First Century Christian

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 7 *"The world's greatest need is the First Century Gospel"* JULY, 1991

Importance Of The Church

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

Editor's Note: *In view of the fact that brother Rubel Shelly has made speeches around the States, in which he reflected unfavorably on the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is fitting that we publish a part of a sermon preached by the inimitable Foy E. Wallace, Jr., who had as much respect for the Lord's church as any man who ever lived, and who had one of the greatest minds of any preacher this side of the apostles. Brother Wallace has exalted the church as the bride of Christ, and glorifies it as it ought to be glorified.*

As the apostle Paul said, "Unto him [God] be glory in the church and in Jesus Christ unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:21, ASV). But brother Shelly says, My children will not stay with the church I grew up in. They will not be part of an irrelevancy."

I now call your attention to Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter two, verses eleven through twenty–two.

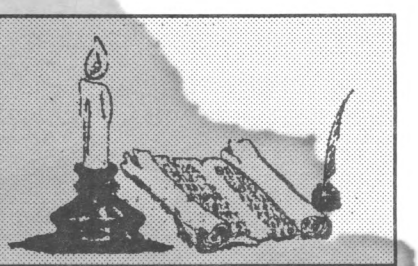
The apostle reminds the Gentiles that they were aliens out of the church; that being aliens they were strangers from the promises and the commonwealth of Israel. Once the nation of Israel was the old commonwealth, now the church of Christ is the new commonwealth. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace...that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Outside the church, Paul says, "Aliens." We all know what an alien is. That is a common word now. An alien is not a citizen. Aliens and strangers without God, without Christ, without hope in the world, not in Christ, not in the church. But, "Ye are made nigh." How? Verse 16 says: "Reconciled in one body." Alright, put reconciliation on the inside. Saved out of the church? If so, saved without reconciliation. "Reconciled in," in what? In the one body. Paul had just said that Christ is the head of the church, which is His body. Now he says these aliens are reconciled in it. But it is said, "That means that the Jew and the Gentile are reconciled to each other." No, it says, "Reconciled *unto God* in one body." If one is saved out of the church, he is saved without reconciliation unto God. The thing that reconciles one unto God puts him into the one body, the church.

Now verse 19. "Therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners." He drops the word "alien," and adopts "strangers." Therefore, no more strangers, foreigners, aliens. Why? Because you are reconciled and in the one body. "Therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but are fellow–citizens." Fellow–citizens in this one body. Out of the church, an alien; out of the church, a stranger; out of the church, not reconciled. In the church, reconciled; in the church a citizen. Saved out of the church—saved without being a citizen. Saved out of the church—saved as an alien. Saved out of the church—saved as a stranger. Saved out of the church—saved without reconciliation. Saved out of the church—saved without the promises, saved without God, saved without Christ, saved without hope. This is the New Testament apostolic syllabus on the church. God put salvation in the church.

Continue: No longer strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens "with the saints." Out of the church, not a saint. The idea of a saint varies. Roman Catholics think that a person must be dead to be canonized as a saint. There are no living saints in the

Continued On Page 14



Vol. 13, No. 7 July, 1991

First Century Christian is a monthly publication of First Century Christian, Incorporated, a non-profit organization, and is dedicated to the restoration of primitive Christianity through the preaching of the first century gospel.

ADVOCATING

Supreme Authority Of Christ
Matthew 28:18

Verbal Inspiration Of The Bible
1 Corinthians 2:1–13

Contending For The Faith
Jude 3

Purity Of The Church
2 Corinthians 11:2–3

In Matters Of Faith, Unity
Ephesians 4:1–6

In Matters Of Opinion, Liberty
Romans 14

In All Things, Charity
1 Corinthians 13

Roy J. Hearn
Editor

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The Kingdom And The Church

Mention was made in a recent Sunday morning Bible Class of some false statements Rubel Shelly made in a series of lectures at Missouri Street church of Christ in West Memphis, Arkansas and reported in an article by brother Curtis A. Cates [see "The Old Paths Mentality" on page 4].

Shelly made the following statements: [1] "The church never existed." Yet, he says the church came into being on Pentecost (Acts 2). A plain contradiction. [2] "The church has never existed except in the Father's mind." [3] "The church is not the kingdom of God." [4] "The kingdom of God and the church must not be identical. They are not." Brother Cates reports that he said the kingdom came in Christ's personal ministry, but will not be established until the second coming of Christ. Let us see what the Bible teaches concerning these matters.

The Kingdom And The Church Are Identical

There are several terms that describe the different aspects of this institution. Kingdom refers to the type of government. Christ is King. It is an absolute monarchy, and Christ has all authority over it (Matt. 28:18; 1 Tim. 6:15). The word church means the called out, separated from the world of sin by obedience to the gospel, and being added to the church, the place of salvation (Acts 2:47). It is also called a body, which refers to its organization, with Christ as head and all Christians as members of the body (Col. 1:18; Rom. 12:4–5). Note the following proof that the church and the kingdom are the same:

First, the seed of the kingdom is the word of God (Luke 8:11). On the first Pentecost after Christ was raised from the dead, the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in preaching the word which resulted in the production of the church (Acts 2:22, 33, 37, 41, 47). Thereafter, wherever and whenever the word of the kingdom was preached the church was produced. Paul preached the testimony of God at Corinth and called it the church of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 says, "That ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and his glory." Thus, they were in the church and the kingdom. Philip preached the "things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." He preached both, thus if the kingdom does not exist, neither does the Christ! (See also Acts 14:22; Col. 4:11.)

Second: In Matthew 16:18,19 when Christ said He would build His church, He gave Peter the keys of the kingdom. Here the two words are used interchangeably. Then when Peter preached the word of the kingdom as recorded in Acts 2, it produced the church. So, the church and the kingdom are the same.

Third: Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:17,18 affirm that Christ will be with the saints when they partake of the Lord's Supper in the kingdom. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20–33 and observe that Paul instructed how the Lord's Supper should be observed in the church. The Supper is in the kingdom, the Supper is in the church, therefore, without controversy, the church and the kingdom are the same. Shelly contradicts the Bible.

Be it also observed, that if the church does not exist, as Shelly says, Christ died in vain for He shed His blood to purchase the church (Acts 20:28). He gave Himself up for it (Eph. 5:25). And, if the church does not exist, there is no salvation, for He is the Savior of the body which is the church (Eph. 5:23).

The Kingdom Does Exist

In a prophecy in Zechariah 6:12–13 concerning Christ, the prophet said: [1] He should build the temple, which is the church (Eph. 2:21). [2] He would sit upon His throne. [3] He would rule upon His throne. [4] He will be a priest upon His throne. That this was fulfilled, Paul declares, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1). In Acts 2:30 Peter said God promised David He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. The throne was not really David's. 1 Chronicles 29:23 says: "Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David." This shows that Christ was raised up to sit on God's throne, and He sits there now.

If Christ's kingdom does not now exist, Christ is not our King. If He is not our King, He is not our Priest (Heb. 8:1). He is not our Mediator, and we have no Intercessor in Christ. Yet, thank God, Paul says He is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), and we can approach God through Him (Col. 3:17).

In Colossians 1:13 Paul says: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." How could this be, if the kingdom does not exist until Christ returns? Shelly is wrong, again.

The kingdom does now exist. Christ is King and Priest in His kingdom. The kingdom and the church are the same. We can approach God thorough Christ our Mediator and Priest. Thank God. ▪

Roy J. Hearn
Editor

In This Issue

Importance Of The Church ..... Page 1
Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The Kingdom And The Church ..... Page 2
Roy J. Hearn

The "Old Paths" Mentality ..... Page 4
Curtis A. Cates

A Nonconformist Who Poured His Own Mold ..... Page 6
Max R. Miller

The Identity Of The Church ..... Page 8
Ernest S. Underwood

Rubel Shelly And Kingdom Passages Restudied ..... Page 10
Ben F. Vick, Jr.

The Pattern For Worship? ..... Page 12
Larry Powers

The Old Paths Mentality

Curtis A. Cates

FOR many years, certain people have desired to throw off the "yoke" of Christ (Matt. 11:28–30) and to abandon the New Testament pattern, in spite of the fact that Paul warned, "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). Among those who ridicule that the New Testament is a pattern is brother Rubel Shelly. But, at one time he warned against such liberalism, calling upon brethren even to expose false teachers by name.

The Former Rubel Shelly

In his splendid book *Liberalism's Threat to the Faith*, which I taught to Bible classes in the early 1970's, he wrote, "Although some today would discourage the exposure of false doctrines among brethren, it should be remembered that the apostle Paul exposed error and called the names of those teaching it, (Cf. 2 Tim. 2:16–18)" (p.3). Liberals, he wrote, "are careful to appear humble, pious, analytical and in search of freedom from dogma and tradition. On the other hand they try to make their critics out to be arrogant, legalistic, backward and antiquated traditionalists" (p.7). "Christ's church must abide in His doctrine (2 John 9–11)" (p.12). We are asked to believe that strong doctrinal presentations do more harm than good. We are being brainwashed into shying away from the controversies and debates" (p.12). "If we do not intend to maintain our distinctiveness, we have no right to exist" (p.12). "If we are unwilling to oppose false teaching and false practices, let us quit claiming to be the people of the holy God" (p.12). "There can be no spiritual fellowship between New Testament Christians and individuals or groups which teach anything other than the pure gospel of Christ, worship in any manner other than that authorized in the New Testament, organize themselves differently from the pattern of organization set forth in Scripture and/or live a worldly life" (p.19). "He must have an absolute and objective standard. That standard is Holy Scripture" (p.21). "These are doctrines about which men must be right in order to be saved" (p.29). "The *Gospel Advocate*, edited by B.C. Goodpasture, and *Words of Life*, edited by Gus Nichols, are excellent weekly publications which stand firm in the 'old paths' of soundness in the gospel" (p.81).

> ***Liberals are "careful to appear humble, pious, analytical and in search of freedom from dogma and tradition. On the other hand they try to make their critics out to be arrogant, legalistic, backward and antiquated traditionalists."***
>
> **(Rubel Shelly)**

The Present Rubel Shelly

In his speeches at Missouri Street, West Memphis, Arkansas, April 20–21, 1990, all four of which I have heard no less than four times, he made such statements as, "My children will not stay with the church I grew up in. They will not be a part of an irrelevance." He ridiculed "the old paths mentality, I don't know why we ever chose that one, the ones that smack of rigidity. We'll talk to you about a model of the church that's less institutional and more personal, less organization and more organism." He belittled our imitating the pattern for the church of the first century. He asked "Are we really looking for a pattern?" "We've taken Acts and tried to make it a prison…a rigid pattern. Acts was never meant to be a pattern." "I reject pattern theology," he said. "The Scripture is not a book of case law to be cited like a bunch of proof texts. The way to teach people about the Bible is not to quote a series of steps to salvation." When we give the plan of salvation [steps of obedience, plus Scriptures], Rubel says that we are "proof–texting ourselves to death." He called it a "silly game of scissors and paste." "I am not looking for a pattern; I am looking for a person." "What are we looking for, pattern or principles?" "A lot of time, God, we have just played wicked games with Scripture [a part of a prayer he led, referring to using "scissors and paste," proof–texting]." "In our tradition…the tendency is historically to settle on the Acts of Apostles as the key book for the project [of restoration]. We want to discover a doctrine of salvation, the organization of the church, the mission and function of the church, the evangelistic pattern for the church, the worship of the church—and you want Acts, then branch into

From Page 4

"Old Paths"

the epistles shortly. Acts and the epistles have been core documents in our restoration project. I think this is a mistake." "We do not need to start with Acts and the epistles. If we start with Acts and the epistles, we are copying a copy." He stated that is "bad." "We need to work directly off of Christ, who sat [as for a portrait] for Acts and for the epistles." "We are not trying to reproduce the first century church." To imitate the primitive church is an "eccentricity, a foolish thing to do." Why? He says that would include imitating their sins and frailties. But, this quibble is answered in 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Brother Shelly ridiculed the sermons the great men of the ages have preached on "Marks of the True Church," or as I have preached many times, "How to Identify the Church of Jesus Christ." "Being the people of God does not rise out of getting down a pattern," he stated. Brother Shelly said that to claim that the New Testament church has been restored is "extremely self–serving," "extremely arrogant," and makes "claims that are not true." "He called this the 'Golden Age Great Pit Theory.'" He said, "The church has never existed." We are not the "true church—an arrogant claim." Those who claim the church has been restored are like Laodicea—poor, wretched, blind, sinful. To claim to be the church is to be like the self–righteous Pharisee. And, the "one sin God won't tolerate is the inability to confess an act." In church history when we say, "We have restored [the church], we are the New Testament church," Rubel proclaimed, "The one thing that will cut us off from God is to make that kind of arrogant claim."

He made several interesting statements about the church. "The church has never existed except in the Father's mind." "The church is not the kingdom of God." "The kingdom of God and the church must not be identical. They are not." "The kingdom did not come on Pentecost, whereas the church did." Though the kingdom (he avers) came in Christ's personal ministry, it will not be established until the second coming, since the works of the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom (Galatians 5:19–21). He says we should still pray, "Your kingdom come." They do where he preaches. It is axiomatic [self–evident], Rubel says, "among Biblical scholars of all stripe and rank that the kingdom and church are not synonymous." He called for us to "get away from the self–serving notion that the true church existed, was lost, and we have it again." "There is no precedent for congregational singing; there is for solos. And, we say follow the pattern!"

Toward the close of his fourth lecture, after defending choirs, solos, quartets in the assembly, he stated, "And if some brotherhood arbiter, who without running for pope elected himself that, decides that these people must...[pause], God forgive him. Somebody who is close enough to him to help him think, please help him." "We don't have to be bound to the traditions of the past."

Space does not permit anything but mention of his use of such sectarian expressions as "this heritage," "our churches," "as a fellowship," "modern theology of the church," "our tradition in the churches of Christ," "our liturgy," "our hermeneutic," "high theology who Jesus is," "American restoration movement churches of Christ," "our fellowship," "pilgrim church," "share Christ," our "tradition," et.al. Brethren, are we going to cease preaching the old sermons of the pioneers on "The Language of Ashdod" (Nehemiah 13:23–24)? Those who use such language will not preach against it for sure!

We shall continue to walk in and defend the Old Paths through God's grace, without addition, subtraction, or modification. Our prayers are for those also who have chosen thus not to walk. ▪

Yokefellow • September 25, 1990

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A Nonconformist Who Poured His Own Mold

Max R. Miller

LIFE changes from day to day. Change is usually imperceptible; sometimes it is obvious. Physical change is apparent first in the growing babe, and finally in those of a great age. Looking at baby pictures one can hardly believe one was once a babbling babe or an adolescent of tender years. There is constant change from the cradle to the grave.

As in physical change, there is also a change of mind and personality. One grows in knowledge, understanding, and spirituality. One grows from infant faith to the full grown man in Christ. It may be said that one has lost his mind. It also may be said that one has lost his faith.

Just as physical change, its development or deterioration, is often imperceptible, likewise there may be unnoticed change in intelligence, faith, or spirituality. Suddenly, over night, one may lose health, or mind. The loss may be conspicuous and over a period of time.

We are aware of physical and mental changes. We know, too, of changes that effect spirituality, one's faith. A living vibrant faith may become stronger, or it may become a weak or a dead faith. The loss of faith may occur in a short period of time; it may take a while.

We have known some who lost their faith. They may become irreligious, or zealously swept up into "another gospel which is not another" (Gal. 1:6). Causes of the loss of faith are unknown but to those of most intimate association. To others the loss is sudden, startling, an almost unbelievable revelation. An outstanding and respected gospel preacher suddenly announced he would no longer preach. He gave his reason: for a long time he had not believed the things he had faithfully preached. Again, a president of a Christian college and prominent preacher of the gospel when asked to resign his presidency, to the surprise of many, departed from the faith, began attending a denominational church, and at death an Episcopal priest officiated at his funeral. When, one wonders, did these lose their faith? When did they first begin to doubt, when did their faith die? These are puzzling questions. Had we known the men intimately we might better understood their defection from the faith.

Those who have known Rubel Shelly and his digression from the faith were first puzzled, and even confused by his seemingly sudden departure from the Old Paths of truth and salvation. What prevailed on him to deny the great truths he had been taught from infancy? One who could so ably defend the faith, preach the gospel in a commanding manner, write with effectiveness, produce so many good books for Bible classes—what could move such a one to speak against the Way in which he had so long and faithfully stood? What prevailed upon him in such measure that he now denies many of the great truths he formerly preached—and speak in confusion and contradiction, extolling the greatness of his Pilgrim Church (which has been established and has not been established!) and the new hermeneutic of "no pattern theology." An enigma? Why, O why! How! How! How?

Several factors play a role in such an extreme change. The public announcement of his long coming defection came in March of 1983 at the Centerville Meeting. There he spoke of his repentance and apologized for his former sectarian disposition. He inferred that all who held his former doctrinal position were sectarians. In this he measured a faithful brotherhood in his own bushel. Because he was of a bitter spirit, demonstrating a sectarian spirit in his presentation of the gospel of salvation, was not evidence that all others were like him in mind and spirit. They did not have a sectarian spirit because he did! The background for such a drastic change is worthy of examination. Shelly was reared in a good and faithful Christian home. His father was an able elder in the Lord's church. It may be said of Rubel Shelly "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). He began preaching while in his teens, before he had driver license, his mother often driving him to his preaching appointments. The faithful in Zion rejoiced in his youthful abilities and good life. He was lauded, extolled, and highly commended as a young evangelist.

One who could so ably defend the faith, preach the gospel in a commanding manner, write with effectiveness, produce so many good books for Bible classes—what could move such a one to speak against the Way in which he had so long and faithfully stood?

Shelly entered Freed–Hardeman College in 1963 and excelled as a student. Near the end of his Freshman year campus talk was that he would not return the next year. One, in an effort to encourage him to continue

From Page 6

"Mold"

his education at the college, was given this reason for not returning to school. "I am not going to be poured into someone else's mold." Is not this *the key*, the answer to the question in Shelly's case, "Why do men change?" The intervening years furnished time and opportunity for him to cast his own mold—unlike any other.

We observe three categories of people: Those who imitate others; those who want to be only their natural selves; those who want to be unlike others, nonconformist. There is both good and bad to be derived from either or all these courses of life. The most harmful course to self and others is to refuse to be *anything* like others, to make their own mold and pour themselves into it. They sometimes are identified as eccentrics, mavericks, odd balls, radicals. They seek distinstion. Others may conform to their mold, but they themselves will not conform to the mold of others. Those poured into the mold are transformed into the likeness of the original mold, believing the same things, mouthing the same terminology, reproduction of the master pattern. This has been the history of religious movements—following after men. From hence the doctrines and commandments of men.

The first noticeable sign of Shelly's departure from the faith was in his role as a college teacher. There the master of sarcasm and wit struck down the icons of the older generations. The student's parents were of an old and prejudiced hide-bound code of religious doctrines and ethics. Shelly put the older generation in their place as none other dared. This was music in the ears of some students; they had had parent problems long enough. He identified some of the older and venerated gospel preachers—Foy E. Wallace and Guy N. Woods—as men of inadequate scholarship, small in stature, and out of step with the "church and times of today." Many of the students, impressionable, immature, loved to hear the sarcastic defamation of the old, pattern-styled church of Christ and gathered to him in numbers. Unfortunately, preacher students at the institution drank from his bitter cup of corruption, had problems in matters of faith and brotherhood relations, and in disgust and confusion gave up efforts to preach. From that college he went to another, had problems there, and then out of the college classroom to carry on his independent work. Further education in a liberal environment did not draw him back to the truth as it is in Jesus. And then—to a shocked and dismayed gathering of brethren at Centerville his declaration of a new and ecumenical faith and a denunciation of the faith he once held. There he repented of his having stood in the Old Paths where so many faithful yet stand. "I am trying to think my way out of a sectarian attitude. I grew up in the context of one. I am embarrassed. I am ashamed. I have repented. I am trying to outgrow it."

There is a mold to which all must conform. That mold is Christ Jesus. The nonconformist cannot fit that mold because he will not. Nonconformist Shelly marches to his own drum beat, flies his own ensign, leads his own disciples, is the new messiah of his own church, the Pilgrim Church, and with smooth words and fair speech deceives the trusting.

The conclusion of the matter: With Shelly there is a departure from the faith, and the forming of another denomination among the many in the world and of the world. The Scriptures are in him again fulfilled as in earlier times: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29). Those of Shelly's discipleship yet look for the perfecting of his Pilgrim Church designed for a new generation, led by himself and preachers who stand head and shoulders above the confused and misdirected men of the past and present Restoration Movement. A new messiah? Indeed! ▪

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The Identity Of The New Testament Church

Ernest S. Underwood

THE title of this article presupposes at least three things. [1] There is such an institution known as the New Testament church. [2] That there is one, and only one, true church. [3] That the identity of such a church can be made.

The need for such an article can be seen by the number of recent vicious and unwarranted attacks upon the precious body for which Jesus shed His blood. One of the leaders of these attacks is a man who once was a faithful teacher of truth, but now can be considered nothing less than an apostate. That man is Rubel Shelly. In a series of speeches given at the Missouri Street Church of Christ in West Memphis, Arkansas (April 20–21, 1990, brother Shelly made several vicious attacks upon the church. He claimed that it is irrelevant, that it has not been restored to the pattern found in the New Testament, that it is foolish to imitate the first century church, that the church has never existed except in the mind of the Father, that the church is not the kingdom, and, for a church to claim to be the true church is to be self-righteous. In reality these attacks not only are against the church, but ultimately are attacks upon the integrity of God's word. In what any intelligent person would have to place in the category of sheer silliness, brother Shelly attempted to disarm the listener, then launched into a malicious assault upon the Lord's church, the Lord's people, and the Lord's word.

Before the marks of identity of the Lord's church are shown, it might be well to take a look at brother Shelly's position *then* and *now*. It is readily recognized that what brother Shelly does and does not believe in no way changes the word of God. Others have denied and rejected that Word, but it still abides. However, the reader should know that brother Shelly has not always believed the slanderous statements which he made in 1990. It would seem that much like the "wise men" of Jeremiah 8, he has become ashamed of the word of God and as a result of this attitude, has rejected that word (cf. Jer. 8:9). The following quotations of brother Shelly are taken from *The Spiritual Sword*, July, 1970. Page numbers will be noted after each quote.

In speaking of some of the restoration leaders he says,

"They reasoned that even a purified Roman Catholic Church would still not be the church of Christ, the church described in the New Testament." (p. 42)

Under the heading of "Is The Plea For Restoration Valid?", he wrote:

"Before we advocate the restoration of New Testament Christianity, we must decide whether or not God would want us to believe and practice the same things that men believed and practiced in the first century."

"Did God intend for the New Testament to be considered a once-for-all revelation of his will to men? Did he intend for those scriptures to be the standard in religion for all time to come? Did he intend for the church to continue to worship in every generation as it worshipped in the earliest years of its existence? Did he intend to give us a ***permanent pattern*** [emphasis mine, EU] *for the organization of the church in the New Testament? These questions are vital to our study and must be answered before we go farther!"*

"There are many who believe that we should be concerned only with the ***spirit*** *of New Testament Christianity and not with* ***a fixed pattern*** *of doctrine, organization and work. [Emphasis his, EU). These individuals insist that the church must change from generation to generation in order to adapt itself to changing conditions.* [Brother Shelly is *now* one of those individuals. EU] *On the other hand there are those who feel that God gave* ***in the New Testament a fixed pattern or blueprint*** [emphasis mine, EU] *to which he expects his people to adhere until the end of time.* ***I hasten to add that my study of the Word of God convinces me that the second position—the view that the New Testament is a fixed and binding pattern for the people of God in every generation—is the correct one.***" (p. 43, Emphasis mine, EU).

One can learn by just a casual reading of these statements by Shelly that he *once* believed the truth. He believed the church existed, that it is described in the New Testament, that the New Testament furnished a fixed pattern or blueprint of the church, and that God expects his people to adhere to that pattern. He continues:

"Do you see the significance of these facts in demonstrating the validity of the plea for the restoration of New Testament Christianity?...The restoration principle is a valid one!...We must restore not only the 'spirit' of New Testament Christianity but also ***the plan of salvation, the worship and the organization*** [emphasis mine, EU] *of the church described in the New Testament...We are seeking to restore the first-century church by loyalty to the first century gospel! Nothing more. Nothing less."* (p. 44)

Shelly now *denies* the validity of the restoration plea. He now denies that one must be loyal to the New Testament in doctrine, work and worship. He also denies that twentieth century man can or should be loyal to first century gospel. Concerning restoring worship he wrote:

"Another area of concern in this regard is the type of worship God desires for his children. Based upon ***the conviction—a conviction established from the scriptures***—*that the New Testament reveals a* ***fixed pattern*** *which Christians must follow* ***in every age*** *until the end of the world, let us look for* ***the pattern of acceptable worship which is given in the New Testament***...*A study of the New Testament reveals that early Christians engaged in*

five acts of worship by the authority of Jesus...Since these are the only items of worship for which the New Testament provides authority we would be presumptuous people if we were to add such things as incense, animal sacrifice or mechanical instruments of music to our worship...We need to go all the way back to the New Testament and abandon all unauthorized practices in our worship and follow the pattern given from heaven...There is a church in the twentieth century which is organized just as the church was organized in the first century. There is a church today with the same creed and name as the church had in the first century...a church today which is making a determined effort to follow ***the fixed pattern*** *which the Lord revealed to us in the New Testament."* (p. 44–46, Emphasis mine, EU).

Brother Shelly now claims that these truths are irrelevant and looks with contempt and disdain at the fixed pattern of worship which God has given in the New Testament. Why could he find that pattern in 1970 but cannot see it in 1990? Could it be that because of his "much learning" he is *now* ashamed of the precious truth he once so boldly proclaimed and defended? We wonder if his "higher learning" at the feet of infidels during those intervening years played a part? In 1970 brother Shelly recognized that the church existed and could be identified. He boldly and correctly stated that such a church existed in the twentieth century. In 1990 he stated that the church does not exist except in the mind of the Father, and that the church and kingdom are not, yea, cannot be identical. If the church exists *only* in the mind of God it certainly cannot exist as a tangible institution on earth. Yet, in 1970 brother Shelly wrote, "No man can be saved apart from the church which Christ purchased with his blood! (cf. Acts 20:28)." [p.35] Previously in this same article he had proven by the Scriptures that "the kingdom was established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ," and that "three thousand people entered it in one day." [p. 34–35] If no man can be saved apart from the church, and no man can be, and if that church *does not exist*, it follows then no one can be saved! By Shelly's own brand of "new hermeneutics" he has erased all hope of salvation and has nothing to offer his hearers but silly rhetoric. He once taught the truth concerning the *identity* of the church. He no longer teaches or believes that truth. How sad indeed!

The Identity Of The Church

How can one identify the New Testament church? What marks of identity are presented in God's word? If one finds a church which has the marks of identity given in God's word, will that church be the church of the New Testament? If not, why not? Sound brethren have used the following marks of identity because such marks are from the Scriptures. Those men called upon others to be a part of no other religious organization than that which can be found in the New Testament.

The *TIME* of establishment—the "last days" (Isa. 2:2–4; Acts 2:16–21; Heb. 1:1–3) These passages show that the kingdom would be established in the "last days" [the Christian Dispensation], and they also clearly show that the kingdom/church *was* established at the time prophesied.

The *PLACE* of beginning—Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-4; Acts 2, especially verses 5, 41, 47). Jerusalem was to be the city where the church began. And there it had its beginning.

Who is its *FOUNDER*—Jesus Christ (Isa. 7:14; 9:6–7; Matt. 1:21–23; 16:18; Acts 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 1:20–23) These passages establish that Jesus Christ is the founder and head of the New Testament church.

By how one *ENTERS* it. What saith the Scriptures? By:

(1) Hearing (John 6:44–45; Rom. 10:13–17; Acts 18:8).

(2) Believing (John 8:24; Mark 16:15–16; Acts 8:12–12; 16:31).

(3) Repenting (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9).

(4) Confessing (Matt. 10:32–33; Acts 8:37; 1 Tim. 6:12).

(5) Being Baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3–5; Gal. 3:26–27; 1 Cor. 12:13).

By the way it *WORSHIPS*. Does it follow the *fixed pattern*? The Scriptures authorize:

(1) Praying to God through Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:1–8; cf. 1 Tim 3:15).

(2) Giving cheerfully as one has prospered (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

(3) Singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

(4) Teaching/preaching God's word (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Tim. 4:1–3; cf. Matt. 15:9–14).

(5) Eating the Lord's Supper of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, not, as one among us has stated, "Hamburger bun and Coke" (Matt. 26:26–29; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23–29).

By the NAME by which it is known.

(1) "Church of God" (Acts 20:28).

(2) "Churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16).

(3) "House of God" (1 Tim. 3:15).

(4) "Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

(5) "Temple of God" (1 Cor. 3:16).

(6) "Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27).

By the *CREED* which it proclaims and follows. The Lord's church has no creed book written by men. It adheres to the New Testament. The call of the Restoration Leaders was to "speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent." The Scriptures are clear on this point (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:1–3, 1 Peter 4:11). These passages express the necessity of preaching the word of God. In contrast, Jesus stated that the doctrines of men are vain, producing plants which will be uprooted, and that those who teach such doctrines are blind (Matt. 15:9–14).

These are the marks by which the New Testament church can be identified. As stated by brother Shelly in 1970, yet denied by him in 1990, there is such a church which exists today with these identifying marks. It is the church of Christ. It is not a denomination or a part of a denomination. No denominational church can find authority for its existence in the Scriptures. It is neither arrogant nor self–righteous to claim that it, the church, exists or to claim that it is the *one true church*. To make such claims is simply putting one's trust in the integrity of God and His word. Are you a member of the church which can be identified in the New Testament? We appeal to you to obey the word of God so that he will add you to that church. ▪

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Rubel Shelly And Kingdom Passages Restudied

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

RUBEL Shelly of Nashville, Tennessee somewhere along the line, maybe ten years ago, abandoned the restoration theme, crystallized his thinking and has become, to a large measure, what he set out to oppose—a sectarian. How does one know this is the case? Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:15–16). The fruit of a false teacher is his false teaching. Shelly is a sectarian because he teaches sectarian doctrine. Shelly wears the sheep's clothing of a gospel preacher, but inwardly he is a ravening wolf—breathing out his halitosis of false doctrine.

Shelly is making the same arguments that denominational preachers made years ago. There is no need for the recognized denominational preachers to make the old arguments of their predecessors so long as Rubel and his company are willing to do so for them. The difference between Shelly and the denominational preachers of the past is that he will not defend from the polemic platform what he supposedly believes, but they were willing to put their convictions to the test. They lost decisive battles. Thus, their descendants have learned that they have nothing to gain, but everything to lose in a public discussion. But, brethren, truth has nothing to fear! Is there a wonder, then, that Shelly will not debate?

In a series of lessons delivered in West Memphis, Arkansas last year, Shelly argued that the kingdom and the church are not the same. In this article we want to take up his supposed proofs as to why the kingdom and the church are not the same. In particular, we want to notice the very passages in the gospel accounts he used to "prove" that they are not the same.

Brother Shelly said, "I've heard preachers preach—in fact, I've preached myself—that since Pentecost we can't pray for the kingdom to come; the kingdom came on Pentecost. No, the church was established on Pentecost. The kingdom had already come before that in the person of Jesus. Matthew 12 says it. He says if I am really casting out demons, the kingdom of God has come. Not is about to; has come." Matthew 12:27–28 reads: "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."

There is a sense in which the kingdom of heaven has always existed in one form or another. Jesus taught the development of the kingdom of heaven in stages (Mark 4:26–29). It has always existed in purpose, prophecy, preparation, or as it now is, perfection. When Jesus said the words recorded in Matthew 12:27–28, the kingdom of heaven was there in the preparatory stage. Just as Abraham preached the gospel in promise, so Jesus preached the kingdom as existing in the stage of preparation (Galatians 3:8; Mark 1:14–15). A farmer might look out at his field which is getting close to being harvested and speak of it as having already been "laid by." But that does not mean that the harvesting equipment can be put away for the winter and the men do not need to go into the fields to gather the grain. That which proves too much proves nothing.

To infer that because Jesus spoke of the kingdom as "has come" or "is come" (according to the KJV and ASV) during His personal ministry does not prove the kingdom was a complete reality. God often in the Old Testament spoke of things to be as if they had been or were to be. Isaiah said, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Would Shelly argue that the one described here, Jesus Christ, came in the days of Isaiah? The prophet said, "For unto us a child is born" (present tense), and "unto us a son is given" (present tense). To use Shelly's "reasoning," the prophet did not say *shall be born nor* shall be given. It is just as "reasonable" to argue that the Savior came in the days of Isaiah as to argue that the kingdom came in the days of the personal ministry of Christ.

Again, Isaiah said, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4). The prophet did not say "shall bear our griefs," nor did he say, "We shall esteem him stricken smitten of God." He did not say "Is about to" but "hath born our griefs." Should we accept Shelly's reasoning and assume that the Savior did that in the days of Isaiah? Ridiculously absurd and absurdly ridiculous is a fit description of Shelly's thinking. The Lord used the past tense to show that the prophecy was so certain to be fulfilled it was as if it had already happened.

Shelly argues that the kingdom and the church are not the same because Jesus said the kingdom cometh not with observation (Luke 17:20–21), and one can locate where the church meets, but he cannot tell where the kingdom of God is by location. What sophistry! "Upon what meat hath Caesar fed that he should wax so fat?"

In the first place, consider the context of Luke 17:20,21. It reads: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The Pharisees, like most Jews at that time, were looking for the restoration of their nation as it was in the days of David. Even the apostles did not understand the nature of the kingdom (Acts 1:6). It was not going to be an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom.

But the fact that it is a spiritual kingdom does not mean it cannot be located. Otherwise, why speak of its place of being? Christ said, "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). The kingdom was to come in the lifetime of some of those standing with Christ. (By the way, why does the Lord say it will come if, according to Shelly, it had already come?) It was to come with power. The power was to come upon the apostles in the city of Jerusalem (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit was to come when the power came (Acts 1:8). So, when the Holy Spirit came, the power would come and the kingdom would come. The Holy Spirit and the power came on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2:1–4). Therefore, the kingdom came in the city of Jerusalem on that day.

Shelly argued that the kingdom came before the day of Pentecost in the person of Jesus. But if the kingdom came before Pentecost, then, it had no king. Christ did not become king until after He ascended into heaven and was coronated. Peter argues this very point in Acts 2. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God hath sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:29–33).

Christ was raised to sit on His throne. "To sit upon His throne" is an infinitive clause, showing purpose. Jesus was raised from the dead in order that He might sit upon His throne. He was not upon His throne before His death. Thus, He could not have been king before His death. And if He could not have been king before He was raised from the dead, then there could not have been a kingdom in reality before His resurrection. Christ was crowned after He suffered, not before He suffered (Heb. 2:9).

If the kingdom came before Pentecost (Acts 2), it had no foundation. The foundation, Jesus Christ, could not be laid until Christ had been tried. Isaiah wrote, "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:14). There were four events that had to transpire before the foundation could be laid. The first was a "covenant with death" which had to be made. This happened when Judas met the chief priests (Matt. 26:14,15). The second was an "agreement with hell." This was fulfilled when the Jews procured a guard (Matt. 27:65–66). The third was the making of "lies our refuge." This transpired when the Jews found false witnesses against Jesus (Matt. 26:59–62). The final event was "under falsehood have we hid ourselves," which was fulfilled when money was given to the soldiers to lie concerning the body of Christ (Matt. 28:12–13). This is certainly plain that the foundation was not laid until after the resurrection of Christ. But if Shelly be correct that the kingdom was in existence before the resurrection of Christ, then, it had no foundation.

If the kingdom existed as a reality before Pentecost (Acts 2), then, it had no law. Jesus told the apostles to wait in the city of Jerusalem until they be clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). When clothed with power from on high, the law went forth (Isa. 2:2,3). How can a kingdom exist without a law? That law was to include the Gentiles (Isa. 42:1–3; Acts 2:39). What law did that supposed kingdom have if it existed before Pentecost? It was not the law of Moses, for it was only for Israel (Deut. 5:2,3). It was not that which John the Baptist or Jesus preached. Their mission was to the Jews only (Acts 10:36–37; Matt. 10:5–6). If the kingdom existed before Pentecost, then, Shelly is duty bound to tell us what law existed!

If the kingdom existed as a reality before the establishment of the church in Acts 2, then, it had no subjects. In order to enter the kingdom, one has to be born again (John 3:1–8). To be born again is equivalent to believing the gospel and being baptized (Mark 16:15–16). But the gospel facts could not be preached until certain acts were accomplished, i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord. The facts and commands of the gospel were not preached until Pentecost. Therefore, one could not obey the gospel until then. Since one could not obey the gospel (be born again) until Acts 2, then, if the kingdom existed prior to Acts 2, as Shelly avers, it had no subjects. Whoever heard of a kingdom existing without subjects?

So, what kind of kingdom would have been in existence if it had begun before Pentecost, according to Shelly? It would have been a kingdom without a king, a house without a foundation, a government without a law, and a kingdom without subjects. ▪

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The Pattern For New Testament Worship?

Larry Powers

HOW are Christians to worship God? Jesus said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23–24). God is the one to be worshipped. God *deserves* to be worshiped. God *desires* to be worshipped. God *demands* to be worshipped. God *describes* true worship. He denounces vain, ignorant, and will worship.

The tendency of men in all ages has been to change God's order of things. Many today argue that there is no pattern to follow in the worship of God. Some within the church of Christ are attempting to worship God as the denominations attempt to worship Him. They endeavor to introduce mechanical instruments of music, choirs, or solos into the worship of God. They seek to justify these things by saying that members of the church of Christ are just following human traditions. Are Christians to worship God according to the precious pattern prescribed by God or according to human traditions?

What Is A Pattern?

Webster defines pattern as: [1] A form or model for imitation; [2] Something designed or used as a model for making things; [3] A model for making a mold into which molten metal is poured to form a casting...[8] A reliable sample of traits, acts, tendencies, or observable characteristics of a person. [1] But the question to ask is, *"What does the Bible mean by pattern?*

In the Old Testament there three Hebrew words (*tabniyth, tokniyth,* and *mar'eh*) translated "pattern." *Tabniyth* means "structure, mode of building; model, pattern after which anything is built; or the pattern of what has been built" (Josh. 22:28; Ex. 25:40). [2] *Mar'eh* means "a view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen), whether (real) a sharp (espec. if handsome, comeliness, often plur. the looks), or (mental) a vision...pattern., to see, seem, visage, vision." [3] A pattern then, is a model to be imitated; that which is to be copied; a plan. [4] By faith Noah built an ark according to all that God commanded him (Gen. 6:22). Noah followed the plan or pattern given him by God. Moses built the ark of God according to the pattern shown him by God. "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern [*takniyth*] of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Ex. 25:9). Moses did as God commanded him (Heb. 8:5). Solomon's temple was constructed according to a pattern. "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28:19). The children of Israel had a pattern they were to follow if they were to worship God properly.

In the New Testament there are three Greek words (*tupos, hupodeigma,* and *hupotuposis*) translated pattern. *Tupos* means: [1] The mark of a stroke or blow; print; [2] A figure formed by a blow or impression; [3] Form; [4] Example. [5] Paul writes concerning a pattern. "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus 2:7). The Book of Hebrews shows that Moses did according to the pattern. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern (*tupos*) shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). The same Greek word is also translated "example" (1 Cor. 10:11; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:7; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Peter 5:3), "print" (John 20:25, "figure" (Acts 7:43; Rom. 5:14), "example" (1 Cor. 10:6; 1 Tim. 4:12), "fashion" (Acts 7:44), "manner" (Acts 23:25), and "form" (Rom. 6:17). [6]

> ***"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should after believe on him to everlasting life."***
>
> **(1 Timothy 1:16)**

Hupodeigma means "a sign suggestive of anything, delineation of a thing, representation, figure, copy...an example." [7] One finds this word translated pattern in the Book of Hebrews. "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:23). This Greek word is also translated "example" (John 13:15; Heb. 4:11; 8:5; James 5:10), and "ensample" (2 Peter 2:6). [8]

Hupotuposis means "an outline, sketch, brief and summary exposition...an example, pattern." [9] Paul uses this word when he wrote to the

From Page 12

"Pattern"

young man Timothy. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1:16). This word is also translated "form" (2 Tim. 1:13). [10] Therefore God has provided His children with a pattern to follow. This pattern is His word. "The word of God is an all–sufficient guide in building for 'glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life.'" [11] Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Christian Are To Worship According To God's Pattern

God has provided a pattern whereby Christians are to worship Him. What is this pattern? The Old Testament is not the specific pattern for men today to worship God. The Old Testament is Scripture. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Paul wrote to the church at Rome, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). To the church at Corinth he wrote, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). Also, Paul said, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). Therefore, today the Old Testament is not the pattern of the Christian's worship.

Christians are not guided by human traditions. Human traditions are not the pattern of worship. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their worship according to the traditions of their fathers (Matt. 15:1–9; Mark 7:3–13). Jesus called this vain worship (Matt. 15:9).

Christians are not to follow the pattern set by the majority. The majority are the ones that like to follow human traditions. It was the thinking of the majority that crucified the Lord and Savior. It was the majority that began to persecute the church. Paul said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23:1).

The New Testament is the pattern a Christian is to follow. There is a pattern to follow concerning worship. No matter how loud or hard some protest, that pattern will remain. The New Testament is God breathed (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Therefore, the pattern one must follow is God–given. The New Testament pattern is authorative and final. [12]

What does this pattern include in regard to Christian worship? Christians are to assemble to worship God on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1–2). Christ arose from the grave the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–10). The church, the kingdom of God, was established on the first day of the week (Acts 2:1–47). According to God's pattern there are five acts of worship: [1] *Prayer* (1 Thess. 5:17; Acts 2:42); [2] *Singing* (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); [3] *Giving* (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:7; 9:7); [4] *Partaking of the Lord's Supper* (Acts 20:7; Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–19; 1 Cor. 11:23–26); [5] *Hearing the word of God* (Acts 2:42; Rom. 10:17; Col. 4:16). God is the object of worship. God has provided the place of worship. Christians must worship God in His church (Acts 2:42; Eph. 1:22–23; Col. 1:18). God's pattern, then, gives men everything needed to understand the *who*, the *what*, the *where*, and the *how* of worship.

Conclusion

Christians must worship according to God's pattern. Many liberals are strongly against God's pattern concerning worship. "We must emphasize again: The modern religious world stands or falls by her traditions. Take away the options and legislation of men from the doctrines of sectarians, and you will destroy the foundation and superstructure of more than two hundred and fifty [religious] organizations in America." [13] "The tendency of men in all ages has been to change God's order of things, and run them into mere human formalities and ceremonies." [14] "It is a great irony that those who are crying, 'the church is hopelessly bound by tradition' are the ones who will enslave the church to destructive tradition were they [to] have their way." [15] Will we follow the pattern of worship as described by the Lord, or will we follow the traditions of men? ▪

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Endnotes

[1] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Springfield, MA: Merriam–Webster Inc., 1986).

[2] Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek–English Lexicon Of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 548.

[3] James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Nashville: Crusade Bible Publishing, Inc. nd), p.1190.

[4] J. Emmett Wainwright, "According To The Pattern," *Gospel Advocate* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1939), 81:152.

[5] Thayer, p. 632.

[6] J. B. Smith, *Greek–English Concordance To The New Testament*, (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1983), p. 275.

[7] Thayer, p. 645.

[8] Smith's, p. 360.

[9] Thayer, p. 645.

[10] Smith's, p. 362.

[11] B. L. Douthitt, "According To The Pattern," *Gospel Advocate* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1948), 82:1142.

[12] Alan E. Highers, "The New Testament Is The Pattern For Men Today," Terry M. Hightower, ed., *Rightly Dividing The Word* (San Antonio: The Fourth Annual Shenandoah Lectures, 1990), 1:298.

[13] *Gospel Advocate*, 1948, p. 1093.

[14] **Gospel Advocate**, 1909, p. 750.

[15] Dub McLish, "Shall We Worship In Truth And, Or, By tradition," Bobby Liddell, ed., *What Does God Authorize In Worship* (Pensacola: Fifteenth Bellview Lectures, 1990), p. 89.

From Page One

"Importance"

Catholic Church. Their saints have to be dead so long, usually dead long enough for all their defects to be forgotten; long enough for everybody to be dead who ever knew anything about their defects, then they canonize them and make saints out of them. But the New Testament idea of a saint is simply one who has obeyed the gospel and has remission of sins, having been set apart by obedience to the gospel. That is the meaning of the word *saint* or *sanctified*. All who obey the gospel become saints by so doing. So, in the church, saints; out of the church, not saints.

But again, with the saints, and "of the household of God." God's household is God's family: but the church is the household, and if you are out of the house of God—out of the family. Is it necessary to be a child of God to be saved? Then it is necessary to be in the house, the family of God. *Do not ever again say it is not necessary to belong to the church; that the church is nonessential, unessential, unimportant.* Some people say, "I just don't believe in church salvation." Well, I believe in Christ salvation, and that salvation is in the church, His body. It is not the church that saves, the church is the saved. That is the point. Because a man is saved that does not mean he is the savior; and because the church is the saved does not mean that the church is the savior. To believe that I am saved does not mean that I have to believe that I saved myself. Very well, to believe that the church is the saved, does that mean that I believe that the church saves me? Certainly not. Christ saved me, but He saved me in the church. The church is the saved.

Then he says, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone." What foundation? The foundation of the apostles and prophets. That does not mean that the apostles and prophets are the foundation. No. It means they laid it. This auditorium is a magnificent building. Some man was the architect. He laid the foundation. It is that man's foundation, but the man is not the foundation. There is a difference between the foundation of a man and the man being the foundation. The reference to the foundation of the apostles and prophets does not mean that the apostles and prophets are the foundation. It means the foundation laid by them. So states Paul in the Corinthian letter, chapter three: "I as a wise masterbuilder hath laid the foundation...other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Paul's statement is a divine interpretation of Matthew 16:18. Christ said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." If the church is built upon the rock, then whatever that rock is, that is the foundation and the church is built upon it. But Paul says, "Other foundation can no man lay...which is Jesus Christ." The church is built upon the rock; but the thing upon which the church is built is the foundation; therefore Christ is the rock. The foundation of the church is Christ. It was called the foundation of the apostles and prophets because they laid that foundation by preaching Christ.

One man argued with me that the church is built on the prophets, that David was a prophet, so the church is built upon David, and David used instrumental music in the worship, so that put instrumental music in the foundation of the church! He had two erroneous ideas. He had the idea that the prophets mentioned were the Old Testament prophets, and that the prophets were the foundation. Both of his ideas were wrong. The reference is to New Testament prophets, not the Old Testament prophets. The apostle said in Ephesians 3, "Now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets." How many Old Testament prophets were living when Paul wrote Ephesians? Malachi was the last Old Testament prophet, and he had been dead four hundred years. The prophets referred to were living at the same time that the apostles were living. They were New Testament prophets. But the prophets and the apostles are not the foundation—they laid it by preaching Christ.

A third area in that idea is assuming that if David was part of the foundation of the church it would bring into the church everything David practiced. That would go too far. David burned incense in the worship, so that would put incense in the foundation of the church—good Catholic doctrine. David kept the old seventh day sabbath, so that would put sabbath keeping in the foundation of the church—good Adventist doctrine. David had eight wives and took more, that would put polygamy in the foundation of the church—good Mormon doctrine. You can see what is wrong with that. When it says the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, it does not mean the Old Testament prophets, in the first place; it does not mean that the prophets were the foundation, in the second place; and if it meant that, it still would not bind Jewish worship on the church in the third place.

Notice it says, "Apostles and prophets." *A* and *P*. I do not mean to advertise a grocery store—I am talking about apostles and prophets! It does not say prophets and apostles—but apostles first, then prophets—New Testament prophets. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament preached Christ. By hearing, believing, and obeying what the apostles and prophets preached, the Corinthians got on the foundation. Now, if you have not obeyed the gospel of Christ you are off the foundation. If you are on the foundation you are in the building; but the building is the church, and the church is built on the foundation. So if you are out of the church, you are out of the foundation; and if you are out of the foundation, you are out of Christ. *Do not ever say again that it is not necessary to belong to the church.*

Then the apostle says, "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." You know what a corner stone does for a building? It holds the wall together, does it not? When the Jew and the Gentile obey the gospel they became members of the same institution. God would not have a Jew church and a Gentile church. No, the church of Christ is one body. When the Jew obeyed the gospel he came into the one body. When the Gentile obeyed the gospel he came

into the one body, and Christ is the cornerstone that holds the wall together. "He made of the two one new man." He is the *foundation* because it is built on Him. He is the *head* of it because it exists by His divine authority. He is the *cornerstone* of it because He holds together in one body both Jew and Gentile. Well, there is not anyone else to be in it—only Jews and Gentiles. If you are not a Jew, you are a Gentile, and if you are not a Gentile, you are a Jew, in the Bible use of the term. Since the Gentile must be in the church and the Jew must be in the church, they must be in the same church, where does anyone get the idea that anybody can be saved out of the church? "And he made both one." There is the unity of the church, and there is the essentiality of the church, the importance and the preeminence of the church.

Then the apostle says, "In whom each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.". There the church is represented as a temple. That is the worship idea. You must be in the temple to worship. The pagan idea of the temple was a dwelling place for gods. So Paul said, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the living God." The church is not a temple of idols, but a temple of God. It is not a building of material, but of people, who have obeyed the gospel—they make up the church, God's temple. In order to worship God one must be in the temple. No one can worship God outside His temple. If you are out of the church then you are out of the temple, and cannot render worship unto God. If it is necessary to render worship unto God to be saved, it is necessary to be in the church, the temple of God, to be saved.

The next verse—verse 22—tells us that it is "the habitation of God in the Spirit." If one is in God and God is in Him, then he is in the church, because the church is the habitation of God. That means, where God dwells. If one is out of the church, God does not dwell in him, and he does not dwell in God. *Necessary to belong to the church to be saved?* Friends, what do you think about it in the light of what Paul says?

Bulwarks Of The Faith (pp. 209–215.)

Yesterday

Brief Sketches In Restoration History

25 Years Ago—July, 1966: A special series of lessons emphasizing the Restoration Plea is being broadcast by the *Herald of Truth* radio program during July. These distinctive and persuasive sermons have been especially designed and addressed to members of the church and their friends who are identified with the conservative element of the Christian Church. John Allen Chalk will deliver the lessons over 463 radio stations in the United States and in thirteen foreign countries.

50 Years Ago—July, 1941: N. B. Hardeman and Mrs. Ann Ward were united in marriage in Pulaski, Tennessee by L. L. Brigance on July 30th. Following the ceremony the couple departed for New Orleans, where Hardeman filled a preaching appointment. The groom and "Miss Ann" will make their home in Henderson, where Hardeman is the president of Freed–Hardeman College.

75 Years Ago—July, 1916: The Potter Orphan's Home in Bowling Green, Kentucky has just concluded an open meeting and hosted more than two hundred brethren from Kentucky and Tennessee. At present, the home is caring for twenty–nine boys and girls.

100 Years Ago—July, 1891: David Lipscomb has been caught in the middle of a dispute between E. C. Herndon and Austin McGary. Those two brethren have parted company, severed their business association in the *Firm Foundation* and accused each other of wrong doing. Lipscomb published a statement from each brother in the *Gospel Advocate* and closed the affair with a jab at McGary, who continues to "write up" Herndon and refuses to publish his replies. "Bro. McGary must permit me to say, that his denunciation of Dr. Herndon and the refusal to give him a hearing before his readers, does not comport with the fairness and justice I have always tried to maintain. The heathen ruler could say, our law condemns no man, until he is brought face to face with his accuser. That is, until both sides are heard. Much less should a Christian man seek to condemn his brother and ruin his character and refuse him opportunity to meet the accusations before his readers. This is fair and just."

125 Years Ago—July, 1866: The tender heart of W. K. Pendleton—now president of Bethany College and editor of *The Millennial Harbinger* upon the death of his father–in–law, Alexander Campbell—has been touched by the "receipt of many letters from brethren in the South, and amid the general destitution that oppresses them, there comes louder than any other complaint, the lament for the loss or injury of their churches." Pendleton pleaded with his readers to be generous in their love for an impoverished brethren and promised to forward all funds received to needy brethren in the South. However, Pendleton also saw a great opportunity for the Missionary Society to assume a greater role in Southern missions. "Fill the treasury of the Missionary Society, and enable it to fill these whitening harvest fields with the strong reapers of the Lord...Remember the Missionary Society—it wants your assistance to sustain the gospel ministry in the South; and remember also this appeal, and send us something to make the places of worship comfortable for our brethren who call upon us for this aid."

150 Years Ago—July, 1841: Susan Bedford Creath, the wife of Jacob Creath, Jr., died on July 16th in Monticello, Missouri. An invalid since being thrown from her horse in 1838, she had urged Creath to move to Missouri so she could spend her last days near her family. Following her death Creath continue to suffer devastating personal calamity, including the loss of his stepson and financial ruin. Nevertheless, he remains faithful in the preaching of the gospel.

175 Years Ago—July, 1816: The controversy that follows young Alexander Campbell grows with each passing day. The Presbyterians are outraged at his "defection" and the Baptists are increasingly uneasy with his plea for reformation. Sticks and stones are sometimes thrown at him and his followers at their baptisms.

200 Years Ago—July, 1791: The rift in American Methodism continues as superintendent Francis Asubry pursues a course that will cause Methodist historians to dub him "Asbury the Dictator." His autocratic rule is not well received by the independent frontier preachers. Many are looking to James O'Kelley for leadership and reform. Rice Haggard, age twenty–two, has taken his stand with O'Kelley. ■