

THE

# HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

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## THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Through the books of secular history we have become familiar with the Reformation movement and the Restoration movement. Both activities have several similarities but they have marked differences, too. Both movements are based on spiritual motives, but one is carried out in a worldly manner. The other is more rooted on a scriptural principle.

In the Reformation movement, men sought to "reform" the church. To "reform" something means to take a product that is less than perfect and to make "reformatory changes" into it until the desired result is achieved. When you take something that is inferior, it

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will be impossible to "reform" that object into something superior. Likewise, the pioneers of the Reformation era never succeeded in their goal. Yes, some men made "changes" in the Lord's church that satisfied them but most of the others continued to "experiment." Even today there are men who come up with 'new doctrines' to "modernize" the church and "reform" it into something they think is right. But it is a far cry from the church pattern we find in the New Testament.

In the Restoration movement the approach was entirely different. The men who became involved with this progress of actions saw the flaw in the reformation philosophy. A sin can never be made right through the efforts of "reform" nor could the church be corrected in this manner. The only solution was to "restore" the original church in place of the contaminated institution their forefathers had created.

To "restore" means starting completely anew! When a person "restores" the finish on a cabinet, he strips off the old finish and adds a new one. When a farmer has a bad crop in the field, he does not try to fix the existing crop. It is much wiser for him to plant a brand new crop, starting with the seed! Similarly, those who recognized the leaven of corruptness entering and infiltrating the Lord's church, also recognized the need to "wipe the slate clean" and to re-plant that incorruptible seed, God's holy Word. The cry to leave the traditions and doctrines of men and to return back to the Bible as their only guide, was a plea for Restoration.

The Bible has many examples of the restoration principle. Pages after pages we can read of the return of God's people after they had strayed too far away from him. When God saw

the wickedness of man in Genesis 6, it was time for a restoration movement. First God destroyed the evil men and he spared Noah, who was a righteous man. Then he brought the Flood. To restore order into his world, God had to "wipe the slate clean."

The wanderings of the children of Israel is another example of the restoration principle in action. Once again the people of God had corrupted themselves in Numbers 14 by provoking the Lord. They murmured against him and had no faith in him at all. God "restored" his people by causing them to wander for 40 years! All who were 20 years or older died within that period except Joshua and Caleb. Just as God spared Noah from the flood, so he kept these two faithful servants from falling in the wilderness. As the next generation of Israelites marched into Jordan, God's people had been "restored", not "reformed".

Several kings of Judah initiated restoration programs under their reigns. A good illustration of this can be found in 2 Chronicles 29. Hezekiah saw that the house of the Lord God was full of filthiness. Did he try to correct the problem with "reformatory changes"? No, he undertook a program to "restore" the right religion. First, he had all the uncleanness removed from the house and it took eight days! Then the proper service was set in order according to the law of God. Isn't that what the Restoration movement was all about? *"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."* (Jer. 6:16)

After the Babylonian Captivity, the children of Israel were once again polluted with sin as recorded in Ezra 10. The priests had married "strange wives". How would it be possible to "reform" such a wrong? It wasn't. Instead, it

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required an act of a restoring nature. All the "strange wives" and their children had to be put away! This was done according to the law of God. This was the ONLY way that the people could return to God -- on his terms, not theirs. It would have done them no good to "re-form" God's laws to fit their own needs.

One other example is worth mentioning: the restoration of Israel in Acts 2. Under the Old Law, the Israelites would never become perfect or complete. The Old Law was an inferior law, our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. It was a temporary covenant, a ministration of death. So, God promised to "restore" Israel with a new and better testament. This restoration movement took place at Jerusalem. Christ had died for the world, the Old Law was nailed to the cross, and now Peter held the keys to the kingdom. Those wishing to be "restored" to God simply had to *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38)

Friends, as 1992 begins a new year for us, let us take a careful look at our religious life. Are we failing to live up to God's standards? Is our congregation drifting away from the Truth and the practices of the NT church? If our answer is yes, or we are not sure, then maybe it is time for another Restoration

movement. Let us "wipe the slate clean" and put away all the traditions and teachings we have learned from man. Now let us open the Bible, let us open our hearts, let us open our minds, and let us see what God's word has to say to us. Then, let us obey his every command. May God bless each one of us in this special endeavor.

RAY McMANUS

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who did Jesus send to make preparations for Passover the day before He was crucified?
2. Who did God tell to buy a linen belt, wear it and not let it touch water?
3. Because Abraham believed God, what title was given to him, according to James?
4. Who first said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
5. Did the people of Israel do an evil thing when they asked for a king?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Where was Samuel buried? IN HIS HOUSE IN RAMAH (1 Sam. 25:1)
2. How did Jesus say all men would know His disciples? IF THEY LOVED ONE ANOTHER (John 13:35)
3. Instead of being filled with wine, with what should you be filled? THE SPIRIT (Eph. 5:18)
4. The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" appears 32 times in the NT (KJV) and all in the same book! Which book is it? MATTHEW

5. From the time it left 'Egypt' until the reign of David, in what was the ark of the covenant housed? A TENT (2 Sam. 7:6)

## SPIRITUAL RICHES

Do we sometimes worry about being 'poor', that is, having a lack of riches? Do we try to think of ways to make money and then how to make MORE money? I am afraid too many of us do. Even members of the Lord's church worry to the extent that they may be creating ulcers for themselves. Some people think of nothing else but "I need more money." God's people should not be possessed with such thoughts, but it does happen. We all would like to have an extra dollar to spend on a loved one or to make our lives a little easier. But is it right for us to be so preoccupied about such thing?

Let's ask ourselves a few questions first. What if the job I have right now doesn't pay top dollar? Can I live with that? It pays just enough for me to survive on. After paying all the bills, I never have any leftover to put into savings. Now, is that really all that bad? Think of those who make even less than I do and yet, somehow they are still alive. Some folks don't even have a job! So, is it truly fair for me to complain?

And what if my income is such that I cannot eat steak or pizza or seafood at my next meal? Would it really kill me to have a dinner of rice and beans? As a matter of fact, I don't believe many of us would die if we missed our next meal! Try it! So how can we complain about the quality or quantity of any food we eat when others are starving and going hungry

before our very eyes? Surely we have been spoiled beyond measure.

The point to be made is that there are more important things to be concerned about besides physical riches. That was the key message Christ tried to convey in Matt. 6:25,31 when He said, *"Take no thought"*. He did not say to give up everything we owned and then God would supply all our wants, although God could do that. He did not say for us to fold our hands and do nothing and God would provide our every command. Neither did Jesus say for us to stand back and watch God magically fill our tables with our favorite foods. That is the message the lazy man wants to hear. Instead our Lord is telling us that we should not lose any sleep over the temporal objects of this life. *"Take no thought"*, that is, don't worry or be overly concerned with our physical needs because they are NOT the most significant things. Our spiritual life, i.e., our soul is what matters the most! *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matt. 16:26)

Therefore, let us be encouraged not to worry about material matters like money. It certainly will not be the end of the world if we don't get that dream house or car or job raise we always wanted. If we must die poor men, let it only be in the physical sense. The key is to die rich in the spiritual sense. If a man is to make it to heaven, he must be IN Christ where all spiritual blessings are found (Eph. 1:3). What truly counts is if a man is rich in Christ (Eph. 3:8), in good works (1 Tim. 6:18), and in faith (Jas. 2:5).

Remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16? Most people today envy the rich man since he had everything he

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wanted. Poor Lazarus had to beg for his next meal. Now he had something to worry about, didn't he? But at the conclusion of their lives, whose final outcome turned out better? Evidently Lazarus was rich in the spiritual sense while the rich man had neglected his own soul. In this story we have the lesson that it is far more important to live a righteous and obedient life than to worry about earning physical riches. Lazarus cared more about the spiritual riches and so it must be with us.

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

- H - EAR GOD'S WORD . . . . . Isa. 55:3  
 A - NSWER GOD'S CALL . . . . . Matt. 11:28  
 P - ARDON RECEIVE . . . . . Neh. 9:17  
 P - EACE POSSESS . . . . . Rom. 15:33  
 Y - IELD TO GOD . . . . . Rom. 6:13  
  
 N - O CONDEMNATION . . . . . Rom. 8:1  
 E - TERNAL LIFE IS A GIFT . . . . . Rom. 6:23  
 W - ALK UPRIGHTLY . . . . . Eph. 5:2  
  
 Y - OUTH IS THE TIME FOR SERVICE . Eccl. 12:1  
 E - ARLY SEEK GOD . . . . . Psa. 63:1  
 A - TTEND TO GOD'S WORD . . . . . Num. 12:6  
 R - EJOICE IN THE LORD . . . . . Phil. 4:4

*If you want the church to go on,  
go to church!*