

## **OUR ROOTS**

### **A Concise History of Churches of Christ**

#### **Lesson Seven: Facing the Future**

What does the future hold for Churches of Christ? Maybe a better way to ask that question is, “What does God want Churches of Christ to be?”

The original dream of the Restoration Movement was to bring unity by restoring to the church certain practices and commitments it had lost. Have Churches of Christ restored the church of the first century?

We have done a great service to the church by restoring practices that were neglected in the religious setting of Stone and the Campbells. What, in your opinion have we restored?

However, we must admit that we have not fully restored New Testament practices. What, in your opinion are we still missing?

Would you say that restorationism is a journey or an achievable destination?

Some believe we have restored the church and our job now is to defend it. What are the dangers of this attitude? What are potential dangers of a misunderstanding of the idea that restoration is a never-ending task?

Refugees

#### **NOT THE ONLY CHRISTIANS**

“Christians only, not the only Christians,” was one of the early mottoes of the movement.

How did we come to believe that we alone were Christians and that everyone in the “denominations” was lost?

Are Churches of Christ a denomination?

What if we refer to ourselves as a “movement” calling all people back to God through Christ?

Why do you think so many non-denominational, community, or Bible churches have been popping up all over the place lately?

What would happen if we became less fixed on our name and institutional practices?

### A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR THE NATIONS

"My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of robbers" (Mark 11.17). God intended his house, including Churches of Christ, to be for all nations (nations encompasses race and ethnicity). What kind of job have we done locally and globally with regard to this?

### GOOD NEWS FOR HEAD AND HEART

The future of Churches of Christ must be more than an institutional pilgrimage; it must be a spiritual one.

What are some specific ways we have embraced the poor, the sick, and the powerless?

"The Lord's Supper each week was to be a spiritual feast, an experiential participation in the death of Jesus. Baptism was to bring a heart-felt assurance of salvation and reconciliation. We should appoint elders not so we could be 'organized correctly,' but so that deeply spiritual leaders could guide others to a more intimate relation with Jesus." How do we (JSCC) compare to this statement?

### LORD, COME QUICKLY

The Second Coming relativizes all our plans and programs. It reminds us that God alone reigns, although we only see that reign by faith. If restoration is a journey, not a destination, we must remember that we have a destination: the heart of God. What are your thoughts on this statement? How aware of the second coming are we? Do we act as if today could be the last day of our life on this earth?

### Questions for further discussion

1. Why the word "refugee"? What does that look like? How comfortable are we with this analogy?
2. What evidences of spiritual renewal can you see in Churches of Christ generally and in your congregation today? How have they changed congregations?
3. What is to be gained by admitting that there are Christians other than those who are members of Churches of Christ?