

What I Like about the 'Church of Christ'

Sunday Morning Bible Class

Summer Quarter

David Bearden, Teacher

2. I Like Its Restoration Mission

- Desire to “restore New Testament Church”
- Many buildings to this day have on their foundation the words, “Established in A.D. 33”
- It is Christ’s Church, He is the Builder, Foundation, Head, and Lord – not man
- Get back to the source – the Bible
- It sets clear definable standards – does it look like the Church Jesus built?

- 3 Currents of Reformation

- Martin Luther in Germany “Scripture Alone” 1521
“Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason
– I do not accept the authority of popes and councils,
for they have contradicted each other – my
conscience is captive to the Word of God.”
- Zwingli in Switzerland – put aside all other sources
and preach only the Bible, stripped the church for
simple worship. “Few ceremonies have been left us
by Christ.” He believed that everything not based on
Scriptural precedent should be abolished, for
“everything that is added to the true institutions of
Christ is an abuse...”
- Puritans in England – restoration of the pure
“Constantinian Church” protected by the state holding
covenant with God as the true church.

- Zwingli's Reformation – “Restoration”
 - “The people must be educated in the Word of God so that neither vestments nor songs have a place” in worship.
 - Zwingli was a gifted musician yet excluded all audible music from the Christian assembly. His premise was that whatever Scripture does not explicitly command is forbidden. He believed Scripture taught music should only happen in the heart (Col 3:16).
 - Swiss Anabaptists took up Zwingli's teaching Eph. 5:19 spiritual songs, not audible songs. “Whatever we are not taught by clear passages or example must be regarded as forbidden, just as it is written: ‘This do not; sing not.’” Conrad Grebel

- Response to Zwingli

- Luther did not oppose traditions as long as they helped teach the gospel and felt Zwingli's approach to Scripture developed a new form of legalism
- 2 followers of Zwingli took it even further and are tied to the Puritans of England, Bullinger (1504-1575) and Bucer (1491-1551) introduced King Edward VI to the state church of Constantine restored and protected by God in a covenant relationship was what needed to be restored in England
- John Calvin (1509-1564) between Luther and Zwingli, "back to Bible" did not reject forms that promote Gospel. "Christ Alone"

Some Weaknesses

1. Mission to “restore” rather than “be”
2. Ignores our place in history (restoration heritage before us)
3. Tends to emphasize forms rather than function
4. Tends to emphasize obedience to correct church practice rather than obedience to the Lord in response to His grace
5. Tends to be judgmental and fault finding

3. I Like the Non-Denominational Plea

- (1 Cor 1:10-13 NIV) I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. {11} My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. {12} What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas "; still another, "I follow Christ." {13} Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

3. I Like the Non-Denominational Plea

- (Eph 4:3-6 NIV) Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
{4} There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- {5} one Lord, one faith, one baptism; {6} one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

3. I Like the Non-Denominational Plea

- The Principle Points of Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address (Sept 7, 1809):
 1. The Unity of the Church: "that the church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, constitutionally one."
 2. Christian Fellowship: "that, although there must be separate local congregations, yet they should be one with no schisms and discord."
 3. Terms of Communion: "that nothing be required of Christians as articles of faith but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God."

3. I Like the Non-Denominational Plea

- The Principle Points of Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address (Sept 7, 1809):

4. "That the New Testament is supreme authority for Christians in all matter of faith and practice."

"In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity."

We are "Christians only," not the "only Christians"!

All the saved constitute the Church of Christ. Not the 'Church of Christ' are the only ones saved.

Some Weaknesses

1. Mission becomes to convert the denominations
2. Makes us sound arrogant and as if we are saying, “we are the only ones that are saved”
3. Ignores our place in history as flowing out of Reformation thinking and Puritanism. (tour of history)

Some Weaknesses

2. Makes us sound arrogant and as if we are saying, "we are the only ones that are saved"
(Interview with John Grisham)

WINESKINS: In *A Time to Kill*, you refer briefly to a Church of Christ. Having lived in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana, you've surely had some picture of who we are. What's your "outsider's take" on us?

GRISHAM: My father was raised in a Church of Christ, and I have many friends who are members. (One is particular is Dr. Gerald Turner, the former chancellor of Ole Miss and the new president of SMU.) We view you as kindred spirits who should break down and enjoy the benefits of pianos and organs.

It's just too bad we can't spend eternity together.

Some Weaknesses

1. Mission becomes to convert the denominations
2. Makes us sound arrogant and as if we are saying, “we are the only ones that are saved”
3. Ignores our place in history as flowing out of Reformation thinking and Puritanism. (tour of history)

Our Roots Among the Puritans

1. The impact of Christian Humanism
2. The covenant theology of William Tyndale
3. The influence of the Swiss Reformed tradition
4. The temporary resurgence of Roman Catholicism