



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

By Jeff Sweeten

In *Defining Baptist Convictions, Guidelines for the Twenty-First Century*, Cecil E. Sherman seemed to stumble upon a wonderful concept while studying the history of that denomination's origins. His research on the English Puritan Movement, from whence Baptists have their roots, led him to discover a mindset prevalent in the Puritan rebellion against the Church of England.

"They had an idea in their hands. The true sample for a real and right church is the New Testament. Puritans would fragment, but all were agreed on this idea. ***They were looking for a church on this earth like the one they saw in the New Testament.*** And they were willing to risk life to have it." (emp. JDS)

One could not describe in better words the attempt at and zeal for restoring New Testament Christianity among today's churches of Christ. While Puritans, and many denominationally affiliated bodies, have sought *reformation* on frequent occasion, this concept speaks more powerfully to *restoration*. What puzzles me is that such an erudite and educated man could expound such truth, and not embrace it himself! If it is the case that the Puritans were in error in their subsequent divisions, one of the correct implications in this quote (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10), how is it that one cannot see the necessity of going back to the pattern of New Testament theology for authority and existence, avoiding the disunity of embracing non-biblical innovations? Should it not be plain that to jettison denominational baggage and tradition-based theology, while embracing the precepts of the New Testament, will produce the New Testament Church? Would not New Testament Christianity truly unite all who truly serve Christ?

The churches of Christ, since Acts 2:47, "***are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit***" (Ephesians 3:20-22). The New Testament Church can and does exist today.

You, too, can become a part of that New Testament Church by following the same pattern to which First Century people submitted when the Gospel was preached (Acts 2:38; 8:5, 12, 35-38, et al.). You will not be asked to say some anti-biblical "Sinner's Prayer" (found nowhere in God's Word); there will be no necessity for any emotional testimonial (as emotions are a fickle foundation for faith). In your obedience to this gospel (Romans 6:3-4, 17), you will be added to the church that Christ built (Matthew 16:18; cf. Acts 2:47), not accepted into some man-made religious organization by an initiation of a fallible, human majority vote. You will be known as *Christians* only, unburdened by unscriptural and divisive human names (Acts 4:12; 11:26). Ah, the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:3) and of a "***thus saith the Lord***" (this phrase, in similar form, occurs about 400+ times in reliable translations of the Bible).

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.
Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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