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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of *Passing the Standard* is to teach children in churches that were founded through the Restoration Movement about the rich history and the sacred ideals that their churches possess.

The Restoration Movement resulted in the formation of many independent, autonomous churches—now referred to as Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and Disciples of Christ. These churches attempt to follow the patterns of the New Testament Church and, as a whole, have tried to remain removed from denominational ties. Central to the Movement are the belief in a unity of all who are “in Christ” and the belief that the Bible is the only authority in the spiritual direction of the Church. If the principles on which these churches were founded are to be continued, our children must come to understand their importance and determine to carry the Restoration’s standard into future generations.

To appreciate the Restoration Movement, it is important to understand that God’s hand directed the process. Only He could orchestrate all the elements of time, people, tradition, and spiritual hunger that blended to sweep the globe with a desire to return the Church to its original patterns. To effectively utilize this particular study of the Restoration Movement it is perhaps useful to understand the definitions and implications of certain terms that are regularly associated with this subject.

First—we speak of a “movement”, which would seem to imply in this context, a planned and directed effort to move the course of man’s religious understanding and behavior into a predetermined path. At its heart this may be so, if we realize that it is God, not man, who is ultimately directing that effort. On a human basis, however, it is important to realize that when the term “movement” is used, it is done so only to describe the outward evidences that are observed as Christians began turning from the man-made constraints of creeds and traditions to the freedom of the gospel. Of each of the primary leaders it has been noted that there was no initial intention of pulling out of their specific denomination; rather, there was only the intense desire to follow the

directives of the Bible.

Second—we speak of the Church, which is by design an entity created by God, not by man. In our finite effort to label, describe, and categorize, we have managed to create a multitude of images and definitions regarding the word “church”, and have thus attributed all manner of traditions and practices to it. For the purpose of these lessons, at least, it is important to remember that the Church is unbounded by time and geography and unchanged—it is still God’s Church, conceived, instituted, protected, and preserved by Him, as He ordained.

Third—we speak of the “restoration of the Church”. How arrogant can we be! The terminology of restoring the Church has nothing at all to do with “fixing” God’s design, but rather fixing mankind’s willingness to fully accept that design. When we speak of a reforming or restoring, we are speaking more accurately of “returning”—stripping away all of man’s added requirements to return to the pure design of the Church and thereafter following the prescribed practices as closely as possible.

Lastly—we speak of denominations. The sad reality is that from the moment man became involved in the Church; its appearance began to change—the appearance, not the design. Through the centuries the changes mounted, layering new traditions and interpretations upon the old until it bore little resemblance to its original design. Attempts to “reform” man’s concepts of the Church resulted in a splintering rather than a unifying of the body of Christ. Hence, denominations were formed—each holding to some of the original design, but blending with it new traditions, practices, and concepts. The Restoration leaders, and earlier counterparts, attempted to step beyond the denominational boundaries to return to the pure design as detailed in the New Testament. They urged Christians to unite under Christ, not under a specific denomination.

Such is the Restoration Movement! However, we must never underestimate the tendency of mankind to categorize, limit, and label. As much as we attempt to remain outside the distinctions of denominations and seek only to be called Christians—by the very nature of our collective effort we may find ourselves linked together under the label of Christian, as if the word itself suggests

but one more denomination. In other words, if we don't carefully guard the purity of our claim, we may find that we, indeed, become just one more denomination.

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The Restoration Movement—which is sometimes referred to as the Stone / Campbell Movement—had many dynamic leaders, but it had many more whose names are rarely mentioned and may even be lost to the world's historians. As we study the primary leaders and the ideals that they followed, we must never lose sight of the fact that God, in His own time, called His people, by His Spirit and through His Word, to remove the nonessentials that had been added to the practices of the Church.

In Harold W. Ford's *History of the Restoration Plea*, he quotes Dean E. Walker, *Adventuring for Christian Unity*:

The Restoration movement cannot be properly understood nor can the Plea be properly appreciated without some knowledge of the backgrounds of the movement. The movement did not spring full-grown from the head of any single person, but arose as an evolution of thought in the minds of many in widely separated sections of the country and of the world. It was the work of many and, most certainly, not the work of one man. To call the movement by the name of one man is to demonstrate a very profound ignorance of the history of the Plea. It was the "confluence of six streams of Christian action" which brought to be the total movement to restore to the world the Christianity of the New Testament. These are, in origin, quite distinct. Arising simultaneously, they discovered each other and clarified their objectives within a generation. The story of the beginnings is therefore necessarily scattered at first, but unifies toward the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. [Harold W. Ford, *A History of the Restoration Plea* (Joplin;

College Press Publishing Company,
1952) pp. 3-4 (quoting Dean E. Walker,
Adventuring for Christian Unity
(Birmingham: The Berean Press, 1935)
p. 17)]

In a manner of speaking, *Passing the Standard* is loosely based on Walker's description of a "confluence of streams" idea. Time does not permit a thorough study of all the different individuals or even all the different groups of people that had a part in the religious changes that are collectively called the Restoration Movement, but this course will attempt to cover most of the major leaders of the Movement, identify how slogans and special newspapers impacted the spreading of the ideas, and even acknowledge the painful realization that a movement based on unity can still fall prey to the effects of man's disagreements.

The path of the Restoration Movement was not always easy; personalities often got in the way. But, God's Spirit continued to hold the founders in balance and guided them to the desired goal.

The goal of the Restoration Movement was, and is, to restore and maintain the order of worship and the identifying structure of the Church to the original design. To accomplish this we must first determine what specific practices were considered to be a "routine" part of the life of the Church. For that reason, in *Passing the Standard* we will first look backward to the dawn of the Church to see just what practices the apostles, led by the Holy Spirit, set in place. Then we will very briefly look at how the Reformation—an attempt in itself to restore the order and design of the New Testament Church—instead produced a fragmented Church, creating denominations that in turn eventually layered their own routines upon the original practices of the Church. After that, we will look at the Restoration Movement as it sought again to restore the New Testament pattern. And finally, even though we must stand by a broken standard of the Restoration Movement, we will hopefully catch a glimpse of that perfect Unity in which all who are "in Christ" reside.

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Passing the Standard provides all of the following:

1. Background information, with “Key elements” in the sidebar.

2. Rough outline of the procedure for teaching the lessons

It is left to each instructor to select those components that best suit his or her class, both in regard to time and to maturity or attention level of the children.

Passing the Standard provides all of the following:

1. A brief background for each lesson

The background provides a brief look at the particular facet of the Movement that is being covered in the lesson—it is by no means an exhaustive narrative of the lives of the people involved or an attempt to unlock all the complexities of the ideals that those people held dear.

“Key elements or details” appear in the sidebars. These are the facts that need be covered in your general lectures because they will continue to appear in the quizzes, the activities, the games, etc. You are, of course, not limited to sharing only the details in the sidebars with your students. Other information from the background, or from your personal research, can be shared with the students as well—you can even adapt many of the games and activities to include additional details.

To teach the lesson effectively, you should review the background information (**especially the sidebar information**) until you can smoothly tell the story to the students. It may be helpful to write key words on the board to help you remember all the points that you intend to cover.

2. A rough outline of the procedure for teaching the lessons

The teaching procedure for these lessons is a blend of sharing information (by lecture or other means), activity, and continual repetition of details. There is no single pattern that must be followed and no script to be used. It is merely a matter of conveying the details from the Backgrounds and then continually repeating those details as you play the games, do the activities, and review lessons that have been done before.

While the outline presents a combination of object lessons, illustrations, descriptions of lecture presentations, games, and activities that can be used, it is left to each instructor to select the components that

best suit his or her class, both in regard to time and to maturity or attention level of the children.

“Sharing Information” involves presenting the key information of the lesson. The information can be presented by a verbal overview—aided by visually pointing to maps, key words, timelines, etc.; it can be unfolded gradually through object lessons or discussions; it can be presented by dramatic storytelling; or it can possibly be presented in some other way entirely. The bottom line is: the basic “facts” of the lesson must be conveyed to the class before they can begin doing activities and playing games involving them.

Many of the basic details of the lessons are further explained by use of either “Object Lessons” or “Illustrations”. The purpose of the Object Lessons and the Illustrations is to provide the students with visualizations or real-life examples of the concepts that are involved.

Because one of the pillars of the Movement is Biblical Authority and because this author firmly believes in the continued need for scripture memory, it is highly recommended that at least some part of every lesson should include Bible Drills to help the children become more familiar with the structure and the content of the Bible. The first lesson describes how to conduct a Bible Drill or a Bible Book drill and every lesson (except the review lessons) include a list of Books and verses that can be used for these drills.

Each lesson includes an additional Scripture Memory activity that can be used if time permits. Some lessons also include other additional activities that can be used if you need extra “Time-fillers”.

3 Descriptions regarding the games and activities

Repetition is vital to learning. Details are repeated in games, activities, quizzes, and in the newsletters. Detailed descriptions of how to conduct the games and activities are included, but each one can be adapted

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3. Description of games, activities, etc.

to be used in other ways as well. In particular, an activity or game used in one lesson can be adapted as an extra review activity for later ones. (Note that the duration of many of the activities can be increased or decreased, depending on the amount of time available. To fill in additional time, activities can be repeated; if time is short, the procedure can be altered to make the activities move faster.)

Many of the games and activities are constructed in a manner that provides a little friendly competition—emphasis on friendly. Each one can be treated individually, providing you the opportunity to give out lots of small prizes or certificates; or, you can run a course-long Points Contest. In a Points Contest, you would need to keep track of all the points earned for each person throughout the course and then during the last lesson give prizes based on accumulated points. If you choose the later method, keep track of points in categories—like Bible Drill points; Comprehension Activity Points; Relay Activity Points; Review Activity Points; etc. This will help you to be able to give prizes to more people. You may also want to keep notes on Behavior, Teamwork, Attendance, etc.—in case you find that you need to create a few more prize categories so EVERYONE will earn a prize.

4. Game pieces, templates, supplementary aids, etc.

4. Game pieces and print-outs for quizzes, activities, etc

Game pieces, templates, and other supplementary aids are provided on the *Passing the Standard CD*. Under the copyright of this course, you are permitted to print as many copies of these items as you need for the teaching of the course.

5. Newsletters

5. Newsletters

The Newsletter for each lesson reinforces the information that was discussed during the lesson and provides puzzles and other suggestions to enhance the study of that information. It can be used either as a take-home paper or as part of the structure of your class. Under the copyright of this course, you are

permitted to print as many copies of the newsletters as you need for the teaching of the course.

6. Additional Resources

The following references, which were studied in the creation of this course, are highly recommended if you are interested in obtaining more information about the history of the Restoration Movement. In addition, if you have questions regarding this course or the procedures involved in teaching it, the author can be contacted by email at publisher@autumnlight.net.

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