

CENTURIES OF CHANGE VS. THE UNCHANGING WORD

A Look at God's Plan for New Testament Christianity
and Some Apostasies from It

ABSTRACT

This study is intended to provide a look at some of the changes men have made to God's plans for His New Testament people. There is a major emphasis on how we can understand God's will for us today.

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Preface

This workbook is intended to help students better understand God's plan for His people as they work and worship together. It is not in any way intended to be a Church of Christ Creed. I have diligently sought to avoid denominationalizing the Lord's church and while I may not have completely succeeded in that, I would urge all to make that their goal. Please make the Scriptures your authority.

Some students will find the many historical references unnecessary and they may be correct, but I feel that one can more properly appreciate where he is and where others are spiritually by looking back at some of the forces that have helped shape the religious landscape of our time. Having said that, I want to reiterate that history is not our authority. This workbook is not intended to be a glorification or defense of the Restoration Movement or any other "movement;" but is an attempt to help people better understand God's plan. I hope you will profit from the historical setting in which the issues have been placed, but never forget that the Scriptures are the standard (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Further, by giving emphasis to the Restoration Movement that took place in United States in the 19th century I do not mean to imply that similar things were not taught and practiced elsewhere, but the American Restoration Movement is well documented in both its early growth and its later divisions. Because similar efforts in other parts of the world are not as easy to follow, I have chosen to use the events that took place in America for this study, but do not lose sight of the objective; viz. understanding God's will and some of the ways men have departed from it.

The material is divided into thirteen lessons and can be covered in one quarter, but there is enough material to further divide the lessons and spend twenty-six lessons going through the material. As you go through the lessons you will notice that an asterisk (*) is used in some lessons, but not in others. When a lesson consisted primarily of questions I did not use an asterisk, but when the lessons were more notes than questions, I tried to use the asterisk to help students better locate the places where they were expected to answer a question.

At the end of the study guide you will find a list of some sources I have used in my studies, but it is an incomplete list. I could not begin to list all the articles, tracts, sermons, personal studies, etc. that have helped shape my thinking (and I hope that means they have helped me understand the Scriptures better) on the various issues dealt with in this material. I thought about listing some of the men that had been especially helpful to me, but there have been so many and I would not want to overlook any of them, so I am omitting their names, but acknowledging my indebtedness to them. While the organization of the material is mine, I take no credit for originality. This little workbook is the result of my studies of history and God's word and in those studies I have received more assistance than I could ever properly acknowledge.

Please use this material to the glory of God and if you find errors in it, please let me know.

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Lesson 1: Learning from Old Testament Departures

Note: This first lesson is intended to help us understand some of the reasons people depart from or make changes in God's plan. The verses listed are the minimum reading required to understand and answer the questions, but you will gain a far greater understanding of the material if you read the full story of each departure from God's word.

1. The Tower of Babel. Genesis 11:1-9
 - a. Why did the descendants of Noah begin to build the city and tower of Babel?

 - b. How did God put an end to their building project?

2. What prompted the complaints of Israel in Exodus 16:1-3 and Numbers 11:1-6?

3. The golden calf. Exodus 32:1-10, 17-19, 25
 - a. Why did the Israelites ask Aaron to make gods (or a god) for them?

 - b. What kind of worship did the Israelites offer before the golden calf?

4. Why did the Israelites refuse to enter the land of Canaan? Numbers 13:1-3, 26-33; 14:1-10
 - a. Why was the Israelites' fear of the giants inexcusable?

5. The sin at Acacia Grove. Numbers 25:1-3, 9; 31:14-16
 - a. How did the Moabites and Midianites, at the counsel of Balaam, entice Israel to sin?

 - b. How many Israelites died as a result of this sin?

6. The period of the Judges. Judges 2:7-10; 3:5-7; 17:6; 21:25
 - a. List three factors that contributed to the widespread wickedness in the time of the Judges.

7. Why did the people reject the reign of God and demand a king? 1 Samuel 8:1-7, 19-22

8. The transporting of the ark. 2 Samuel 6:1-15; 1 Chronicles 13:1-8; 15:11-15
 - a. Who was said to be in agreement with David when he sought to move the ark?

 - b. Did David and the Israelites use a cart to move the ark because the ark was unimportant to them?

 - c. To what did David attribute their failure in 1 Chron. 15?

9. What caused the heart of Solomon to be turned after other gods? 1 Kings 11:1-8

10. The golden calves at Dan and Bethel. 1 Kings 11:28-38; 12:26-33
 - a. Why did Jeroboam decide to build the golden calves?

 - b. How did he convince the people to accept these sinful images?

11. Uzziah. 2 Chronicles 26:1-5, 15-21
 - a. Uzziah was made to prosper as long as he did what?

 - b. What led Uzziah to seek to enter the temple and burn incense?

Lesson 2: Prophecy and Establishment; New Testament Warnings

I. THE CHURCH IN PROPHECY. Eph. 3:8-11; Acts 3:24

A. The Promises to Abraham. Gen. 12:1-7; 22:15-18

1. The three main elements of the promises:
 - a. Make his descendants a great _____. 12:2
 - b. Give those descendants the land of _____. 12:5-7
 - c. Bless all _____ of the earth through the _____ of Abraham. 22:18
2. Which part of the promise is quoted in Gal. 3 in reference to those saved by faith in Christ? (Those who were saved in Christ made up the churches of Galatia. Gal. 1:2.)

B. The Mountain of the Lord's House. Isa. 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-5

1. When would the mountain of the Lord's house be exalted?
2. Who would be "attracted" to the mountain of the Lord?
3. "He shall teach us His _____, and we shall walk in His _____."
4. Those in God's house would beat their _____ into _____, and their _____ into _____.

C. Daniel 2:31-45.

1. How many kingdoms were represented by the image Nebuchadnezzar saw?
2. God would set up His indestructible kingdom in the _____ of these _____.

D. The Time Was Fulfilled.

1. Both John and Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at _____. Matt. 3:2; 4:17
2. Mark includes the words, "The _____ is fulfilled." Mark 1:14, 15
3. Some who lived in the first century were promised that they would not die until they had seen the _____ present (come) with _____. Mark 9:1

II. THE KINGDOM WAS ESTABLISHED.

A. Christ Is King at This Time.

1. Jesus came into the world to be King. Luke 1:26-33
2. Following the resurrection He became King. Acts 2:29-36; Eph. 1:18-23

B. Those in the Church Are in the Kingdom.

1. While the words church and kingdom are not always interchangeable, they are closely related. Matt. 16:18, 19
2. The Colossians were delivered from the power of _____ and conveyed into the _____ of the Son. Col. 1:12-14
3. The prophecies concerning Zion are fulfilled in those who make up the church of the _____. Heb. 12:18-29

III. THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM.

A. Subject to the King.

1. Before Pilate, Jesus said...
 - a. His kingdom was not of this _____. John 18:33-38
 - b. Everyone who was of the _____ would hear His voice.
2. Eph. 5:23-33 describes Christ as _____ of the church and the church as _____ to Christ.
3. The citizens of the kingdom, members of Christ's universal church, are first and foremost obligated directly to the King and Head. His called out people must be obedient to Him.

B. Form Local Churches.

1. The word church is used of the one universal body of Christians in Matt. 16:18 and Eph. 5, but it is also used to describe saints in one location working together as a unit. Rev. 1:11; Rom. 16:16
2. It is in these local groups that...
 - a. The Lord's Supper is eaten. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-34
 - b. Discipline is practiced. 1 Cor. 5
 - c. Collective worship is practiced. Heb. 10:24, 25

C. Nondenominational.

1. All the local churches were expected to follow the one faith. Eph. 4:4-6; Acts 16:5
2. The churches were not bound together in a denominational structure or hierarchy.
3. Each church had its own _____ to oversee it. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

IV. WARNINGS WERE SOUNDED.

1. Paul warned that the man of _____ would appear. 2 Thes. 2:3-12
 - a. He would deceive those who did not have a love of the _____, but had pleasure in _____.

2. The Ephesian elders were exhorted to take heed to themselves and all the _____ because savage _____ would come in among them, and even from _____ men would speak perverse things. Acts 20:17-38
3. The Spirit warned that some would depart from the _____, forbid _____, and demand that men abstain from _____. 1 Tim. 4:1-5

Lesson 3: Organizational Changes; Loss of the Priesthood

I. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION.

A. New Testament “Offices.”

1. Elders were appointed in every church. Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - a. Greek for elder was *presbuteros* (cf. presbyter).
2. Elders were also called bishops. Titus 1:5-7
 - a. The Greek word for bishop was *episkopos* and was also translated overseer.
 - b. *While in Miletus, Paul sent for the _____ of the church (Acts 20:17). These men were reminded that the Holy Spirit had made them _____, with a responsibility to _____ the church. Acts 20:28
3. While the term pastor is frequently used today, it occurs only one time in the New Testament (Ephesians 4:11). Who are the pastors of Eph. 4:11?
 - a. The Greek word used here is *poimēn* and occurs about 17 other times in the New Testament and is translated shepherd in those passages.
 - b. If the word pastor is the equivalent of shepherd, we can learn who the pastors were by determining who was to do the work of a shepherd.
 - c. Who was to take heed to the flock and shepherd the church (the Greek *poimainō* is translated *feed* in the KJV)? Acts 20:28
 - d. *Who was to shepherd or feed the flock in 1 Peter 5:1-4?
4. Summary:
 - a. New Testament churches were overseen or shepherded by older men who met certain qualifications. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9
 - b. Elders, presbyters, bishops, overseers, pastors, and shepherds were used of the same men to describe different aspects of their work and/or qualifications.

B. Autonomy of Local Churches.

1. *Define the word autonomy.
2. The New Testament teaches that all churches were “equals.”
 - a. All had the same form of “government.” Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - b. No church was ever said to be over another or subject to another.
 - c. Even in cooperation, they maintained an independence of function. Acts 11:27-30

C. Elevation of Bishops.

1. One of the first changes to God's organization came when some began to elevate one of the elders over the others and reserve the name bishop for the "head elder."
2. In the 2nd century some began to distinguish between bishops and elders.
 - a. Ca. AD 112 Ignatius argued for a single bishop over the church and its elders.
 - b. "There is no trace in the New Testament of government by a single bishop; the position of James at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 13, xxi. 18, Gal. ii. 9) was quite exceptional, and the result of his personal relationship to Christ; but influence is a different thing from office. Among the Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius is the only one who insists on monarchical episcopacy [one bishop/elder ruling—JRG], and even he never states that this is of divine institution—an argument which would have been decisive, if it had been available for him to use. Jerome [born ca. AD 342-347 and died 420—JRG], commenting on Titus i. 5, remarks that the supremacy of a single bishop arose 'by custom rather than by the Lord's actual appointment,' as a means of preventing schisms in the Church." *New Bible Dictionary*, p. 158
3. Bishops in larger churches gradually began to exercise influence over smaller churches.
 - a. The bishops came to exercise territorial influence over their diocese.
 - b. By AD 251 Cyprian taught that bishops were the successors to the apostles.
 - 1) *What was the mission of the apostles? Jn. 14:26; 16:12, 13; Eph. 3:3-5; Mk. 16:15-20; Heb. 2:3, 4
 - 2) Could third-century bishops have been witnesses of the resurrection? Acts 1:2, 8, 22

D. Centralization of Power.

1. At some point the bishops of Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria were recognized as the five "*patriarchs*".
2. Ca. AD 600 the Roman bishop Boniface III laid claim to the title of Universal Bishop.
3. How did the title of Universal Bishop come to reside at Rome?
 - a. Might note that the title of Universal Bishop never won universal acceptance among Christians.
 - b. Around AD 306 Constantine came to power in Rome, was a friend to Christians (he was baptized shortly before his death), and used his influence to form strong ties between the church and the state. With the government now backing the church, it is not surprising that the church at Rome increased in power and influence.

II. LOSS OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

A. The New Testament Priesthood of Believers.

1. *Christians are described as a _____ and _____ priesthood. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9
2. *1 Timothy 2:5 describes Jesus as the one _____ between God and men.
3. *Who enables us to approach the throne of grace? Heb. 4:14-16
4. *Christ was offered _____ to bear the _____ of many. Heb. 9:27, 28
5. *How much authority is Jesus said to possess? Matt. 28:18-20

B. Sacerdotalism and the Clergy.

1. As Roman Catholicism evolved priests replaced the elders and the priests, bishops, etc. came to be called the *clergy*.
 - a. “A group ordained to perform pastoral or sacerdotal functions in a Christian church.”
Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary
 - b. Sacerdotalism: “religious belief emphasizing the powers of priests as essential mediators between God and man.” *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary*
 - c. “Laity” is derived from Greek and Latin words meaning people. Anyone not a priest or clergyman is considered a lay person, i.e. just one of the people.
2. Because Roman Catholicism is always evolving, their most current statements might not endorse all of the following, but these were all Church-approved in the past and would not vary much if at all from current teachings.
3. Only the clergy is to baptize, give communion, receive confessions, etc.
 - a. It is “gravely illicit for a lay person to baptize when no danger of death exists.” *Catholic Dictionary*
 - b. “The chief supernatural powers of the priest are: to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to forgive the sins in the sacrament of Penance.” *Baltimore Catechism*
4. Great honors given to the clergy.
 - a. The priest is “the representative of Christ Himself...In showing reverence and honor to the priest one shows reverence and honor to Christ Himself, for the priest in a very true sense is ‘another Christ.’” *Baltimore Catechism*
 - b. The following titles are given. Priests: “Father;” Archbishops and Bishops: “Most Reverend and Your Excellency;” Cardinals: “Your Eminence;” Pope: “Your Holiness.”
 - c. What did Jesus warn against in Matt. 23:6-12?

Lesson 4: Various Doctrines of Roman Catholicism

Introduction:

- 1) Roman Catholicism slowly evolved in the centuries after the establishment of God's church.
- 2) The last lesson looked at the gradual centralization of power, climaxing in the recognition of the bishop of Rome as the Universal Bishop or Pope.
- 3) We also noted the creation of a separate priesthood.
- 4) This lesson will provide a brief overview of some other Catholic doctrines, along with a brief presentation of what the Scriptures teach on these subjects.

I. THE BIBLE.

A. Roman Catholic Teachings.

1. Though their teachings have changed somewhat through the years, most of the basic doctrines remain unchanged.
2. The Bible cannot be understood by the average person.
 - a. "No one shall dare to rely on his own judgment in matters of faith and morals...it is her (i.e. the Roman Church's—JRG) office to judge about the true sense of and interpretation of Sacred Scripture." Council of Trent, ca. AD 1563
 - b. The Scriptures "are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance." *Faith of Our Fathers*, p. 73
3. The Bible is also considered incomplete.
 - a. "The Bible does not contain all the teachings of the Christian religion, nor does it formulate all the duties of its members." *The Faith of Millions*, pp. 153, 154

B. The Bible Can Be Understood.

1. 2 Peter 1:20 refers to origin, not understanding. Read 1:19-21.
2. *"Do not be unwise, but _____ what the will of the Lord is." Eph. 5:17
3. How can a book not meant to be understood say the following?
 - a. *"Blessed is he who _____ and those who _____ the words of this prophecy, and _____ those things which are written in it." Rev. 1:3
 - b. *The inspired Scriptures are profitable for _____, _____, _____, and _____ in righteousness and will result in the man of God becoming _____. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
 - c. *"So then _____ comes by hearing, and hearing by the _____ of _____." Rom. 10:17

C. The Bible Is God's Final Revelation and Is Complete.

1. Read the following verses and ask yourself if an incomplete book could do all the things the Bible claims to do. Luke 1:3, 4; John 20:30, 31; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 John 1:3, 4; 2:1; 5:13; Rev. 1:3
2. All truth was promised in John 16:12, 13.
 - a. *To whom was Jesus speaking when He made this promise?
 - b. *Are any of the recipients of that promise still alive?
3. *How is the faith for which the Christian is to contend described in Jude 1:3?
4. *What are we to do if an angel comes with a new revelation? Gal. 1:6-9

II. ORIGINAL SIN.

A. The Doctrine.

1. Tertullian (AD 160-220) and Cyprian (mid-third century) argued that all men were sinners, not simply because of their own actions, but by the inherited guilt of Adam.
2. Ca. AD 400 Augustine successfully made this the predominant view among Christians.
 - a. 1100 years later his writings had a tremendous influence on John Calvin.
3. Once the concept of inherited sin was accepted, infant baptism soon became the common practice.

B. Is Original Sin Taught in the Scriptures?

1. Men are judged for their own guilt.
 - a. *"The soul who _____ shall die. The son shall not _____ the guilt of _____, nor the _____ bear the guilt of the son." Ezek. 18:20
 - b. *2 Cor. 5:10 teaches that we will be judged for what things?
2. *How does 1 John 3:4 define sin?
3. *Children are described as having no knowledge of _____ and _____. Deut. 1:39

III. INFANT BAPTISM AND SPRINKLING.

A. Roman Catholic Practice.

1. Believing that babies are born in sin, infants are brought to the priests to be "baptized" (usually by sprinkling).
2. In the second and third centuries pouring was sometimes substituted for immersion in cases of sickness and extreme cold.

3. As infant baptism became more accepted the move away from immersion became stronger, but interestingly, sprinkling was considered less desirable than immersion and pouring until the thirteenth century. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 390

B. The Bible and Infant Baptism.

1. No indisputable evidence for it in the Bible.
 - a. *Though some households were baptized, do all households include infant children?
Acts 16:15, 31-34; 1 Cor. 1:16
2. *Scriptural baptism is for those who _____ (Mk. 16:16) and _____ (Acts 2:38).
3. *Who was baptized in Acts 8:12 and 18:8?

C. Sprinkling or Immersion?

1. *Look up the definition of baptism in an English dictionary and a Bible dictionary (lexicon).
2. *Was NT baptism administered *with* water or *in* water? Matt. 3:5, 6; Acts 8:36-39
3. *Baptism is called a burial in Rom. 6:___ and Col. __:12.

IV. ADORATION OF MARY.

A. Roman Catholic View of Mary.

1. She is highly exalted.
 - a. “Mary is at once our co-redemptrix, our mediatrix, our advocate, and our mother.” *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, p. 78
 - b. Called “Queen of angels and men” and “Queen of the Universe” in the *Peoples Mass Book*, p. 583.
2. Said to have lived a completely sinless life.
 - a. This includes having been spared the guilt of “Original Sin” by the Immaculate Conception.
 - b. “In what does the Immaculate Conception of Mary consist? In this, that from the first instant of her conception, she was preserved free from all stain of original sin.” *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, p. 77
3. Perpetual Virginity. Said to have remained a virgin as long as she lived.
4. The Bodily Assumption. Believed that at the end of her life, she was “taken into the total glory of heaven, body and soul.” *Peoples Mass Book*, p. 317

5. Mary is often said to be “full of grace.” Catholics mean by this that she has grace at her disposal that she can bestow on those who show devotion toward her.
 - a. “1. Mary lavishes signal favors upon her servants; 2. She strengthens them in temptation; 3. She obtains for them the grace of perseverance; 4. She assists them in their last hour; 5. She introduces them into heaven.” *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, p. 79

B. The Teachings of Scripture.

1. Mary is worthy of honor. Lk. 1:28, 41-45, 48
2. *Find the last direct reference to Mary in the New Testament. Hint: it comes before the establishment of the church.
3. Her Perpetual Virginity is not taught in the Bible.
 - a. She was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus. Lk. 1:26, 27, 34-37
 - b. It is implied that her virginity ended at some point after the birth of Jesus. Matt. 1:22-25
 - c. Jesus had brothers and sisters. Matt. 12:46, 47; 13:54-56
 - d. *Is the marriage bed an unholy place or less holy than celibacy? Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-5
4. The Immaculate Conception is based on the misconception of Original Sin. Ezek. 18:20
5. *Did Mary remain sinless throughout life?
 - a. *Who is the only person mentioned in Scripture as reaching maturity and not sinning? Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22
 - b. *Why exclude her from Rom. 3:23 and 1 Jn. 1:8?

C. Mary the Mediatrix?

1. Catholics believe Mary will intercede for them and they appeal to her to pray to the Lord for them.
 - a. In the Hail Mary she is asked to, “pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death.”
2. Two replies:
 - a. Never taught in the Scriptures. Remember she is not mentioned in the epistles except when Paul writes, “*born of a woman.*” Gal. 4:4
 - b. *Who is the one mediator between God and men? 1 Tim. 2:3-6
3. We must be a people of prayer and ought to thank God for devout people like Mary, but she is not to be the object of our worship and should not be elevated to mediator.

V. WAS PETER THE FIRST POPE?

A. Roman Catholic View.

1. The Popes are said to be the successors to Peter, who was made head over the other apostles.
See Matt. 16:16-18.

B. The New Testament Teaching.

1. Matt. 16:16-19 did not make Peter the Pope.
 - a. A similar promise was made to the other apostles in Matt. 18:18-20.
2. While Peter was *a* leader, Jesus made no one *the* leader. Matt. 20:20-28
 - a. In Acts 15, James appears as more of a leader than Peter.
 - b. None of the apostles behaved like modern Popes. Acts 10:25, 26
 - c. They were warned against such in Matt. 23:5-12.
 - 1) What does the word Pope mean?
 - 2) “Do not call anyone on earth your _____.” Matt. 23:9
3. Peter was a married man. Matt. 8:14, 15; 1 Cor. 9:5

Lesson 5: The Protestant Reformation

Introduction:

- 1) On October 31, 1517 a thirty-four year old monk offered to debate *95 Theses* and thus set in motion a chain of events that would change the world.
- 2) This lesson looks at the background to the Protestant Reformation, the Reformation itself, and concludes with a look at some of the things that went wrong.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE REFORMATION.

A. Underlying Causes of Dissatisfaction.

1. Moral Bankruptcy.

- a. Though there were many exceptions, corruption was rampant among officials of the Roman Catholic Church.
- b. Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) had six children by two different women and was said to have bribed 25 cardinals to secure his election.
- c. Simony (buying and selling clerical offices) was common practice.

2. Church Embarrassments.

- a. From 1309 to 1377 the papal headquarters were moved to Avignon, France in what came to be called the Babylonian Captivity.
- b. Around 1400 three men claimed to be the lawful Pope.

3. Nationalism.

- a. A rising sense of nationalism created resentment over the domination of Rome and the Italian popes.

4. The Renaissance.

- *. What was the Renaissance)?

- a. The Renaissance emphasized reason and knowledge and especially emphasized the individual's ability to reason for himself.
- b. It created a renewed interest in classical writings, including the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of Scripture.

B. Early Reforms.

1. During the years of Roman Catholic dominance (ca. 600-1520), there were always dissenters, some raising loud cries of protest, while others quietly worshiped God according to the dictates of conscience.

2. John Wycliffe (1320-1384) gave the English the Bible in their language.
 - a. Forty-four years after his death his bones were exhumed and burned.
3. John Huss (1373-1415) was influenced by Wycliffe and began a movement in Bohemia (part of the modern Czech Republic) that survived his being burned at the stake.
4. We do not have time to consider all the courageous men and women who risked their lives for the sake of conscience, but we should thank God for them and ask ourselves if we possess a similar courage. Matt. 10:28-33

C. The Printing Press.

1. The fifteenth century saw the development of the “modern” printing press.
2. Johann Gutenberg printed his famous Bible about 1456.
3. The printing press allowed Reformers to make the Scriptures, along with their own writings, widely available.

II. MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546).

A. Background.

1. At age 34 Luther was serving as a teacher at the University of Wittenburg (Germany) and was also a parish priest.
2. For some years he had been troubled by the Church’s emphasis on works, including penance, fasting, etc., and a lack of emphasis on grace and the need for a personal faith.
3. The dramatic events of Oct. 31, 1517 had been building for some time, but the final straw involved a man named John Tetzel.

B. Tetzel’s Indulgences.

1. When a German prince (Albert of Brandenburg) needed money to pay a debt to Pope Leo X, the sale of indulgences was permitted.
2. The indulgences promised relief from Purgatory for a deceased loved one or for the purchaser himself.
3. Tetzel was employed as the chief salesman and by all accounts was highly successful.
4. This widespread “selling of grace” deeply disturbed Luther.

C. The *Ninety-five Theses*.

1. The document nailed to the “church” door in Wittenburg that October was a challenge to debate the propriety of selling indulgences.
 - a. Some dispute the claim that Luther actually nailed his document to the door, but no one disputes that he offered to debate *Ninety-five Theses*.
2. In the beginning Luther had no intention of leaving the Roman Catholic Church, but as Luther studied and debated it became clear a separation was inevitable.
3. Though he must have seemed quite radical to the Roman authorities, Luther was actually very cautious in making changes and retained many of Catholicism’s rituals.
4. However, several distinctive ideas did come to characterize him and his followers.
 - a. Authority was said to reside in Scripture alone and not in the Church. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
 - b. Salvation by faith alone. (In Luther’s writings you will find some contradictory statements regarding the necessity of baptism, but salvation by faith alone came to be the accepted doctrine of his followers.)
 - 1) *From Mark 16:16 and Heb. 5:8, 9, what do the Scriptures teach is necessary for salvation?
 - c. Priests/ministers were now allowed to marry.
 - 1) *Where had Paul written that forbidding to marry would be a doctrine of demons?
 - d. The priesthood of believers.
 - 1) Though a key element of Luther’s teaching during the earliest days of the Reformation, he seems to have lost faith in the common man’s ability after the Peasants War in 1525.
 - e. The “Sacraments” were reduced from seven to two: Baptism and the Eucharist.
 - 1) Luther rejected transubstantiation, but believed in **consubstantiation**.
 - 2) *What does the word consubstantiation mean?
 - 3) Today Lutherans prefer the term “sacramental union.”
 - f. View of how to interpret Scripture.
 - 1) Of Luther it was said that “he determined to abide by what the Scriptures did not forbid, instead of by what they enjoined.”
 - 2) Another reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, argued that everything not expressly enjoined in Scripture should be rejected.
 - *3) Would you say Luther or Zwingli was more correct in how we should interpret the Scriptures? Give Scriptures to support your answer.
5. Though Luther did not want anyone to be called Lutheran, this was the name that stuck.

III. THE GROWING PROTESTANT MOVEMENT.

A. John Calvin (1509-1564).

1. At age 26, this French-born theologian published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a systematic theology that continues to have a tremendous impact on religious thought.
2. Calvin became a virtual dictator in Geneva, Switzerland, where he established a university that helped spread his Reformed theology throughout Europe.
3. His doctrine came to be represented by the acrostic—TULIP.
 - a. **T**otal Depravity; **U**nconditional Election; **L**imited Atonement; **I**rresistible Grace; **P**erseverance of the Saints.
 - b. Some have said that Calvin's tulip grew in the **S**oil of God's Sovereignty.
 - 1) The "sovereignty of God" was critical in two ways:
 - a) It was Calvin's answer to charges that his theology made God appear to be unfair.
 - b) Proponents also argued that allowing man any choice in the matter of his salvation robbed God of His sovereignty.
 - 2) *What does the word sovereignty mean?

B. Jacob Arminius (1560-1609).

1. Arminianism became the counter to Calvinism.
2. While Arminius' views on Predestination are (in my estimation) hard to understand, he strongly opposed Calvin's views on the bondage of the human will, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints, etc.

C. Anabaptists.

1. While Luther and Calvin had continued to accept infant baptism as valid, a movement quickly arose that rejected infant baptism and encouraged all to receive baptism as adults, hence the name Anabaptists (from a Greek word meaning to baptize again).
2. The Anabaptists were a diverse lot that spawned the Quakers, Mennonites, Baptists, and many other lesser-known sects.

D. England.

1. Reformation came to England when Henry VIII sought a divorce from Catherine of Aragon, a divorce the Pope would not allow.
2. When the Church of England was declared free from Rome it claimed it was not creating a new church, but only reasserting its traditional independence from foreign bishops.

3. In the years after the break with Rome, the Anglican Church wavered between becoming a true Protestant church and holding onto traditions as an “English Catholic Church.”
 - a. Even today the Anglican Church is considered the most Catholic of all Protestant churches.

IV. THE FAILURES OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

A. Two Great Problems.

1. The tyranny of Rome was often replaced by an equally intolerant Protestant tyranny.
 - a. Lutherans persecuted Anabaptists.
 - b. Calvin was a virtual dictator in Geneva and those who broke his moral code could be put to death. In 1553, a “heretic” named Servetus was burned at the stake in Geneva.
2. Division.
 - a. By 1650 there were Lutherans, Presbyterians, Reformed, Anglicans, Baptists, Anabaptists, Mennonites, Congregationalists (Puritans), et al.

B. Why the Divisions and the Tyranny?

1. Leaders lacked or lost faith in the gospel.
 - a. *What does Rom. 1:16 call the power of God to salvation?
 - b. *What does Eph. 6:17 describe as the sword of the Spirit?
2. Lack of faith in the common man.
 - a. The priesthood of believers quickly gave way to a new clergy system.
 - b. Men were supplied with creeds and catechisms to guide them.
3. Division was viewed as acceptable.
 - a. Unity no longer seemed to be important. John 17:20, 21
 - b. Sincerity was more important than what one believed. John 8:32
4. Nationalism.
 - a. Many were more interested in an independent religion than a correct one. Revelation 19:16
5. Humanism / Individualism contributed to a “do your own thing” mentality.
 - a. The spirit of the Renaissance led many to completely cast off religious restraints.
 - b. Others lost sight of the importance of submitting the human will to the will of God. Though religious, they did not see the importance of careful obedience to God’s word. Matt. 7:21-23; Heb. 5:8, 9
 - c. *“I know the way of _____ is not in himself; it is not in _____ who walks to direct his own _____.” Jeremiah 10:23

Lesson 6: The Restoration Movement

Introduction:

- 1) This lesson will look at the Restoration Movement in America (called the Stone-Campbell Movement by some historians) of the 1800s. [Please read the explanation in the Preface (p. 2) for why I chose to focus on the Restoration Movement in America.]
- 2) This back-to-the-Bible movement profoundly affected religion in America (and ultimately throughout the world).
- 3) The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), independent Christian Churches, and churches of Christ all have connections with this movement.
 - a) While I believe the ideals of the Restoration are valid (to be explained later), we are to be disciples of Jesus (Matt. 28:18-20) and not Restorationists.
 - b) This can be a useful study, but the pattern must always be the Scriptures.

I. AMERICAN RELIGION AROUND 1800.

A. Extremely Divided.

1. Along the eastern seaboard the Episcopalians and Presbyterians were the strongest.
2. As one moved west into Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio one found a greater percentage of Methodists and Baptists.
 - a. And the ecumenical spirit rarely prevailed among them.
 - b. Fierce arguments over immersion and infant baptism were common.
3. There were also many other denominations and the various denominations were themselves frequently divided over different issues.

B. Creeds.

1. *Each denomination had its own creed. What does the word creed mean?
2. People tended to be defenders of the creed more than students of the Scriptures.

C. The Great Revival.

1. Around the beginning of the 19th century the Great Revival swept across America.
 - a. Though it affected people in the East, its impact was greatest along the frontier.
2. Revivals were often interdenominational and might last a week or more.
 - a. The Cane Ridge, KY meeting in 1801 was estimated to have drawn between 20,000 and 30,000.

3. The Great Revival served to create a renewed interest in religion, but also added to the religious confusion of people.
 - a. After the revivals ended where were the “converts” to worship, since the revival might have featured Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists alternating the preaching?

D. Liberty.

1. The Revolutionary War had just ended and a new nation “conceived in liberty” had been “brought forth on this continent.”
2. The time was right for a movement that would promote independent thinking and independent congregations.

II. WHAT WAS THE RESTORATION?

1. At its core it was a rejection of human creeds and an effort to call men back to the Bible.
 - a. One reason they insisted on getting back to the Bible was their belief in the sufficiency of the Scriptures. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
 - b. Another involved a desire for unity and the belief that creeds and catechisms only perpetuated division.
2. No one can point to an exact time or place when the Restoration began, for around 1800 back-to-the-Bible pleas were being heard from the Carolinas up to New England, but the most influential voices would be heard in western Virginia (now West Virginia), Ohio, and Kentucky.
3. What began as several separate movements slowly merged into one during the 1830s.
4. By 1850 the resulting churches (variously known as Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ) were the sixth largest religious body in the United States.
 - a. Sometimes entire churches were converted to this new way of thinking.
 - b. Other times, revival-style meetings would convert dozens, even hundreds.
5. In the second half of the nineteenth century the movement would suffer a serious division.
 - a. We will look at that in a later lesson.

III. FOUR KEY MEN.

A. Note of Explanation.

1. I never refer to the Restoration as the Stone-Campbell Movement, a term used by some historians, though Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell were very influential.
2. The full story of the Restoration involves countless men and women who put their faith in God and His word and sought to return to New Testament Christianity.

3. Never forget that though this study will only consider a few of the leaders, there were many more that played important roles in the “search for the ancient order.”
4. But even if we could name everyone involved, this was not a movement about people but principles.

B. Barton W. Stone.

1. Initially ordained as a Presbyterian preacher, he was a key speaker at the famous Cane Ridge, KY camp meeting in 1801.
2. Early on, Stone had questioned the human creeds so prevalent in his day.
 - a. At his ordination he pledged to uphold the Westminster Creed “only so far as it agreed with the Word of God.” (Ca. 1798).
 - b. To avoid suspension for his rejection of Unconditional Election, he and several other Presbyterian preachers withdrew from the synod in Lexington, KY and formed the Springfield Presbytery ca. 1803.
3. On June 28, 1804, *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* was published.
 - a. Stone and others had come to see such presbyteries as unscriptural and divisive and in *The Last Will and Testament* urged every church to become self-governing (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1, 2) and take the Bible as its only guide. Cf. Rev. 22:18, 19.
4. *Over time baptism was restudied and sprinkling was rejected in favor of immersion as was taught in _____ 6:4 and Col. ____:_____.

C. Thomas Campbell.

1. Campbell was a Presbyterian preacher who arrived in this country from Ireland in 1807.
2. Concerned about religious division, he began to urge men to put aside creeds and seek unity based upon the Bible.
3. He coined a famous expression: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

D. Alexander Campbell.

1. Thomas’ son, he arrived in the USA in 1809 and settled in western Virginia (now West Virginia).
2. Independently of his father, he had begun to question traditional Presbyterian teachings. When reunited in America, each was surprised to find the other moving in the same direction.

3. In 1811, the Campbells helped organize an independent church that rejected all creeds and ate the Lord's Supper every Sunday.
 4. The birth of his first child in 1812 led to vigorous study of the subjects and mode of baptism.
 - a. It was then that Alexander and Thomas Campbell were immersed. They also began to proclaim what they called "believer's baptism." Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:12
 5. Campbell wanted to bring together all who believed in Christ, so when rejected by the Presbyterians, he was affiliated for a time with a Baptist association. (Baptists practiced immersion and rejected infant baptism.)
 - a. Despite his brief affiliation with them, Campbell denied ever have been a Baptist.
 - b. He opposed creeds, while the Baptists (in his area) held to the *Philadelphia Confession of Faith*.
 - c. Campbell's Biblical teaching eventually caused a complete break from the Baptists.
 - 1) Issues concerning the OT/NT relationship; purpose of baptism; frequency of the Lord's Supper; et al led to this separation.
 6. Campbell was neither the first nor the only Restoration preacher, so why was/is he the man most often associated with the movement?
 - a. Campbell was prominent outside the Restoration movement. He was wealthy (married into money) and served in the Virginia House of Burgesses.
 - b. He was extremely intelligent, well educated, logical in his thinking, and hard working.
 - 1) He generally rose at 4:00 A.M. and worked for hours at a time at his standing desk.
 - c. His debates with men of various backgrounds attracted a lot of attention.
 - 1) He publicly debated prominent representatives of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Roman Catholic faiths, along with the renowned skeptic Robert Owen.
 - d. He was a prolific writer.
 - e. But though his natural gifts and hard work put him at the forefront, he was neither the founder nor the source of authority for the Restoration.
- E. Walter Scott.
1. A gifted orator, he made several important contributions to the Restoration.
 2. After making a systematic study of the conversions in Acts he began to preach conversion as a rational process that followed logical steps.
 - a. The conversion process was seen by most in his day as requiring, in one fashion or another, some mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit.

- b. He preached Faith, Repentance, Baptism, Remission of Sins, Gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) The last point was to show that God's promise was received by obedience, and not by praying and seeking some proof of the Spirit.
 - 2) Scott would illustrate the Bible plan with five fingers of one hand, while contrasting the five points of Calvinism on the other hand.
3. Scott stressed unity as others did, but was one of the first to stress that the key to Biblical unity was individuals being in harmony with Christ.

V. SOME REASONS FOR THE EARLY SUCCESS OF THE RESTORATION.

A. The Appeal to Unity.

1. Many found the plea to put aside denominational names and creeds appealing. John 17:20, 21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-3
2. As the years went by, there were often struggles to balance the desire for unity with the importance of truth. See Eph. 4:4-6; 1 John 1:3.

B. The Emphasis on the Bible.

1. Though the Protestant Reformation had hinged on the authority of the Scriptures, man-made creeds and catechisms had become the focus of study and belief.
2. The Restoration was at its core an appeal to search the Scriptures. Acts 17:10, 11
3. Since the Scriptures were sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16, 17), what else could be needed?
 - a. Ben Franklin observed that a creed must be either less than the Bible, more than the Bible, different from the Bible, or the same as the Bible.
 - b. He added that if it is one of the first three it must be rejected and if it is the fourth, it is unnecessary.

C. Reason, Decency and Order.

1. God has never wanted his people to be without emotion, and there are many questions God has not answered, but...
2. The Restoration preachers stressed the importance of decency and order. 1 Cor. 14:33, 40
3. They also emphasized that God had spoken words men could read and understand if they looked at them with reason and logic. Acts 17:10, 11; Eph. 3:3-5

D. The Plan of Salvation.

1. For many in the nineteenth century, salvation was an elusive, uncertain prospect.

2. Through an emphasis on studying the book of Acts, people were made to see that man's part in salvation was easily understood and when men did their part, God promised to do His.
3. Please read Eph. 2:8, 9; John 3:16; Heb. 5:8, 9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16.

E. Militancy.

1. While the first generation Restoration preachers made unity a priority, they did not hesitate to challenge the beliefs and teachings of any they believed to be perverting the gospel of Christ.
Gal. 1:6-9
2. Alexander Campbell, along with others, engaged in a number of debates.
3. The writings of brethren in the first half of the 19th century were often highly critical of the teachings of their day.
4. They found inspiration in Acts 6:9; 7:51-53; 13:44-47; 15:1, 2; 19:8, 9; Jude 3; et al.

Lesson 7: Division and Bible Authority

Introduction:

- 1) In the last lesson we studied a back-to-the-Bible movement that came to be known as the Restoration Movement (named for the desire to restore the ancient order revealed in the NT).
- 2) By 1850 the resulting churches were the sixth largest religious “body” in the United States, but by 1900 the movement was sharply divided.
- 3) Three very distinct groups had emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century.
 - a) The Disciples of Christ were on their way to becoming a full-fledged Protestant denomination.
 - b) The more conservative Christian Churches used instrumental music and believed in the use of missionary societies, but did not fellowship the denominations and had no rigid denominational hierarchy.
 - c) Churches of Christ rejected instrumental music and the missionary society, and rejected all denominational organization.
 - d) Note: some Christian Churches might have accepted only the instrument and others only the society, while some that used the name Churches of Christ utilized one or both of these, but as a general rule the division followed the lines mentioned above.
- 4) In this lesson we will explore some of the reasons the movement divided and consider some fundamentals of Bible authority.
 - a) The two main “issues” were the missionary society and instrumental music, but in this lesson we will focus on two underlying issues.

I. THE DESIRE FOR RESPECTABILITY.

A. The Early Years of the Restoration.

1. The sermons and published articles in the first half of the 19th century fearlessly attacked both Catholic and Protestant practices.
 - a. Disciples did not hesitate to call names or question beliefs, and religious debates were common.
 - b. As a result, many viewed them as “narrow-minded Campbellites” preaching water salvation.
2. Adding to the “image problem” was the fact that many of the early preachers were rough-hewn frontiersmen with limited secular education.
 - a. There were exceptions (Campbell being a notable one), but in the early years of the Restoration most preachers, as with most Christians, were not highly educated, financially secure, or well cultured.

B. Changing Attitudes.

1. As the movement grew, many in the 2nd and 3rd generations grew unhappy with the negative view many had of the Disciples.
2. The changing attitudes reflected themselves in many ways.
 - a. Meetinghouses became increasingly elaborate.
 - b. Preachers were expected to be better educated and more respectable. Some even began to accept titles such as Reverend.
 - c. Preachers were expected to be more positive in their presentations and debating was now discouraged by many.
 - d. Many churches sought to be accepted by other religious groups.
 - 1) Though they may have thought of it as the “best” of the denominations, many clearly wanted the church to take its place among the denominations.
 - e. The push for instrumental music often reflected a desire to be like others.

C. Biblical Evaluation: the Positive Side.

1. As lights of the world (Matt. 5:14-16), Christians must seek to live in a respectable fashion. Cf. Rom. 2:24; 2 Cor. 8:20, 21
2. Christians seek to avoid conflict. Rom. 12:18
3. A church’s meetinghouse should not convey lukewarmness or lack of interest.

D. Biblical Evaluation: the Negative Side.

1. Following God’s way has always created conflict.
 - a. Consider the lives of Jesus, John, the apostles, Stephen, et al.
2. NT Christians, who sought to be “light,” were often despised. 1 Cor. 4:9-13
3. Their preaching often “offended” both Jews and Gentiles. Acts 17:5, 6; 19:23-29
4. That message was often negative as sin was identified and specified. Cf. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10.
5. They debated their cause. Jude 3; Acts 6:8-10
6. They were not men-pleasers. Gal. 1:6-10
7. They simply did not have as their goal “fitting in.” 1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:13; 1 John 2:15-17

II. CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARD SCRIPTURE.

A. Points of Disagreement.

1. Brethren came to view the Scriptures quite differently.
 - a. Some insisted on a “progressive” approach to the Bible (often referred to as liberal by their critics), while others insisted on a more conservative interpretation (sometimes called legalists and traditionalists by their opponents).
2. While some of the more “progressive” began to have little interest in Bible authority, for many conservatives and “moderates” the hermeneutical questions raised were vitally important.
 - a. Was Bible authority vital?
 - b. Was silence prohibitive or permissive?
 - c. How was Biblical authority to be established?
 - d. What are allowable aids and expedients?
 - e. Issues of expediency (i.e. things necessary to carry out a command) were hotly contested.

B. Importance of Authority.

1. All of the above questions are important, but the importance of authority must be first.
 - a. Authority may be defined in different ways, but I use it to mean “authorization, permission, instruction.” I include both requirements and permissible options.
2. We must do the will of the Father. Matt. 7:21-23
 - a. Though Bible authority is a valid concept and term (cf. Matt. 28:18-20), I have come to prefer the phrase “knowing God’s will.”
3. That will cannot be known except through revelation. Isa. 55:8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:10-13
4. God’s will is found in its completeness in Scripture. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
5. *To minimize the importance of Biblical authority is to reject the truth and refuse to abide in the _____ of _____. 2 John 9

C. How Is God’s Will Revealed (Bible Authority Established)?

1. There are three basic ways. Direct Command or Statement; Approved Example; Necessary Inference or Implication (Inescapable Conclusion).
 - a. In recent years I have seen it shortened to “tell, show, and imply.”
2. While these are often seen as artificial rules, in reality they are the means by which we learn many things.
3. Someone beginning a new job would learn his responsibilities by these 3 methods.
 - a) Direct commands/statements. “Report to work at 8:00 AM.”

- b) Necessary implication. “You will be driving a truck to make deliveries.”
 - 1) Though not expressly stated, it is necessarily implied that a driver’s license is necessary.
 - c) Approved example. The new worker might initially be assigned to ride with an experienced driver. He also might watch some of the employees that are in the boss’s good graces.
4. These three means of establishing authority or determining God’s will are not a “Restoration Hermeneutic,” but are the result of much careful thinking about this subject.

III. DIRECT COMMANDS OR STATEMENTS.

1. While it should be obvious that God’s will can be determined this way, not all see it that way.
 - a. Many think a spirit of love or a good heart will suffice. They ridicule those who think the commandments matter by calling them legalists and Pharisees.
 - b. Just as in the 1800s, some brethren today seek to eliminate the idea of commandments, even referring to the epistles as “love letters.”
2. There are many references to the importance of obeying commandments and/or the recognition that the Bible is to be understood as a book containing such.
 - a. Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:15, 21; 15:14; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thes. 4:1, 2; 2 Pet.3:1, 2; 1 Jn. 2:3,4
3. These commands and/or statements are found in different forms.
 - a. Classic form of command. Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:9
 - b. Conditional statements or declarations. Matt. 7:21; John 3:3, 5; Mark 16:16
 - 1) None of these are “*commands*,” yet each informs us as to the will of God and implies a commanded action.
 - 2) Having read these statements of fact, we can know something about God’s will.
 - c. Rhetorical questions. Rom. 6:1,2
 - 1) The question makes the statement that God commands those who have died to sin to quit living in sin.

IV. APPROVED EXAMPLES.

- A. God Intends for Us to Learn From Examples.
1. Jesus is held out as an example for us. 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:3-6
 - a. Note the connection between keeping commandments and following Jesus’ example.
 2. Paul held himself up as an approved example. 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 2 Thes. 3:7-9
 3. 1st century apostles were guided by the Spirit into all truth (Jn. 16:13), so when these churches were approved by inspired men, they can serve as examples for us today. 1 Cor. 4:16, 17; 1 Thes. 1:6, 7

B. Using N.T. Examples.

1. With examples we must avoid the extremes of binding (imitating) examples not meant to be bound (imitated) and completely dismissing all examples as not binding.
2. All examples teach, even if they do not bind any particulars upon us.
 - a. E.g., Jesus washing feet in John 13 is an example to learn from, but does not make washing feet part of the Lord's Supper or any other congregational activity.
 - b. Note: some prefer not to say *binding examples*; they suggest that an example "*looses*" or shows that we are permitted to do a certain thing.
 - 1) E.g., Acts 20:7 does not bind the 1st day of the week, but shows that this is an authorized day and we conclude it is the only day for eating the Lord's Supper when we find that no other day has been "loosed."
 - 2) Not a lot of difference in expressing it either way.
3. Consider the following guidelines.
 - a. Harmony with other NT teachings.
 - 1) We can learn from the "beyond their ability" giving in 2 Cor. 8:1-5, but the command is, "*as he may prosper.*" 1 Cor. 16:1, 2
 - 2) The Macedonian example *permits* giving beyond our ability, but 1 Cor. 16 shows that such is *not commanded*.
 - b. Uniformity.
 - 1) Every example of elders is plural. Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:4; 20:17
 - 2) Acts 16 shows that people can be taught in various places, therefore the place of teaching in the different examples is not an essential part of the example. Yet we still learn something from each example.
 - c. Universal Application.
 - 1) Can everyone follow it?
 - 2) We might learn from Acts 2:46, but we can't go to temple for worship.
 - d. Apply to our Time and Situation? Are Circumstances Similar?
 - 1) Does the example deal with an emergency, temporary, unique situation? 1 Cor. 7:26
 - 2) We can learn from Peter's actions in Acts 3:6, but can't imitate them.
4. It may take some thought, but examples of approved action can certainly help us understand the will of God. Matt. 7:21

V. NECESSARY IMPLICATIONS/INFERENCES (INESCAPABLE CONCLUSIONS).

1. We often use implications and inferences in our communication and expect others to draw the inescapable conclusion.
 - a. A parent may say, "If this room is not clean by Friday, someone will be staying home."
 - b. Didn't say, "Clean up your room," but come Friday the room had better be clean.
2. The Bible teaches by implication.
 - a. *Where in the NT did Jesus draw from the "*one flesh*" of Gen. 2 the implication that divorce is wrong?
 - b. "I AM" implies life after death. Matt. 22:29, 31, 32
 - c. According to Heb. 7:11-14, Psalm 110:1-4 implied that perfection could not come through the Levitical priesthood; a change of priesthood was coming; and the law would be changed.
 - d. *What inescapable conclusion did Peter draw from the things he saw and heard. Acts 10:9-16, 28, 34, 35
3. This does not mean we resort to guessing.
 - a. We are forced to conclude that infants are not to be baptized. Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 18:8; Rom. 6:3, 4
 - b. Those verses inescapably imply that one must be old enough to believe and repent before baptism.
 - c. *Necessary* and *inescapable* are key. Though some have thought infants were implied in Lydia's household, they are not necessarily implied and as with examples, a verse cannot imply anything out of harmony or inconsistent with other passages.
4. Some have argued against the use of implications by saying that God has then made it too difficult.
 - a. He has not made it too difficult, but the precious truths of Christ are to be regarded as a pearl of great price worth a little effort.

Lesson 8: More on Understanding and Establishing Bible Authority

Introduction:

- 1) In the latter half of the 19th century, the missionary society and instrumental music were often defended with the plea that God had forbidden neither.
- 2) The silence of God was seen as permissive by many Christians and to this day continues to be a point of contention in many religious discussions.
- 3) In this lesson we want to do two things:
 - a) See that silence is intended by the Lord to be restrictive.
 - b) See that God's silence does permit the use of aids or expedients.

I. REACTING TO GOD'S SILENCE.

A. Our First Concern.

1. Begin with the desire to know what God wants. Matt. 7:21
2. Realize that man's wishes are not always the same as God's. Isa. 55:8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:11
3. *How does Jesus describe the worship of those who teach the commandments of men?
Matt. 15:6-9

B. The Completeness of Revelation.

1. If God has told us all that He wants us to know, then silence should mean something to us.
2. *How much truth did Jesus promise the apostles in John 16:13?
3. The mind of God as it relates to salvation has been fully revealed. 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17

C. Jesus and the Apostles Respected God's Silence.

1. *Where did Jesus read that divorce was specifically forbidden? Matt. 19:3-6
2. "To which of the angels did He ever say...?" Heb. 1:5, 13
3. That Moses said "nothing," meant something. Heb. 7:11-14

D. Respect the Boundaries of Truth.

1. If God has revealed all truth and we impose on His silence, are we not adding to God's word?
2. OT warnings. Deut. 4:1, 2; 12:32
3. NT warnings. 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18, 19
4. Nadab and Abihu. Lev. 10:1-3
 - a. When they offered that which God had not commanded, it did not glorify Him.
5. Uzzah and David. 2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13:9, 10; 15:12-15

E. Summary.

1. God has not provided a list of all the things we might wish to do that are wrong; He has by command, example, and implication shown us what He wants.
2. Search the Scriptures for what God wants and trust that God has told us exactly what He wanted.

F. Questions.

1. Can we have a building, song books, projector, etc. and still claim to respect the silence of God?
2. Understanding 2 principles will help us:
 - a. Some commands are specific, while others are general.
 - b. There's a difference between an aid to doing God's will and a change to doing something else.
3. In the remainder of this lesson we want to look more carefully at the idea of general and specific, aids and alterations and see that this is not just "preacher talk."
 - a. We sin if we create or follow a preacher's hermeneutic, but we want to understand the Bible as God meant for it to be understood.
 - b. Bible authority is sometimes made to seem complicated and the words we use in talking about divine authority may not be words we use every day, but the concepts are used on a regular basis.

GENERAL and SPECIFIC AUTHORITY; AIDS and ALTERATIONS

1. Imagine you have been given \$60 and the following grocery list:

Grits	Cereal (3 boxes)
Heinz [®] Ketchup	Apples (1 doz.)
Clorox [®] Lemon Scented Bleach (1 gal.)	Boneless Chicken Breasts
Pillsbury [®] Hungry Jack Biscuits (10)	LeSueur [®] English Peas (2 cans)
Instant Banana Pudding (6 serving box)	Skim Milk (1 gal.)

2. *If you did the following would you have followed instructions?
 - a. Purchased Martha White[®] "instant" grits?
 - b. Purchased Jim Dandy[®] "quick" grits?
 - c. Bought chicken thighs since they were on sale?
 - d. Used a calculator to keep up with your total?
 - e. Bought Rocky Road ice cream (it has milk in it)?

- f. Purchased 6 Rome apples and 6 Red Delicious apples?
 - g. Purchased 12 yellow apples and 1 watermelon?
 - h. Purchased 6 apples and 6 oranges (adds up to 12 pieces of fruit)?
 - i. Purchased 3 boxes of Cap'n Crunch[®] cereal?
 - j. Bought Heinz 57[®] sauce?
 - k. Carried your groceries around the store in a plastic basket?
 - l. Pushed a shopping cart through the store?
 - m. Carried the groceries home in plastic bags?
 - n. Carried the groceries home in paper bags?
3. If we understand how general and specific commands are used in everyday life, we should be able to see how they are used in Scripture.
- a. Can we see that Heinz[®] Ketchup is specific as to product and brand, while the size is optional (within the \$60 constraints)?
 - b. Some brands were specified and others were left in the generic category. Even the specific instructions left certain choices to our discretion.
4. The same goes for aids and alterations.
- a. We do not have any problem seeing that an orange changes the list, while a shopping cart only expedites the purchase and is an “expedient.” (An expedient as the term has often been used refers to an aid or tool to accomplish a job given by God.)
 - b. One might keep up with his money spent in his head or use the calculator. Both aid the process of carrying out the expressed will of the grocery list.
5. In the next lesson we will look at the two great issues that brought division to the Restoration and as we study those we must take these simple everyday principles and apply them to those spiritual questions.

Lesson 9: Issues that Divided—the Missionary Society and Instrumental Music

Introduction:

- 1) As noted in previous lessons, a great division took place in the latter half of the 19th century.
- 2) This lesson will look at two issues that were the focal points of division.
- 3) But let's not forget the two great underlying issues. (See Lesson 7).
 - a) Many wanted to move the church in a more “respectable” direction. They had lost much of the pilgrim spirit (1 Pet. 2:11) and wanted to be more like the denominations their fathers had denounced.
 - b) Along with that, there was also a lessening of emphasis on Bible authority. Matt. 7:21-23

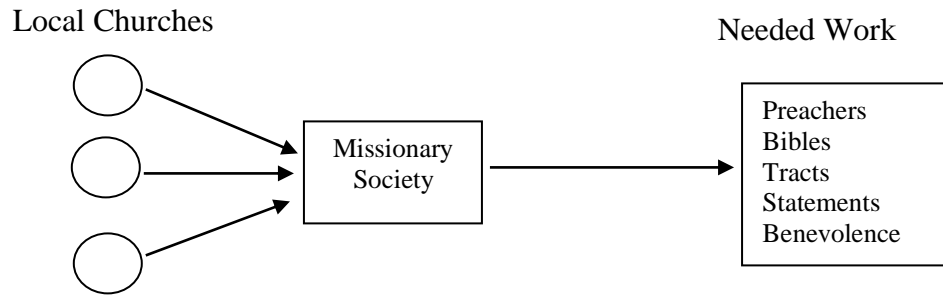
I. BACKGROUND OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY DISPUTE.

A. Early Cooperative Efforts.

1. As the Restoration took hold, cooperation meetings began to be held.
2. The size of the districts involved varied from fairly small to statewide.
3. In the beginning, the meetings were basically news, fellowship, and worship gatherings.
4. In time, they became more organized and authoritative.
 - a. State Meetings might select officers and decide what men would be supported to preach the next year.
 - b. Churches represented at the meetings would often pledge a certain amount of support, which, in many cases, would be sent to a *receiving church*. The receiving church would then disburse the funds as directed by the State Meeting.

B. A National Organization.

1. In 1849 the American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS) was formed in Cincinnati, Ohio with Alexander Campbell as its first president.
2. The Disciples now had a national organization for the first time.
 - a. They could select missions, missionaries and, during the Civil War, even offer political statements “on behalf of the Lord’s people.”
 - b. When the ACMS was formed relatively few men stood against it, but within a few years the Society and the Organ became items of great controversy.
 - c. Note: Some were divided on the two issues. J. W. McGarvey and Moses Lard were known as “middle grounders,” but most brethren either accepted or rejected both.



II. DEFENDING THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

A. Giving Organization to the Universal Church.

1. Brethren recognized the word *church* was sometimes used in a *local* (limited) sense (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 16:16; Rev. 1-3), but could also be used in a *universal* (unlimited) sense (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23).
 - a. See lesson 2.
2. It was argued that the universal church had a mission (Matt. 28:18-20), and since no organization for it was found in the NT, many felt they were free to create any universal organization they desired.

B. An Expedient.

1. Some called it an expedient to carrying out the Great Commission.
 - a. Campbell once wrote of the need for a more “efficient organization of our churches.” *Search for the Ancient Order (Vol. I)*, p. 167
2. It was argued that the Society was equivalent to a meetinghouse, hymnal, etc.

C. Silence of the Scriptures.

1. This was the key argument.
2. In 1866, the Society was in danger of dying and W. K. Pendleton (Campbell’s very prominent son-in-law) defended it by admitting that NT authorization was lacking, but contended it was unnecessary as long as the NT did not forbid it.
3. Pendleton redefined the Restoration plea: “Where the Bible speaks, we speak. Where the Bible is silent, we are silent” was said to have meant that if the Bible was silent, nothing should be bound.

D. Prejudicial Arguments.

1. Some resorted to personal attacks and prejudicial arguments.
2. Society opponents were called “do nothings,” “legalists,” and compared to the Pharisees.
3. Some were accused of being mean-spirited and lacking true spirituality.
 - a. It was said that the spiritually minded were not slaves to “*the letter*” of the law

III. OPPOSITION TO THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

A. Unauthorized.

1. To its opponents, the fact that the all-sufficient Scriptures never authorized the Society was decisive. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
2. The argument from silence was rejected and an appeal for positive authority was made.
 - a. Jacob Creath, Jr. asked why brethren rejected the following that were not specifically condemned: Popery, corrupt Protestantism, infant baptism, creed making, and auricular confession.
3. David Lipscomb’s words from 1873 state well the opposition viewpoint.
 - a. “Our worship to God is regulated by the laws of God. We have no knowledge of what is well pleasing to God, in worship, save as God has revealed it to us. The New Testament is at once the rule and limit of our faith and worship to God. This is the distinctive difference between us and other religious bodies. Others accept the New Testament as their rule of faith, but do not make it the limit of their faith. They add other things as articles of faith and acts of worship than those contained in the Bible. We seek for things authorized, they for things not prohibited. Our rule is safe—theirs is loose and latitudinarian. Ours confines us to God’s appointments. Theirs opens the worship and service of God to whatever will please men. Our rule limits man’s worship to the exercises approved of in the Bible.” *Search for the Ancient Order (V. II)*, p. 241
4. In Lessons 7 and 8 we have seen that Lipscomb was correct when he said that the NT should be the “rule and limit.” 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Rev. 22:18, 19

B. Local Vs. Universal.

1. If the NT is complete, then God has told His people how to do the things He has assigned them and what we find revealed are local churches, each with their own oversight. Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-4

2. God had not provided for a universal functioning body and to create one is to shift responsibility from a divine organization (independent local churches) to a human one.
 - a. While the concept of a universal church is scriptural, giving it organization is not.
 - b. Mistaken ideas about the universal church that had led to the Roman “Universal Bishop” had now been adopted by many brethren.
- C. The Missionary Society Was Unnecessary.
1. Most opponents were far from being “*do nothings*.”
 2. Evangelism was certainly accomplished in NT times without a missionary society and the Restoration Movement enjoyed its greatest growth before the missionary society.
- D. Not Expedient.
1. Everyone should recognize that lawful activities might require expedients (aids, tools).
 - a. E.g., assembling requires a place; singing may require a leader, book, etc.
 2. But where is the command for local churches to pool their resources?
 - a. There is no place for an expedient when there is no authority for the action.
 - b. There can be *no lawful* expedient when no activity has been prescribed.
 3. The missionary society was also criticized as inexpedient by some because it added more expense and overhead to the work of preaching the gospel.
- E. Miscellaneous.
1. Some were opposed because such organizations often came to dominate the churches.
 - a. Not a decisive argument, but one that should be considered.
 2. When Jacob Creath, Jr. was urged to stop his opposition because they were “*commonly accepted*,” he pointed out some other things, such as the golden calf, report of the 10 spies, calves at Dan and Bethel, which had been commonly accepted.
 3. The accusation of “legalists lacking spirituality” may well have fit some, but not all the opponents.
 - a. The fact remains that one must be obedient to Christ. Heb. 5:8, 9; Matt. 7:21

IV. INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

- A. The Controversy.
1. Within the Restoration, the first documented use of a mechanical instrument in worship took place in Midway, KY in 1859, though a few churches probably used it at least as early as 1851.

2. Though this question would become the most visible (or audible) cause of division, the Civil War put the issue on the backburner for a few years.
 3. But in the 20-year period following the war a majority of churches adopted instrumental music.
 4. When the instrument was introduced into the worship division frequently occurred.
 - a. In most cases the majority either favored the instrument or went along with its introduction.
 - b. Those whose conscience would not allow them to go along with the instrument were forced to “start over,” often leaving behind the meetinghouses they had helped build to begin worshiping in a borrowed facility.
 5. This lesson will not cover all that could be said about instrumental music, but will notice a few of the key arguments made in its defense.
- B. The Lack of a Prohibition.
1. The most common defense of the instrument was, “*It doesn’t say not to.*”
 2. Since it was not prohibited, its advocates defended it as an expediency.
 3. Refer back to III., A. and D.
 - a. Silence is not permissive, but prohibitive. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
 - b. To be justified as an expedient there must be a command, yet most agreed that instrumental music was not commanded.
- C. The OT Justification.
1. Some did seek to find biblical justification for instrumental music by looking to the OT.
 2. OT worship often involved instruments. Hab. 3:19; Psa. 150:3; 1 Chron. 25:1; 2 Chron. 29:25-27
 3. But we live under a new and different covenant. Rom. 7:1-4; Eph. 2:14, 15; Heb. 8:6-9; 9:15
 4. If we appeal to the OT, must we also accept incense, animal sacrifices, polygamy, dance, etc.?
Cf. Psalm 150:4
 5. We must look to the NT to know how we are to worship God today.
 - a. Because instrumental music was featured so prominently in the OT, its complete lack of mention in NT worship seems quite significant.
- D. There Are References to Harps in Heaven.
1. Rev. 5:8; 14:1-3; 15:2, 3a
 2. Are heaven and the church exactly alike?

3. Are we certain heaven will contain actual harps?
 - a. Revelation is filled with symbols such as a dragon, beasts, wars, a river of blood flowing for almost 200 miles, a Lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes, et al.
4. Should incense be used with our harps? Rev. 5:8
5. While on earth, we must be governed by passages that deal with our earthly lives.

E. The Word *Psallo*.

1. The Gr. word *psallo* (used 5 times in NT) is claimed by some to mean, “to pluck” and therefore authorize the use of instrumental music.
2. Lexicographers tell us that *psallo*...
 - a. Originally meant to touch, feel or pluck anything, e.g. a hair.
 - b. It then came to be used of playing a harp.
 - c. From there it came to refer to the singing done to the accompaniment of the harp.
 - d. Then in NT times, “to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song (Thayer),” “to sing a hymn, sing praise (Vine).”
3. Consider the way *psallo* is translated by scholars of various religious groups, most of which would accept the use of instrumental music in worship.
 - a. Rom. 15:9 *Sing*.
 - b. 1 Cor. 14:15 (Used twice here.) *Sing*.
 - c. Eph. 5:19 Here given as “*making melody*,” but the instrument making the melody is specified as the heart.
 - d. James 5:13 “*Sing psalms*.”
4. Standard translations never render *psallo* as play and whatever *psallo* includes is commanded of all Christians.
 - a. If it means to play then one person playing an instrument cannot fulfill the command.
5. A more recent twist argues that the Greek *psalms* (psalms) in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 means a song sung to the accompaniment of an instrument.
 - a. In the NT, when the word psalm or psalms occurs the emphasis is on the words.
 - b. As noted above, the psalms were sung. Nothing is said about sung and played.

F. Summary.

1. When it comes to music we have the same choice brethren had in the 19th century. We may offer that for which we have no NT authority, or we can offer that which is commanded and we know is accepted. Heb. 13:15

2. There is no question that the only music authorized for NT is singing.
3. The question for us is this: are we willing to be guided by the NT alone or do we wish to take a chance on that which we think/hope God will accept? Isa. 55:8, 9; Matt. 7:21

Lesson 10: Division Again—Orphan Homes

Introduction:

- 1) After the divisions in the 1800s over the missionary society and instrumental music, churches of Christ struggled with various questions in the first half of the 20th century.
- 2) Some of the more important involved questions about located preachers, Bible classes (Sunday School), the number of containers to be used in the Lord's Supper, and premillennialism.
 - a) After the innovations of the 1800s, brethren tended to be extremely skeptical of anything new.
- 3) While all of them caused some divisions among churches, the most significant was premillennialism.
 - a) In the 1930s the debate raged with R. H. Boll and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. as two of the principal combatants.
 - b) While the battle was fierce for a time, the premillennial position won relatively few adherents, though some churches did become strongly associated with premillennialism. (The Louisville, KY area was one stronghold for this view.)
- 4) While the same issues were a concern in the second half of the 20th century, new issues arose in the 1950s that had a far greater impact on the unity of God's people.
 - a) Some called it a battle over "cooperation," but I will refer to questions about "institutionalism," since this is a term most on both sides can accept as fair.
 - b) This lesson will focus on church support of benevolent organizations such as orphan homes, but many of the same principles would apply to educational organizations (schools and colleges).
 - c) Lesson 11 will examine the institutionalizing of the church as was seen in sponsoring church arrangements.
 - d) Lesson 12 will look at what has come to be the most distinguishing characteristic of institutional churches today, i.e. ministry to the "whole man" as seen in kitchens, gyms, weight loss classes, hospitals, day care, etc.

I. HISTORY OF THE TROUBLES.

A. 1900 to 1945.

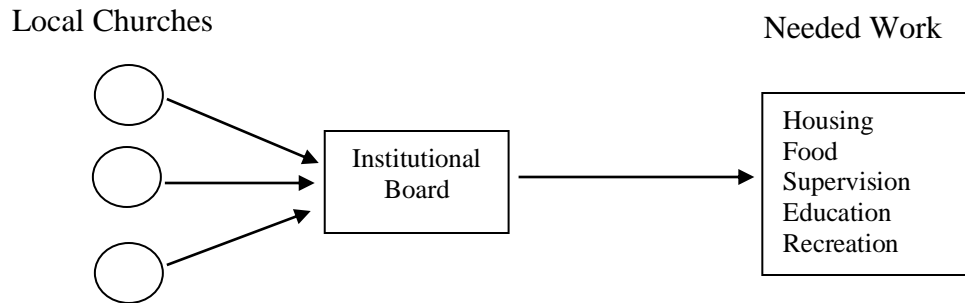
1. The 1930s saw several institutional questions raised and occasionally debated.
2. From the beginning of the Restoration, brethren had established schools and colleges.
 - a. E.g. Alexander Campbell had established Bethany College in 1840.
 - b. From time to time, the question of their relationship to the churches would be raised.
 - c. Some opposed any college teaching the Bible; some viewed them as a strictly an individual enterprise; while others felt churches should support the colleges.

- d. In the 1930s, G. C. Brewer, N. B. Hardeman, et al sought to gain support for colleges from the church treasuries, but were largely unsuccessful.
 3. Orphan homes and other institutions were also discussed on occasions during the 1930s.
 4. When World War II began, the emphasis among brethren shifted to the Christian's role in the military and the institutional questions would not rise to prominence again until the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s.
- B. 1945 to 1965.
1. For the first time church support of orphan homes became a critical issue.
 2. Two key reasons they became so controversial.
 - a. Increased numbers.
 - 1) From 1909 to 1939 Christians established 6 orphanages.
 - 2) In the ten years from 1939 to 1949 the number was more than doubled to 14 orphanages.
 - 3) More orphanages created a need for more money, so increased pressure was put on churches to contribute.
 - b. The college-in-the-budget movement was failing, so the more emotional (yet parallel) question of orphan homes was brought to the forefront.
 - 1) Looking back it is clear that some who pushed for church support of orphan homes (and other benevolent organizations) hoped to swing the discussion to the college as time went by.
 - 2) N. B. Hardeman: "If the church can do part of its work—caring for orphans through a human institution—why can it not do another part of its work— teaching the Bible through a human institution?" (*Gospel Advocate*, 10/23/47). "Why will these brethren support an orphanage and fight the schools? The possible answer is that there are too many of our best churches that support the orphan home, and these brethren are afraid to attack them." (*Gospel Advocate*, 8/28/47).
 - 3) Ultimately, the tactic worked, for though many of the original orphan home boosters never went along with church support of the colleges, the next generation accepted the parallels and supported colleges from the church treasury.
 3. Following World War II, institutionalism and centralization grew rapidly, but critics soon appeared.
 - a. Critics argued that respecting the silence of the Scripture would prohibit churches establishing and contributing to any other organizations.
 - 1) The church was described by them as "all-sufficient."

- b. The earliest critics of institutionalism included Foy Wallace, Jr., Roy Cogdill, James W. Adams, Marshall Patton, Yater Tant and others.
 - 1) Later Wallace was seen as somewhat of an enigma by both sides.
- 4. For several years opponents were able to slow the rush toward institutionalism, but in 1954 the editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, B. C. Goodpasture, endorsed a call for quarantine of the “antis” and the *Gospel Advocate* closed its pages to further study of the issues.
 - a. After this, many “anti” preachers were fired, had meetings cancelled, support dropped, etc.
 - b. The quarantine did not end all opposition, but a lot of “antis” quickly “restudied” their positions.
- 5. The 1950s and 1960s saw many churches divided and by the mid-1960s most on the institutional side preferred to ignore the antis, whom they described as withering on the vine.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECTIONS.

- 1. As noted above, the key argument from opponents was that there was no authority for organizations other than the local church to receive funds for the purpose of doing the work of the church.
- 2. NT churches were engaged in benevolence (and teaching of God’s word), but we have no record of any “middleman” organizations being funded by the churches.
 - a. See Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-7; 11:27-30, et al.
 - b. The “Judean Relief Agency” simply did not exist.



- 3. Since the Scriptures make us complete (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) and do not provide for these other institutions, we must conclude that they are unauthorized. 2 John 9
- 4. How then did the proponents of institutionalism defend their practices?
 - a. Some brethren sought to justify institutionalism on the basis of the silence of the Scriptures without ever using that expression.
 - 1) They did not wish to use the argument used by the Christian Churches to justify missionary societies, organs, carnivals, etc.

- 2) But when A. C. Pullias wrote *Where There Is No Pattern*, and others questioned the binding nature of NT examples, a shift of attitudes toward authority on the part of many could be seen.
- b. However, fairness demands acknowledgement that many of those advocating support of orphan homes believed that they did have Bible authority for their practices.
 - 1) While there were “liberals” who had begun to downplay the importance of understanding and doing God’s will in the strict way most had once believed necessary, others sought to show that these institutions were in harmony with God’s revealed will and we will briefly consider three of those arguments.

III. “THE ORPHAN HOME IS AN EXPEDIENT.”

1. It was argued that church supported orphanages (and Bible colleges?) were simply an expedient method of doing a work God had commanded.
 - a. Orphan homes were compared to meetinghouses, songbooks, radio programs, etc.
 - b. It was said that, “the church can’t change a diaper, fix a bottle, etc.”
2. The truth is that a church and an orphan home are both organizations that *use methods* to do their work.
 - a. The orphanage cannot change diapers or feed the hungry, but it can arrange for someone to do it.
 - b. Similarly, the church can make arrangements for the feeding of a needy saint.
 - c. Sometimes a church will help needy saints with medical bills, car payments, rent, and other expenses. Would that give the church the right (authority) to build a hospital, car dealership, apartment complex, etc.?
3. The orphanage is not a method, but an unauthorized organization that utilizes the same type methods God’s authorized organization (i.e. the local church) uses.

IV. “THE ORPHAN HOME WAS THE NATURAL HOME RESTORED.”

1. Guy Woods, preacher and attorney, popularized the legal term *in loco parentis* (in the place of the parents) to argue that the institutional board stood in the place of the deceased parents.
 - a. The claim was that a contribution given to an orphanage was not being given to an institution as such, but only to the child’s home which was now restored under this board of directors.
2. Answering this defense.
 - a. Those who made it would defend giving aid to a Catholic family that was in need, but would have refused to give money to a Roman Catholic orphanage.
 - 1) But was not St. Jude’s Boys Home acting in loco parentis?

- b. As discussed under the expedient argument, the institution was *not* a home, but sought to provide a home for the children.
- c. If the institution and its board of directors stood in loco parentis, why did the board members not use their own resources to take care of the children?
 - 1) Not to suggest that they did not contribute generously, but one does not “contribute” to the needs of his family—he puts all at their disposal.
- d. Church benevolence in the NT went to needy saints and not homes.
 - 1) One of the things a needy saint might do with those funds is provide a home, but there is a difference between helping an individual and a home.

V. “WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL CAN DO, THE CHURCH CAN DO.”

- 1. Though not exclusively linked to the question of limited benevolence, as the discussion began to shift in that direction, some contended that since the church was made up of individual Christians, it could do anything individuals could do.
 - a. “Any ‘good work’ which the individual, as a Christian, is obligated to support financially, the church is equally obligated to support financially. There has been a great deal of talk about what the individual can do in supporting good works, and what the church cannot do in supporting the same good works. No such distinction is taught in the Scriptures. If it is a good work which the Lord wants done, the obligation falls equally upon the individuals and the church, for individuals are the church.” *Questions and Issues of the Day in Light of the Scriptures*, Batsell Barrett Baxter
- 2. But there is a great difference between church and individual action.
 - a. Matt. 18:15-17 shows a distinction between individual, joint, and church action.
 - b. Churches and individuals acquire funds differently. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Eph. 4:28
 - c. Do not let the church be burdened. 1 Tim. 5:16.

VI. LIMITS ON BENEVOLENCE.

A. The Shift in the Arguments.

- 1. At some point in the discussion a separate issue was raised. Is there any authority for the church to take funds from its treasury to render benevolent assistance to one who is not a Christian?
- 2. When the orphan home first became a subject of controversy, most Christians probably believed that the answer was yes, but interestingly, there are no indications that it had ever been widely studied or debated among brethren.

B. Church Benevolence and Its Recipients.

1. Acts 2:44-47 All who believed.
2. Acts 4:32-35 Anyone among the multitude of those who believed.
3. Acts 6:1-4 Widows among the disciples.
4. Acts 11:29 Brethren.
5. 1 Cor. 16:1 Saints.
6. 2 Cor. 8:4 Saints.
7. 2 Cor. 9:1 Saints.
8. 2 Cor. 9:12 Saints.
9. 1 Tim. 5:5, 9-11, 16 Widows who trust in God and follow every good work.

C. Objections to the “Saints Only” Position.

1. James 1:27
 - a. The context shows that this deals with an individual practicing undefiled religion. 1:23-27
 - b. The Christian is to care for the poor and his own purity.
 - c. Note that even if James 1:27 obligated the church to a general responsibility for orphans and widows from the treasury, it would not authorize another organization.
2. Galatians 6:10.
 - a. Does the plural mean Paul speaks of church action or does it simply obligate every individual saint? Cf. 5:1, 25, 26.
 - b. Begin reading at 6:1 and read through v. 10.
 - c. “Therefore” in v. 10 is pointing us back to the statement in v. 7 that whatever “a man” sows, that he will also reap.
 - d. When brethren sought to apply this to the use of the church treasury they opened Pandora’s box, for this verse has since been used to justify recreation, family planning, medical research, etc.
3. 2 Corinthians 9:12, 13.
 - a. This passage speaks of church action, but does it justify a general benevolent work of the church?
 - b. Who are the two groups in verse 13?
 - 1) With them (saints) and all (men in general).
 - 2) With them (poor saints at Jerusalem) and all (saints everywhere, particularly Jewish Christians).

- c. For whom was the contribution intended?
 - 1) Money raised for saints in Jerusalem. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2; Rom. 15:26
 - 2) Money sent to saints. Rom. 15:25
 - 3) Money received/accepted by saints. Rom. 15:31
 - 4) Money supplied needs of the saints. 2 Cor. 9:12
 - 5) Consider the context of 2 Cor. 8, 9. 8:4: 9:1, 12
 - 6) “The Corinthians’ contribution is for the poor saints at Jerusalem only. But the fellowship which was expressed in it was, the apostle assures, felt for all Christians.” R. V. G. Tasher, *Tyndale Commentary*, p. 129

Conclusion:

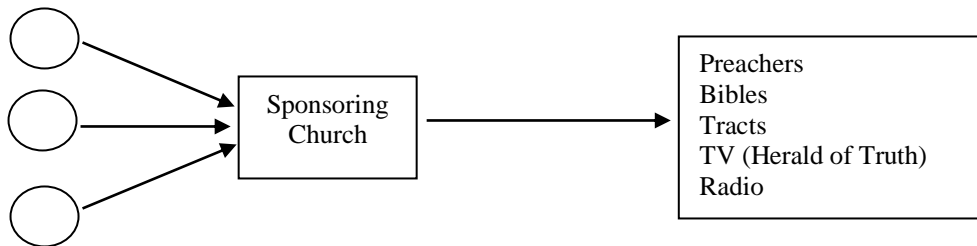
- 1) Had brethren recognized the Scriptural limits on benevolence there never would have been an orphan home controversy.
- 2) But if we don’t recognize the error of unauthorized institutions (“middleman” organizations), some other form of institutional or organizational error will arise to trouble us.

Lesson 11: Division Again—Sponsoring Churches

I. DEFINING THE SPONSORING CHURCH.

1. A sponsoring church arrangement is created when a local church (the sponsor) takes the oversight of a work belonging to more than one church.
2. It is sometimes seen in the oversight of a “mission” church.
 - a. In this arrangement the elders of the sponsoring church oversee the work (often the establishment) of the mission church, at times even holding the property deeds of the mission church.
3. However, the best known practice is similar to the arrangement that was used for the *Herald of Truth*.
 - a. One church decides (or agrees) to sponsor a work they cannot afford. Then they appeal to other churches to help support the work.
 - b. Interestingly, there can be disagreement about whose work is done through the sponsoring church. Some say that it is the work of all the churches, but at other times the sponsoring elders contend that they are simply doing their own work and receiving assistance to do their own work.

Local Churches



4. Historically speaking, sponsoring church arrangements (or at least things similar to it) had appeared from time to time on a limited scale, but after WWII they became prominent and this prompted more study.
 - a. The desire to evangelize the world and especially the defeated Axis powers led to the first large, national sponsoring churches.
 - 1) For example, the Broadway church in Lubbock, TX sought to be the sole sponsor of evangelism in post-war Germany and other churches acted in a similar way toward Italy and Japan.

- b. Then around 1950 the *Herald of Truth* was launched.
 - 1) Overseen by the Fifth and Highland elders in Abilene, TX, the *Herald of Truth* was first a national radio program and then a national television program.
 - 2) Looking back on the promotion of and emotional attachment some had to the *Herald of Truth*, it is not difficult to see the “desire for respectability” rising again.
- c. Today there is no single program attracting the interest the *Herald of Truth* once did, but the sponsoring church arrangement is still a common practice.
 - 1) *In Search of the Lord’s Way*, *International Gospel Hour*, et al..

II. ATTEMPTS TO JUSTIFY THE SPONSORING CHURCH.

- 1. Some argued that it was simply an expedient to carry out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - a. As some had done in seeking to justify the Missionary Society, it was argued that the Great Commission requires worldwide evangelization without specifying an arrangement.
- 2. It was also argued that the SC was simply a local church doing Scriptural work within the framework of Scriptural organization.
- 3. Opponents were frequently labeled anti-cooperation or anti-evangelism.

III. OBJECTIONS.

A. Not Anti-Evangelism or Anti-Cooperation.

- 1. Brethren who opposed the centralization of power under elderships in Memphis, Abilene, Lubbock, et al insisted that they were not opposed to cooperation or evangelism.
- 2. They agreed that churches were to proclaim the gospel (1 Thes. 1:8), but also insisted that God had revealed the way it was to be done.

B. No Authority.

- 1. Does the Great Commission authorize a sponsoring church? Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16
 - a. *To whom was Jesus speaking when He gave the commission?
 - b. *Where in Scripture would we go to learn how local churches and individual Christians were to assist in the evangelization of the world?
- 2. Brethren who rejected the missionary society and accepted the sponsoring church did so because they viewed the church as a divine plan and the society as a human one, but....
 - a. Did any NT church and its elders function as a sponsoring church?
 - b. In reality, the sponsoring church was a “middle-man” organization. In essence, it was a missionary society under the oversight of elders.

C. In the NT Receiving Churches Were Needy.

1. We have NT authority for one or more churches to send to another, but it was always in the direction of need, poverty, etc.
2. There is no record of funds being sent to another church for the work of evangelism.
3. Read each of the following references and ask yourself if any of these involved funds being sent for evangelism or if the need was ever an artificially created one.
 - a. Acts 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8, 9
4. In an attempt to answer this argument some sought to blur the distinction between evangelism and benevolence.
 - a. “Evangelism and benevolence cannot be perfectly separated from each other. The benevolent acts of Jesus were to result in faith which is over in the realm of evangelism. Jn. 20:30, 31” *Gus Nichols’ Sermon Outlines*, p. 17
 - b. Such misses the point of John 20:30, 31. Benevolence did not produce faith; faith came from miracles (signs) that confirmed the message Jesus proclaimed. Some miracles were benevolent in nature, but benevolence was not the faith maker.
 - c. *Jesus told those whom He had fed that they were seeking Him for the loaves, when they should have seen the _____. John 6:26

D. The Sponsoring Church Arrangement Creates an Unscriptural Hierarchy of Churches.

1. Sponsoring church advocates have created 3 types of churches: supporting, sponsoring, and mission.
2. In the NT we never read of these distinctions; instead, we simply read of churches.

E. Each Congregation Is to Be Independent.

1. Though all authority ultimately resides in Christ (Matt. 28:18), each congregation is free to rule and direct itself within those confines.
2. No NT authority can be found for a higher denominational body to govern the churches.
3. Each church is to have the same “officers.” Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
4. Consider the five churches in Rev. 2 and 3 that were doing something wrong.
 - a. Christ dealt with each one independently and each was to take care of its own problems.
 - b. There were no denominational or brotherhood enforcers to punish them for noncompliance.

5. Even when one or more churches sent funds for benevolent relief to another church independence was maintained. Acts 11:30; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:18-23
 - a. The funds were delivered to the elders of the receiving congregations in Acts 11. In the later collection for Jerusalem, each congregation chose its own messengers to deliver the funds.
 6. But in sponsoring church arrangements, either supporting churches turn funds over to another church to use as they decide, or the sponsoring church allows supporting churches to dictate to it.
- F. Limits on Elders.
1. *Elders are to shepherd (feed, KJV) what group? Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4
 2. *Can elders in one town shepherd a flock in another town? Cf. John 10:1-5, 11, 27.
- G. No Authority for Universal Church Activity.
1. The *Herald of Truth* was spoken of as a project of “THE CHURCH.”
 - a. Interestingly, Alexander Campbell had seen the American Christian Missionary Society in the same way.
 2. However, in the NT no provisions are made for the universal church to be activated or organized.
 3. Local congregations did not ignore the existence of other local bodies, but local organization is as large as the NT teaches us to get.
 4. While the NT speaks of times when churches assisted one another, lasting links or organizations beyond the local level were never created.
- H. Preacher Support Was Sent Directly to the Preacher.
1. Some argued that sponsoring churches were necessary in order to support preachers around the world, but how were preachers supported in NT times?
 2. While there are no examples of one church sending to another church for the support of a preacher, mention is made of churches sending support to a preacher.
 - a. Phil. 4:10, 14-16; 2 Cor. 11:7-9
 3. Interestingly enough, this last passage has been used by some to justify the sponsoring church.
 - a. “2 Cor. 11:8. Here, churches co-operated in aiding another church in evangelism. The fact that the record does not say whether the funds were sent directly to Paul, or to the church for Paul, proves that it would not make any difference, or God would have said which way it was done.” *Gus Nichols’ Sermon Outlines*, p. 23.
 - b. Notice that Paul said, “**I** robbed.” Without a practice to defend no one would argue that other churches sent money to the Corinthian treasury.

Lesson 12: Food, Fun, and Fellowship

Introduction:

- 1) The institutional battles began over what organizations churches could use in the care of orphans and preaching the gospel, and while these are still important issues, the most obvious differences among churches of Christ now involve other issues.

I. PRACTICES OF SOME CHURCHES OF CHRIST.

1. Many churches of Christ have buildings that include kitchens and fellowship halls in which they eat common meals they call fellowship dinners.
 - a. Ray Hawk affirmed in a written debate in 1973: “The Scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.”
 - b. Burton Coffman argued in his commentary on Romans that meals could be eaten in a church building since they’re eaten in private homes and early Christians often met in private homes.
 - c. Several years ago the Gateway Church of Christ in Pensacola, FL sponsored a “Breakfast of Champions.”
 - 1) “For \$2, attendees sit against a huge backdrop mural of a sunrise and dine on eggs, sausage, ham, toast, fruit, juice and coffee (Wheaties are conspicuously absent) prepared by the church volunteer staff. Following the meal, they get their engines revved for the week ahead with a short, positive message from area sports figures, industry heads, politicians and other notables. The sessions begin about 6:30 a.m. each Monday in the church fellowship hall. “The messages are usually of the positive thinking, go-get-‘em variety and cut across denominational boundaries to appeal to a success-oriented audience....
“One of the hallmarks of these initial sessions has been the attention paid to detail: the attractive business card present at each place setting, the plaque awarded to each speaker, the surprise appearance on the menu of a homemade dessert specialty.” *Pensacola Journal*, 11/26/82
2. Churches have built gymnasiums. (At least one called it a Family Life Center.)
 - a. Not unusual to see playground equipment on the church’s property.
3. In some cities the church softball or basketball leagues include teams from the Church of Christ.

II. OPPOSITION TO THESE PRACTICES IS NOT NEW.

1. The *Gospel Advocate* once opposed church sponsored recreation.
 - a. “It is not the duty of the church to provide entertainment for young or old. It is not a part of the program of the church to provide playgrounds, programs of entertainment, or supervisors of such programs.”
 - b. “Building recreation rooms and providing and supervising recreational activities at the expense of the church is a departure from the simple gospel plan as revealed in the New Testament. The church might as well relieve the parents of feeding and disciplining all the young people at church expense as to take over the job of entertaining and supervising their recreation at church expense.” *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary on Bible School Lessons, 1951*, pp. 226, 229
2. In 1944 Floyd Decker wrote a tract on why he left the Christian Church. Included in his criticisms of the Christian Church were the following.
 - a. The use of missionary, benevolent and educational organizations to do the work of the church.
 - b. Carnal Appeals: carnivals, bands, plays, choruses, dramatics, camps, kitchens, fellowship halls.
3. Bill Hall stated that he did not know of a single church in Montgomery, AL in 1954 that had a kitchen and fellowship hall in its building. *Restudying Issues of ‘50s and ‘60s*, pp. 31, 32

III. THE KITCHEN, BALL TEAM, ETC. ARE WITHOUT SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY.

A. Authority for the Building.

1. Aids and expedients are authorized.
 - a. In order to go into all the world, some method of going must be used.
 - b. Drinking the fruit of the vine requires some expedient container in which to hold the liquid.
2. But you can only have expedients (aids, tools) for things which are authorized.
 - a. E.g. choir robes can’t be justified as an expedient, for the choir itself is unauthorized.
3. *The command to assemble (Acts 20:7; _____ 10:25) necessitates a place.
 - a. Church ownership of property isn’t the only option available, but since God hasn’t specified where to meet we can choose what is most expedient.

B. The Building and the Meals.

1. The church has a Scriptural right to a place of assembly (assembling for worship is required), but if a church is going to have a place to cook and eat it must first establish that these are things God commands or desires the church to do.
2. Unless the eating of common meals is an authorized work of the church, the kitchen and fellowship hall cannot be Scriptural expedients.

C. What Is the Work of the Local Church?

1. *NT churches assembled regularly. Heb. 10:24, 25; Acts 20:___
2. *In those assemblies they observed the Lord's Supper. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. ___:17-34
3. *They sang together. _____ 5:19; Col. 3:_____
4. They prayed together. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 14:16, 17
5. They preached and taught God's word. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 14:26
6. They took up a collection on the first day of the week. 1 Cor. 16:1, 2
7. *They supported men who preached the gospel. 2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. ___:15, 16
8. They provided for the needs of destitute saints. Acts 4:34, 35; 2 Cor. 8, 9
9. They disciplined unruly members. 1 Cor. 5:1-7
10. Anything necessary to carrying out these functions can be authorized as an expedient, but is there a Scripture which teaches that NT churches were involved in social activities, such as eating and recreation?
 - a. Without such a passage, the kitchen and/or fellowship hall cannot be justified as an expedient.

IV. INDIVIDUAL—CHURCH DISTINCTION.

1. Does opposition to church sponsorship of recreation and meals mean that such activities are evil?
2. Absolutely not, but we must recognize the distinction between things to be done as individual Christians and things God expects of us as a church. Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:16
3. To justify church kitchens, dinners, fellowship halls, etc. requires more than proving Christians may sometimes eat together or have kitchens; it must be proven that is Scriptural for the church as a collective body to be charged with these things.
4. But what about the fact churches sometimes assembled in homes where ordinary meals were eaten?
 - a. Do we have the right to build sleeping facilities since they are found in our homes? If we baptized someone in a member's pool could we then build a church swimming pool?
 - b. If someone operates a business out of their home and also allows the church to meet there, does that make it right to get the church involved in business?
5. We have Bible authority for Christians to eat together (Acts 2:46; 1 Pet. 4:9) and such should be encouraged, but only as an individual activity.

V. THE CORINTHIAN SOLUTION.

1. The church at Corinth had a problem that involved corruption of the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. 11:17-34
 - a. *Based on 11:17-22, what were the Corinthians doing wrong?

2. Notice that there are two parts to the solution.
 - a. Paul reminded them of how the Lord's Supper was to be observed. 11:23-33
 - b. He also told them to eat their "hunger-satisfying" meals at home. 11:22, 34

VI. MAKE THE CROSS THE APPEAL.

1. Rather than appeal to man's carnal nature, the apostles sought to persuade with spiritual appeals.
2 Cor. 10:3-5
2. Their appeal was the appeal of the cross. 1 Cor. 1:18, 22-24; 2:2
3. They knew it was foolishness to some and a stumbling block to others, but because it was the power of God they would not resort to any other motivation.
4. If we make food, fun and "fellowship" our drawing cards, are we not seeking to appeal to men by something other than the cross? See Mark 4:18, 19.
5. *What did Jesus say to those who sought Him because of the loaves and fishes? John 6:26, 27
 - a. *What did these do when the teaching became too strong for them? John 6:60-69

VII. ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY.

A. Jesus Deals with the Whole Person.

1. Some have argued that in His teachings and miracles Jesus dealt with physical, spiritual and emotional needs.
2. But what does that mean to the church?
 - a. Were the acts (including miracles) of Jesus, an individual, ever imitated by NT churches?
 - b. Would this principle not require churches to operate hospitals, psychiatric clinics, health clubs, funeral homes, job training centers, etc.?

B. Expedients That Edify.

1. Some say that while "fellowship" dinners are not specifically mentioned in the NT, they are an expedient means of edification, and edification is taught in the NT.
2. Objections to the expediency argument.
 - a. See III on the absence of Bible authority.
 - b. *Edification is prominently mentioned in the NT, but are church dinners ever suggested as a means of edification?
 - c. See III, C for the means by which NT churches edified (built up) one another.
 - d. *Look up the word fellowship in the NT and see if you can find any references to social activities.

C. The Results Are Good.

1. Some have defended their dinners, kitchens, et al with such statements as...
 - a. "I have seen it work."
 - b. When you don't have church dinners you will be cold, callous, with bickering, backbiting, etc.
2. Objections to the results argument.
 - a. Is God always pleased with things that "work," or at least appear to work?
 - 1) Have we forgotten Moses and the water, Uzza and the ark, et al?
 - b. If the absence of church dinners produces all the bad results mentioned above, they would be a requirement and not an option, and how can we explain their lack of mention in the NT if they are so vital?
3. Read Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

D. Love Feasts Are Scriptural.

1. Read 2 Pet. 2:13 and Jude 1:12 where feast and love feast appear.
2. What are these love feasts that are mentioned only in these verses?
 - a. Some understand it to refer to the Lord's Supper.
 - b. A similar view sees it as depicting the entire worship assembly as a spiritual feast. Cf. John 6:35-59.
 - c. Others view it as something like a modern "pot-luck" dinner.
 - d. Still others see the modern "fellowship" dinner and "fellowship" hall in these verses.
3. What are the facts?
 - a. Neither verse specifically indicates that these were church planned activities.
 - b. The fourth option would contradict what Paul taught in 1 Cor. 11.
4. It is a dangerous thing to use obscure, uncertain references as authority to add things to the mission of the church.

E. Arguments on 1 Cor. 11.

1. The following were arguments offered by some preachers and elders in Conyers and Covington, GA as justification of their kitchens and "fellowship" meals. (In 1993 and 1994, a series of studies with representatives from two institutional and two non-institutional churches was held and the author was one of the participants.)
 - a. It was only an abuse of the Lord's Supper Paul condemned.

- b. The Corinthians weren't sharing properly and were embarrassing those that had nothing, but we share it all on one table. 11:21, 22
 - c. If eat "at home" means at home, you can't stop at Ryan's® (restaurant).
 - d. We dismiss the worship assembly before going to the basement to eat.
2. It's true the Lord's Supper had been perverted and Paul reminded them of how it was to be done (11:23ff), but if all they needed to do to make the "fellowship dinner" scriptural was dismiss, move to another room and share, why didn't Paul say that, instead of...11:33, 34?
3. Does "at home" lose all meaning if those who oppose church kitchens eat at a restaurant?
- a. Can women preach since most allow them to ask questions in the car? 1 Cor.14:34, 35
 - b. "At home" in both 1 Cor. 11 and 14 does not have reference to a specific place, but is instruction to keep these things (viz. eating, women speaking) out of the assemblies, since they are not suitable for church functions.

Lesson 13: Concluding Thoughts

1. Love God.
 - a. We must not serve God merely out of habit or family tradition.
 - b. Let us ever be drawn to Him by His love. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15
2. Loving God requires obedience to Him. 1 John 5:3
 - a. The Lord has called us to be a people who listen to His law. Isa. 2
 - b. A strict interpretation of the Scriptures, accompanied by careful obedience to God's word is not legalism.
3. Study!
4. In disputes we must conduct ourselves honorably.
5. Avoid centralization.
 - a. Let's keep elders shepherding the flock "among" them.
6. Remember that one error (or misunderstanding) can easily lead to another and take us farther and farther from God's truth.
7. Have faith in the power of God's word.
8. We must not allow nationalism to triumph over loyalty to our King.
9. Never lose the "pilgrim" mentality.
 - a. We were not called to "fit in" with the world around us.
10. God must always be worshiped as He has directed and not as we desire.
11. Any work assigned to local churches can be accomplished without the need for a "middle-man" organization.
12. God's silence should be seen as prohibitive and not permissive.
13. There cannot be justifiable expedients for unauthorized practices.
14. Individual Christians may do some things which the church, acting as a collective body of Christians, is not authorized to do.
15. In the New Testament, the treasury was used in benevolence only for needy saints.
16. The work of the local church does not include social activities.
17. We must be evangelistic, but our appeal must be "Christ and Him crucified."

Sources

I will not cite all the works listed in the notes, but will instead mention some of the more helpful books used in my studies. I would like to make it clear that this is not a complete list of resources available and I would not endorse everything in these books, but these are some of the ones that were most helpful to me in helping me understand the historical perspective of the various issues that have troubled God's people through the years. In addition to these listed, back issues of magazines and church bulletins contain some valuable history and biblical teaching. But as suggested many times in the body of the material, the key source is the Bible. May God help us all to be better students of His word and less attached to the traditions of men.

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