommend you do), you'll find he believed divisions between Christians are caused primarily by "matters of private opinion or human invention." He said, "What a pity that the kingdom of God should be divided about such things!"

Campbell believed if Christians were willing to, "Give up human inventions in the worship of God, and to cease from imposing his private opinions upon his brethren, that our breaches might thus be healed." As far as definitions are concerned, a "human invention in the worship" is doing anything as a part of our worship that is not expressly taught in the New Testament. And "private opinions" are, "All things not expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. If otherwise, we know not what private opinion means."

Campbell's belief was that when our own reasoning – beyond the clear teaching and application of Scripture – is used for the basis of fellowship, there will necessarily be unhealthy division in the church. Therefore, the premise of the Restoration plea is that introducing human inventions AND imposing private opinions are the causes of many divisions and both should be abandoned.

Our Divisions Today

It seems to me that there is a divide between many congregations. On one side of the divide are those who believe they are justified in doing whatever Scripture does not expressly condemn. In other words, they are determined to introduce and keep human

inventions. The Restoration plea is to abandon all such practices; if not for the sake of obedience to the Lord, then at least for the sake of unity.

On the other side of the divide are those who impose their private opinions as matters of fellowship. The problem isn't that they disagree with certain practices or beliefs, but that they refuse to accept their brethren or they condemn their brethren to hell – not for any violation of the express teaching of Scripture – but for violating what they believe to be the unspoken implications of Scripture (see Romans 14). Sadly, they may very well be right in their inferences, but because they judge where God has not spoken, Campbell would say:

That every such judgment is an express violation of the law of Christ, a daring usurpation of his throne, and a gross intrusion upon the rights and liberties of his subjects. We are, therefore, of opinion that we should beware of such things; that we should keep at the utmost distance from everything of this nature; and that, knowing the judgment of God against them that commit such things, we should neither do the same ourselves, nor take pleasure in them that do them.

On both sides of the divide, there are Christians who are unwilling to show humility, loving forbearance, or Christ-like submission (see Romans 15:1; Ephesians 4:1-4). The divide exists because many on both sides have been unwilling to stick to the biblical principles of the Restoration plea.

Expressly Declared in the Word

Campbell believed that if we are going to have unity in the church, neither our practice nor our condemnation can go beyond what is expressly laid out in God's word.

(continued on back page...)

Announcements

1. Brother David will be giving the invitation this Wednesday evening.
2. May the Lord bless brother Charles for all his hard work - his latest task was the installation of the new lights in the auditorium - please tell Charles you appreciate all he does for the Lord and our congregation. We all love you, Charles.

~ On the Prayer list

- Nito Gomez** - for his good health and recovery from a bad cold.
- Charles Barry** - for healing of the on-going infection in his leg.
- Bobby Glover** - to successfully teach others about Jesus while in prison.
- Michael White** - for helping others as he serves his time.
- Our country** - and our new President Trump and Vice President Pence.
- All the saints** - and the knowledge and zeal to teach those who are outside the body of Christ.

Be prepared for our regular Bible class this coming Wednesday at 6:30 PM. Bring your notebooks and papers as well as your eager minds! We are back and ready to go!

GOOD MORNING