

University Heights Church
of Christ
445 Columbia Ave.,
Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday

Bible Study: 9:45 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is
immediately followed by a
short worship period)

First Friday of Each Month

Singing: 7:30 PM

LEADERSHIP

Elders

Garry Banks, David Collins,
John Thompson

Evangelist

Adam Litmer

Deacons

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,
Matt Thompson, Adam
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam
Daniels, Jamie Powell

NOTE

Jared Sells has identified with
the congregation here at
University Heights. We are
excited to work and worship
with him. Let us welcome him
to the family with open arms
and encourage him just as he
will encourage us.

“Equipping the saints for the work of ministry”

A thought on Mark 16:16

*“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but
whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

A.T. Robertson, in his book “Word Pictures In The
New Testament”, makes this most unfortunate statement.
“The omission of baptized with ‘disbelieveth’ would seem
to show that Jesus does not make baptism essential to
salvation. Condemnation rests on disbelief, not on baptism.
So salvation rests on belief. Baptism is merely the picture of
the new life, not the means of securing it.” (106, Concise
Edition) This is how I suggest you deal with this faulty
argument.

Do *not* leave this passage to pile up other “baptism”
verses. Point out that Mark 16:16 offers two sets of
instructions—how to be saved and how to be lost. Does the
one to whom you speak wish to be lost? If so, they need
only refuse to believe. Baptism means nothing for the
unbeliever. Do they wish to be saved? If so, ask them where
Jesus placed baptism in relation to salvation. When they
admit that Jesus placed baptism *between*, not after, belief
and salvation, ask them who has the authority to change that
order today? I have found this to be the most effective
method of dealing with the argument expressed by Mr.
Robertson concerning Mark 16:16.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

NEW: Lyn Kincaid (Diane’s sister-in-law) is recovering
from major back surgery. **Bernard Larch** (father-in-law of
Jackie’s aunt) has been diagnosed with brain cancer.

Treatments are to begin immediately.

OTHERS: Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson,
Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina
Krissow, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson,
Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit,
Valerie and Barry Boyd, Wilma Lawson, Jannett’s mother
and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker

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Restoring The Church

Adam Litmer

The call for the restoration of the church has been sounding in certain
portions of this country for well over 200 years. The word “restore” means “to
bring back; reinstate.” To call for the restoration of the Lord’s church is to suggest
that there is something lacking that needs to be brought back, that something has
been left behind and needs to be reinstated. Ultimately any restoration that takes
place will do so congregationally as the Lord’s church has no earthly head to
oversee the entirety of the brotherhood. It will happen as congregations (in
particular, the saints who comprise them) examine themselves and restore or
reinstate those things that are lacking.

In this article I want to consider a question: if the call to restore the church
is still valid today (and I believe it most certainly is), then to what are we to restore
the church to? I believe that this is an important question based upon the comments
made by brethren from time to time. To what should the church be restored?

The church of the 1950’s and 60’s? I occasionally hear brethren,
particularly older brethren who lived during those times, speaking of the church in
those days in wistful (dare I say worshipful?) ways. One brother spoke of those
years as the golden age of debaters among the brotherhood. I own several debate
books from those years and can see exactly what he means. So many men were set
for the defense of the gospel and were able to defend it ably. There is much to
commend in that as it follows the instruction of Jude 3.

An older preacher of my acquaintance speaks of those days with great
sadness. He refers to them as the decades of division, lamenting the fact that so
many of the fights of those years were between brethren. He recalls the number of
congregations that divided over disagreements concerning the use of the treasury
and other issues. Tears fill his eyes as he speaks of those days.

Those who were active during the 50’s and 60’s speak of the good that was
done then. They also speak of much that was not good. Regardless, the church was
not established in the 1950’s or 60’s in America. While there are lessons to be

learned from those years, good and bad, why should we seek to restore the church to a period many centuries *after* its inception and partly remembered for division?

The church of the “restoration era” from the late 1700’s through the early 1900’s? One of my hobbies is studying this particular era. I firmly believe today’s church owes a debt of thanks to men like Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone, “Raccoon” John Smith, Jacob Creath, Moses Lard, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb and many others. The courage these men demonstrated, particularly the first five mentioned, in casting aside denominational presuppositions to objectively examine Scripture is commendable. To take it a step further and break with the denominations to try and be the church they read about in Scripture is inspiring. I suggest you read about this period yourself and be strengthened and encouraged by their example.

However, many of these men continued to cling to various denominational constructs. Some of them fought doggedly to incorporate “innovations” into the worship service and to add institutions unknown to Holy Scripture. The vitriol they occasionally spewed against their opponents, who often became their own brethren, is simply shocking.

There was much good accomplished in those years and many fine examples to follow. There was also a great deal of error and anger to avoid. Besides that, the church was established long before the days of the men mentioned above. There must be no call to restore the church to a period several centuries after its birth.

The church of the first century? This is the correct answer, right? After all, most times when people speak of restoring the church they even mention “to the church of the first century” at the end of the statement. The church was established in the first century so the early church was certainly in the correct timeframe. But let me ask this question: were any of the congregations to whom Paul wrote (Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, etc.) perfect? The church at Rome had a problem with hypocritical judgment (Romans 2:1-5, 17-24). The church at Corinth struggled with a myriad of problems (1 and 2 Corinthians). The church at Galatia was on the verge of open apostasy (Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-3). The church at Ephesus seems to have struggled with relations between Jew and Gentile Christians as well as godly conduct (Ephesians 2:11-22; 4:1, 17-32). Eventually Jesus accused them of abandoning their first love (Revelation 2:4-5). The church in Philippi had two prominent members engaged in some sort of conflict with each other (Philippians 4:2). The church at Collosae seems to have struggled with the pagan philosophies of the day (Colossians 2:8). James saw all sorts of problems among first century Christians and hits them very hard in his letter. The Hebrew writer fought to prevent his brethren from going off into apostasy

and scolded them for not being as mature as they should have been (Hebrews 5:11-14). If it is reasonable to assume that at least *some* of the instruction in righteous living found throughout the epistles is there to correct what was lacking then it is easy to see that first century Christians struggled with exactly the same things we struggle with now.

The point is this: the aim of every saint who makes up every congregation ought to be perfection (complete maturity). The church of the first century fell short of that mark time and again. So much of what we know about the church and the Christian life we’ve learned from the writing of inspired men correcting the mistakes of the first century church. Might I suggest that we can, and should, aim even higher than trying to be like the first century congregations?

The ideal church described in the New Testament. Just here we find what should be at the heart of every call for restoration. Where the churches in the cities mentioned previously fell short we can resolve not to. We can look at the instruction given them and determine to follow it in ways they did not. When they *did* follow it and were commended for so doing we can learn from their example and do what they did, not because a congregation in the first century did it, but because they were approved for being the ideal church in their doing.

Brethren, the wonderful thing about the ideal church described in the New Testament is that it is absolutely timeless. Where any one of the earliest congregations was commended for following the pattern we know we please God in doing the same thing in 2014. The teaching and activities of the ideal church never go out of style, nor do they lose their power. They are timeless in every sense of that word and we *only* do well when we cling to them today.

A final word on restoring the church. I believe with all my heart that the forms of worship have been completely restored today. There is no doubt in my mind that our activities in worship are precisely those of the ideal church described in the New Testament. The heart is the thing that will forever require restoration. As long as sin continues in our lives, though rare it may be, it is a constant reminder that there is more work to be done. If the worship assembly occasionally becomes a “going through the motions” activity, we are reminded that restoration needs to occur. Let us guard our heart, brethren (Proverbs 4:23).

The call to restore will always be valid. Let us ensure that the aim of such restoration is toward that which is timeless.