

What Can Christians Learn from Tithing?

Written on: May 1, 2022

Article by: Ed Broadus

Lately I have given more thought to two biblical ordinances that in our own tradition have been largely dismissed as relics of Judaism – tithing and the Sabbath. To be sure, they were important ordinances under the Mosaic law, but both antedate that law and they both involve underlying principles that can be very instructive to Christians. This article is concerned with the first, and an intended article will deal with the second. By way of definition, tithing is giving away ten percent of one's income for God's causes and not some lesser amount that some identify as their tithe.

Prior to Moses and the law that God gave to Israel through him, tithing is mentioned twice in Scripture. The first is in Genesis 14:18-20, when Abraham, after helping win a war and rescuing his nephew Lot, gave Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," a tenth of everything (apparently the spoils of war). The text implies that he did this in response to the blessing from God that Melchizedek pronounced upon him.

The other reference to tithing, prior to Moses' law, is in Genesis 28:20-22. When Jacob was on his journey to find a wife among his mother's extended family, he camped one night at Bethel, and God in a dream reiterated his earlier promise to Jacob's grandfather of the land of Canaan and through him a blessing to all the families of the earth. He also promised Jacob safety on his journey as well as a safe return. Jacob's response seems transactional and self-serving: "If God" does these things, "then the Lord shall be my God . . . and of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you" (28:20-22). But perhaps we should understand Jacob promising that since God was doing this that Jacob would give him a full tenth.

Although we have but these two examples of tithing during that early period, some think these cases are indicative of a widespread practice of tithing (giving God a tenth). One of the reasons for this would seem to be a grateful and significant response to God for his much greater blessings.

When we turn to the law of Moses, that which earlier was an implied response to God becomes explicit: "Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. . . . And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff shall be holy to the Lord" (Leviticus 27:30-32).

Tithes in Israel were given to the Levites for serving in the tabernacle (Numbers 18:21-24), and the Levites in turn were to give a "tithe of the tithe" to Aaron the priest (18:25-30). Tithes were taken to Jerusalem every first and second year, but in the third year they were retained in their various towns and shared with Levites, sojourners, the fatherless, and widows in each town so that they could eat and be filled (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

In addition to the prescribed tithe, there were various other offerings that Israelites at times made to God, including some that were called "freewill offerings," made voluntarily in addition to what was prescribed, so the tithe was only a portion of what they gave. According to the prophet Malachi, it was *robbing God* not to give the full statutory tithes and contributions since they actually *belonged* to God (Malachi 3:6-12).


Jesus had little to say about tithes but much otherwise about the use of money. About tithes he condemned abuses. He criticized those under Moses' law who were careful to tithe small things (like mint, dill, and cumin) but then neglected virtues that were much more important (like justice, mercy and faithfulness). Their fault was not their scrupulous tithing ("these you ought to have done") but their neglect of what was far more important (Matthew 23:23). In a parable he rebuked those who were self-righteous, trusting in good deeds like fasting and tithing (Luke 18:10-12). He very likely had tithes partly in mind when he condemned those who failed to help their father and mother because what they would have given them was "Corban" (a word meaning sacrifice), which is explained by Mark as something "given to God" (Mark 7:9-13).

Tithing is not mentioned in the New Testament as a command for Christians to practice.

Despite this, many churches and church leaders have urged tithing on the church by their members – assuming that this is a command of God and also assuming that all that the members tithe is for the church. There are many good causes that Christians may want to support, including some that are obligatory. A biblical example of this is the instruction to believing women who have relatives that are widows: "Let her care for them" rather than letting the church be burdened (1 Timothy 5:16).

Now that we have surveyed biblical teaching about the tithing prescribed for the Israelites we need to answer the question raised in the title to this article, "What Can Christians Learn from Tithing?" At the head of the list is the realization that what we give is the Lord's and is holy. The root idea of holiness is separation, and the Israelites were taught that the tithe, as holy, was set apart for the Lord and belongs to him. As Malachi said, not to give it was robbing God of what was rightfully his. While Christians have not been told an exact amount to give, they are to give something of what God has given to them, and it is important to realize that what they have decided to give is holy and in a special way belongs to him. They are told that this is part of their worship and that they should not neglect to "do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Hebrews 13:15-16).

We can also learn from what each Israelite was commanded to give that it was a significant amount of what he had. Although our giving is free will ("as one has decided in his heart") and



THANK YOU for your support of the Key to the Kingdom Canada television program which continues outreach and provides opportunities across Canada for teaching the gospel of Christ. Many are involved in Bible study with our study helpers across the country.

Airing times are Friday mornings at 8:30 am EST on the Vision TV network and Sundays on Joy TV 10 which serves the Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley region and Victoria in B.C. On the program we offer Bible Study Courses: a 7-part World Bible School Course (available by Mail or Online); a 3-part Bible Study series produced by Key To The Kingdom Canada; and a DVD, "God's Plan for Redeeming Man".

We appreciate your support. Your prayers are also appreciated – and don't forget to advertise Key to the Kingdom in your congregation and local area. Please visit our [website: www.keytothekingdom.ca](http://www.keytothekingdom.ca).

Please contact the Strathmore leadership with any questions concerning the KEY Ministry at:
Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ, 346 Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1N3
Phone: 416-461-7406 or Email: steveg@keytothekingdom.ca.

Donations may be sent to: Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ, 346 Strathmore Blvd., Toronto, ON M4C 1N3. Due to bank requirements, please make cheques payable to...
Strathmore Blvd. Church of Christ and please put **KEY** on the memo line.

should not be done reluctantly, for “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), it should, in its totality, represent a significant part of what we have. We need to realize the principle that “whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” If we really believe this we will decide accordingly (9:6-7). This is not a “prosperity gospel,” like some preach today, for the promise is not that God will make us rich if we give generously, but that we will be enabled to be generous in meeting still more needs in the future (9:10-11).

Another important lesson is that, while the tithe made giving proportional to what each person had, it did not limit giving to that amount. Similarly, when Paul asked Christians to give, he said that “it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have” (2 Corinthians 8:12-15). He also commended those who despite poverty gave beyond their means, of their own accord, because “they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5). Sometimes a need is so great that some will give more than any of us would ask of them. In the early days of the Jerusalem church, some, like Barnabas, sold lands and houses to help those in need (Acts 4:34-37).

Another important lesson from the tithe under Moses’ law is that much of it provided for the poor, like the fatherless and widows, those leading in the Lord’s work, like the Levites, and those who were immigrants or refugees (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). References to Christian giving in Acts and the letters, say more about giving for this reason than for any other. Concern for the poor and support for those giving much of their time to doing the Lord’s work should motivate much of our giving.

Finally, though tithing is not commanded as such for Christians, it has helped many, especially early in their Christian lives, to learn how to give. Very early it seemed reasonable to me that if God wanted the Israelites to give a tenth, surely even more would be appropriate for a Christian, living under a much more glorious covenant. For many this can be a beginning step until they learn more fully the joy of generosity and what Jesus meant when he said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Paul ended his discourse on giving in 2 Corinthians and the blessings of generosity by exclaiming, in 9:35, “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!”

Burlington ON

(All Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.)

The Surrey church of Christ is looking for a fulltime Minister and Evangelist. We are a conservative fellowship with a rich multicultural mix of congregants. This includes a good balance of youth, young families and seniors. We strive to be faithful to the Lord and His Word and we are passionate about sharing God’s love to our community and abroad.



Located in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada.

Please send us your resume and a video introduction with a sample sermon included..

You may forward your resume and introduction to churchofchristinsurrey@gmail.com

Please place “Minister” in the subject line. For further details please cheque our Web Site www.surreychurchofchrist.org.

Is Personal Self Defence Morally Right?

Written on: May 1, 2022

Article by: Kevin Cleary

Part 1

'Gun control' is one of the hottest issues debated today. This article is not about that, but asks a related question: is it morally right to defend oneself? And if so, might self defence include the use of violence? The application of force might include the use of a gun or any other means at hand at the moment. But the means that one uses is not at the heart of the question. The question is, is it ever right or permitted for a Christian to use force in self-defence, or the defence of one's family?

The use of force to achieve a peaceful outcome extends to the broader scope of daily life and even international affairs. And when it does, our question becomes: can a Christian serve in law enforcement and/or in the military? Each of these is related by common elements to our original question and we will consider them in turn. None of these questions are new to the church or to those who seek to please the Lord.

Consider this writers personal experience.

A few years ago a friend decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. It was not long before a concerned acquaintance asked me if being a police officer was consistent with Christian morality. I was well aware that some Christians consider the use of *any* violence and especially violence causing death, to be wrong. But I was surprised to hear it again firsthand since that view seems – no longer in the majority. Yet in that connection, I have had brethren tell me about a family member or a friend who refused to go to war as a conscientious objector. It was something that they were proud of as were their families. They were respected for taking a stand and refusing to participate in war.

The congregation that I serve is in the small town Meaford Ontario which is located near a military base. In July of 1942, the federal government expropriated more than 17,000 acres of land from over 150 landowners. also affecting four schools and three churches. Considerable ill will was created in the community and some of those feelings persist today. But all in all, military personnel now make up a good part of the population, adding many young families to our town. This was the setting in which the questions about self defence, law enforcement and military service were raised.

While preparing for a Bible Study class to consider these matters, a friend gave me a copy of H. Leo Boles book "*The New Testament Teaching On War.*" The thought was, that perhaps this volume might guide my thinking. I did read a good portion of the


book back then and have taken a look at it again in preparation for this paper. Boles and before him David Lipscomb and earlier still Alexander Campbell popularized the pacifist position within the restoration movement. Both Lipscomb and Boles served as editor of the Gospel Advocate, with Lipscomb serving longer and having arguably the most influence of the two (Casey, 1999). It is not my goal to outline the history of this question in the church but the case that has been made for pacifism is well stated by brethren in the past. Pacifism is a far less popular position in the present day but as my story illustrates it is not unknown.

The change may have to do with an equally influential preacher, writer and later editor of the gospel advocate Foy E Wallace Jr. He was a strong advocate for the Christians right to bear arms for his country (Lambert, 2021). No doubt secular influences such as Pearl Harbour and the Allied success in World War 2 had an influence and continue to shape sentiment around the issue. In current discussions a new dimension of the subject, namely personal self defence has taken center stage, again likely influenced by the secular discussion of *gun control*.

Now it is important to point out, that it is with good reason that many Christians are pacifists. A cursory reading of the New Testament does indeed reveal a number of passages that encourage an attitude of love, patience, and forgiveness. These seem to favour the pacifist position. Given this, it makes sense that pacifism strikes a chord with many Christians, who are drawn to the Mercy and Grace of God. This is as it should be. At the same time, it is important to base our beliefs on the clear teachings within scripture rather than just a general impression that we get from scripture. For example, I had a lady tell me recently that Jesus was very non-judgmental. When I asked her to explain, she was unable to do so. When she stopped and thought for a few minutes, she amended her position saying that actually Jesus passed many judgments but he did it in a way that was attractive and compelling.

So lets examine the teaching of scripture starting with those passages often cited in support of pacifism.


Many restoration leaders and others when teaching on this



Not sure if your church insurance policy is giving you the coverage you need?

Brokerforce Insurance is committed to offering congregations in the Restoration Movement quality insurance coverage with competitive premiums. With the Sanctuary Plus Coverage, congregations are able to devote their energy to the work God is calling them into. We have over 45 years of experience and a growing list of restoration churches we are serving.

Call or Visit for a Free Quote Today!

BrokerForce we work for you 1.800.263.9870 www.brokerforce.ca  **SANCTUARY PLUS**

subject started with the sermon on the mount (Boles, 1923, p. 17) (Guin, 2009). We will start there as well.

- Jesus in the beatitudes taught: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called son of God” (Mat 5:9) (scripture citations will be from the English Standard Version Unless otherwise noted). How can we pursue peace if we resort to violence?
- Later in Matthew 5:21-26 Jesus addresses the command “you shall not murder”. He amplified this teaching to say “everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.” This passage not only condemns murder, but the attitude or state of mind which leads to it.
- Based on this the pacifist would say, killing entails a feeling toward your fellow man that is condemned by Jesus. If even the state of mind is wrong how much more the act itself.

There is more to discuss in regards to the Sermon on the mount. First, however, we should establish a Biblical principal that pacifist’s rightly emphasize. It’s also a principal we heartily agree with. Human life is sacred. Unlike the animals we read that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). We go on to read Genesis 2:7 where God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living creature.” The wise man tells us “and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.” (Eccl 12:7). Human life is given by God and the pacifist is right to value it highly. In fact while we may disagree with certain aspects of the pacifist position, whatever conclusion we draw must value and respect life as given by God.

Carrying on through the sermon on the mount, we shortly come to Jesus’ teaching on retaliation (Mat 5:38-42).

- Here Jesus says “you have heard it said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek turn to him the other also.” Again, the pacifist would point out that we are not to resist the one who is doing evil. Rather the Christian is to share in suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
- This passage leads right into Jesus next admonition, which will often be the first one raised to support the pacifist position; “You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven” (Mat 5:43-48). Alexander Campbell said “The central principle of Christ’s kingdom was love: “Philosophy as well as religion teaches us that to conquer enemies is not the work of swords, nor lances, nor bows of steel. To conquer an enemy is to convert him into a friend To do this all arms and modes of warfare are impotent, save the arms and munitions of everlasting love.” (Casey, 1999).
- We could add to these passages Romans 12:17-21, “Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honourable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as

it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

- Leaving the sermon on the mount we must add Matthew 22:39 “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”

Which raises the question – how loving is it to respond with violence? How can you claim to love someone while using physical force against them? Then to top off the whole discussion, one might point out that when Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus in Gethsemane, he was scolded for doing so. Matthew 26:51-52 reads “And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”

Based on this passage the pacifist will once again insist that even in the face of an unjust arrest Jesus did not allow Peter to use force. If it’s not acceptable in this dire situation then what situation would justify the use of physical force?

Having made a brief survey of the pacifist argument and having acknowledged that there is much to recommend it, we need to look further. There is more that the Bible has to say on this topic. Before that however, it’s important to once again, qualify our discussion by emphasizing our shared belief in certain Christian principals. There is no question that the Christian is called to behave differently and to live by a higher standard than the world. Part of this

seek. serve. become.



GREAT LAKES
CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
www.glchs.on.ca



GLCHS MISSION STATEMENT
Great Lakes Christian High School fosters excellence in education while equipping learners to seek, serve and become like Christ.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants should forward a cover letter and resume by May 18th to:

dwayne.williams@glchs.ca
or
Great Lakes Christian High School
Attn: Dwayne Williams
4875 King Street
Beamsville, ON L3J 2J1

GREAT LAKES IS HIRING
We are seeking a full-time 10-month (mid August to mid June) Dormitory Parent for our boys dormitory. Housing available.

DORMITORY PARENT
Dorm parents create and maintain a safe, inclusive, structured, and nurturing environment in which each and every boarding student feels connected, respected, valued, and loved.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure the safety and well-being of all students.
- Practice authoritative care that exhibits both high expectations and authentic warmth.
- Model and espouse Christian values and encourage faith development in students.

QUALIFICATIONS

- A degree or diploma in ministry, social work, or education preferred.
- Experience working with teens, ideally in a dormitory environment.
- Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and follow-through.
- Computer skills including file management and electronic communications software.

For a detailed job description, email dwayne.williams@glchs.ca.

includes how we respond to people who are difficult or mean or hurtful.

Jesus himself calls us to do all that we can to seek resolution and forgiveness, even if it means that we endure suffering. It is because of this important truth that pacifism seems so in keeping with the teaching of scripture and with the kind of life Christians are to live. It's easy as a human to simply accept the thought forms of the world and to justify or even glorify death and violence. That is not the purpose of this article, nor should it ever be the goal of any Christian. While we may not accept the full pacifist position, we must embrace the scriptural teaching to love our enemies and genuinely desire that which is in their best interest.

"He Could Have Called 10,000 Angels" is a favourite hymn for many. Ray Overholt wrote the song after reading Matthew 26:53 ". Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" No doubt there were many present on the day of Pentecost who were also present at Jesus crucifixion (Acts 2:22 and 36). Jesus had the capacity to defend himself and chose not to, for the benefit of the very people who killed him. We must give careful thought to defending ourselves, even if we have the capacity to do so, because other priorities may take precedence.

With these important concepts in mind let's examine the case made by the other side.

Both sides in this discussion often start with Exodus 20:13. In this passage, God condemns murder. It is important to distinguish this from a general prohibition of killing as reflected by the being the sheer number of translations that render the Hebrew word "*ratsakh*" (Notes, 1996)murder. Twenty One of the Twenty Five translations I referenced translate this word "murder" (Hub, 2021). Murder, is the intentional or unauthorized taking of human life (Gen Ed. Chad Brand, 2003, p. 1158). Strong's and Brown Driver Briggs define the word "*ratsakh*" (H7523) as murder (bible, n.d.).

This translation of the word is supported by the immediate context of the book of Exodus. Immediately after giving the ten commandments, Moses outlined a series of laws, the violation of which was punishable by death. Capital punishment had to be carried out by men and their actions were not included in the prohibition of Exodus 20:13. The rest of the book of Exodus tells the story of how Israel engaged in battle (Ex 17:6-16), without violating of the sixth commandment. We must also consider the more remote context of the whole Old Testament. In Genesis 9:6 mankind is commanded to kill anyone who is guilty of murder.

It is clear then that Exodus 20:13 pertains to murder and not to all forms of killing. This is an important distinction but by itself does not prove that killing in self defence is morally right. Yet the distinction is important as we seek to answer our original question. It is more damaging to the pacifist case, when the argument includes the assertion that all killing is condemned.

When carried out by the state, capital punishment does not violate God's law. Nor does it seem that when a nation defends itself in war, that killing in war is morally wrong. There were even times when God sent his people into war, and it would have been morally wrong for them to refuse to go...which raises the matter or concept of agency.

I have worked in the past as a sales representative for various companies mostly in the construction industry. I was not making personal arrangements to supply or install some product or to offer a service. I was representing the company that I worked for and was empowered to act on their behalf. Similarly when I respond to an emergency as a fire fighter I do so as an agent of the Ontario Fire Marshal. I can do things that are illegal for a private citizen. I may destroy property or stop traffic or use resources that I could not legally use as a civilian.

A police officer or a soldier is in a similar position. They are working as an agent of the state, and as such the activities that they engage in are done on behalf of the state which is acting through them.

The scriptures recognize this principal and demonstrate it in various ways.

- Prophets for example represented God when they are sharing inspired utterances (II Pet 1:20-21, I Thess 2:13).
- The high priest represented the people to God (Heb 5:1).
- David and Goliath represented their respective nations (I Sam 17).

We could give other examples but this is enough to establish the concept. When individual soldiers of Israel went to war, they represented their nation and sometimes also represented God. The apostle Paul appears to apply that same principle in

The Pinehill church of Christ (Sault Ste. Marie

Ontario) -Full time Evangelist. Our congregation of approximately 40, is looking for an Evangelistic Minister to assist an aging membership on our journey through this world. We are seeking a person who has a demonstrated commitment to the beliefs and practices of the mainstream churches of Christ. The evangelist will work with us to not only meet the needs of the congregation today but aid us in establishing a congregation for tomorrow by actively promoting His word. As the world changes around us, we are looking for a person who can preach the word of God to show us that regardless of the changes, God's word is steadfast and with us always. We prefer a married person who has graduated from a noted Christian College but will consider someone with demonstrated experience. Demonstrated ability to relate to recent immigrants would be an asset since Sault Ste. Marie is a partner in Canada's Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP). See <https://www.facebook.com/pinehillcoc/> for more information about Pinehill. Send resumes to secretary.pinehillcochrist@gmail.com. "Salary and compensation package can be discussed with qualified applicants" (Note this is a continuation of search started in 2020)



Romans 13:1-4 to those who keep the peace within nations and even between nations. They represent the state in a way mandated by God (Rom 13:1-4).

Having said that, we also recognize certain limitations. John the baptist made it clear that tax collectors were not allowed to overcharge and soldiers were forbidden to extort money. Each was not allowed to take personal advantage of their position as agents of the government (Luke 3:12-14). Today, soldiers are expected to exercise some autonomy and not just blindly follow orders. Nazi soldiers who committed atrocities, could not escape prosecution by claiming that they were just following orders. So if an agent of the state is asked to do something immoral or cruel or wicked there is an expectation that they will refuse. Police officers are expected to use personal judgment as well. What the law permits and that which constitutes a proportional response in individual circumstances is a matter of judgment.

Norman Giesler identifies this position on war as selectivism and describes it as follows: "Selectivism therefore correctly points to the need to put God over government and to encourage obedience to government but preserve the right of conscience to dissent from oppressive commands" (Geisler, 1989, p. 237). This is somewhat of an aside, but it stresses the importance of maintaining composure, and making rational rather than emotional decisions. This is especially important when there is a potential for violent action. We will consider some tools for managing stress response later.

This brings us finally to the matter of self-defence. We do find one in Exodus 22:2 that is helpful. If a thief breaks into someone's house at night and dies as a result of being struck, the person who struck him (presumably the homeowner) is not guilty of murder. This does seem to be a clear case of self defence. It should be noted that this law only applies at night. There are a number of possible reasons for this: At night, there is a greater risk to a family at home. In the dark, those *broken into* have a compromised ability to measure the degree of danger and to apply less lethal force, all the while feeling trapped with no way out. All of that changed for a daytime break-in when others were about and help might be had. The point for our discussion is, that in at least some circumstances, the Law of Moses allowed for defence of self and property, even when it resulted in an offender's death.

Turning to the new Testament, a number of related scriptures should also be considered.

First consider Romans 13:1-4, where Paul explains that government is authorized by God and has a role in maintaining safety in society. Agents of government are authorized to use violence to do their job. As in the Old Testament, human life might be taken without committing an immoral act.

Some have argued that while this authority is assigned by God to the government, a Christian cannot serve as an agent of the state for these purposes. In effect, God has one set of standards for people outside of the church and another for his own people.

Yet this is not reflected in scripture. Consider Acts 17:30 which indicates that all mankind is held accountable to God's moral imperatives. There seems to be just one standard. This is reinforced by the fact that when soldiers came to John the Baptist in

Luke 3:14, he did not tell them that they had to quit being soldiers, only that they could not take advantage of their position. There is also no indication that Cornelius a Roman centurion, was required to leave the military (Acts 10:34-11:18). His freedom to do ought not be confused with a requirement to resign.

The scriptures do not indicate any necessary conflict between a Christian serving as an agent of the state, even if that role potentially involves violence which may result in death. No one may abdicate personal responsibility for their actions as a police officer or a soldier. Their actions must be guided both by that which is lawful/legal and morally right in the eyes of God. When the state is carrying out its God given role, a Christian may take part.

Meaford ON

Works Cited

Bible, B. I. (n.d.). *Blue letter Bible*. Retrieved from Blueletterbible.org: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?strongs=H7523>

Boles, H. L. (1923). *New Testament Teaching on War*. Retrieved from digitalcommons.acu.edu: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1442&context=crs_books

Casey, M. W. (1999). *digitalcomons.pepperdine.edu*. Retrieved from The Ethics of War: Pacifism and Militarism in the American Restoration: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1625&context=leaven>

Geisler, N. L. (1989). *Christian Ethics Options and Issues*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books.

Gen Ed. Chad Brand, G. E. (2003). *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. Nashville TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Grudem, W. (2018). *Christian Ethics*. Wheaton IL: Crossway.

Guin, J. F. (2009, October 20). *Pacifism: David Lipscomb and Civil Government*. Retrieved from One In Jesus: <https://oneinjesus.info/2009/10/pacifism-david-lipscomb-and-civil-government/>

Hub, B. (2021). *Exodus 20:13*. Retrieved from BibleHub.com: <https://biblehub.com/exodus/20-13.htm>

Lambert, G. (2021). *history of the restoration movement Foy Esco Wallace*. Retrieved from therestorationmovement.com: https://www.therestorationmovement.com/_states/texas/wallace,fe,jr.htm

Notes, N. T. (1996). *NET Bible Full Notes Edition*. Thomas Nelson.

World Video Bible School, D. B. (2015, Jan 21). *The Christian and Self Defence*. Retrieved from YouTube.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdrvGOso1Q4>

Hospitality: A Work Of Love

Written on: May 1, 2022

Article by: Tim Johnson

In the same breath, Peter spoke of fervency in Christian love, and gracious hospitality (1 Pet.4:8-9). He wrote at a time when brethren found themselves persecuted and the need was great to look after each other. Perhaps the peace of our own land today lulls us into thinking, that hospitality is not to be taken as seriously as it was in Peter's day. Yet the Hebrew writer said, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers" (Heb.13:2).

Why do we need to practice hospitality today? Because many Christians are lonely, the elderly need some attention, new Christians need to experience love, the harried need peaceful times of personal attention, and everyone needs to feel the strength of a loving Christian home into which they've been invited.

Congregations may think of themselves as friendly and welcoming, but the lack of hospitality weakens our claim. Handshakes and brief conversations are helpful to newcomers, yet they often do not return. Hospitality delivers a whole new level of interest and care.

God commanded His people in both the Old Testament and the New to look after people, to bring them home, feed them, and show them godly love. Abraham, Gideon and Manoah even fed angels. Philip housed Paul (Acts 21:8-9). Peter's mother-in-law fed Jesus along with four of his disciples (Mark 1:29-31). Martha, Mary and Lazarus welcomed the Lord into their home and fed Him

Care to Help?



Grove Park
HOME

a commitment to CARE 

Consider a gift that supports Dementia Care
Donations • Asset Transfers • Will Bequests

Contact Information:

234 Cook St, Barrie, ON L4M 4H5

www.grovetparkhome.on.ca

lindam@grovetparkhome.on.ca 705-627-2218

before He entered Jerusalem, on his way to the cross. Jesus Himself was always welcoming people, feeding them with food and the truth.

People may not remember a particular church service, but they do remember your hospitality. Years ago, as a missionary visiting supporters, I remember one eldership that escorted me to a church member's home where we enjoyed a great dinner provided by a hard-working woman who welcomed us all. Her home was not large, and we sat in close configuration around the table. I still remember the conversation, the good will, and even what we ate – although I don't remember the events of the church meeting that evening. There's something about hospitality that nourishes not only the body, but the soul. It is love in action and proof of who we claim to be. It is Jesus working through us.

Hospitality is easily neglected. We are busy people, even on Sundays. "I don't have time." We think our homes are not big enough, nice enough, or even clean enough to have people home. We get in the habit of NOT doing it, and that habit is hard to break. Maybe you feel that you cannot cook well. Others don't want to upset their pets. And Covid-19 has certainly forced us to keep people away. These objections are easy to respond to but the scriptures say it best when they encourage this work of love, commending and even command it.

It's also easier for some Christians to practice hospitality than others. I grew up in a home where people were welcome at our table. My parents often housed visiting preachers for days at a time. My wife's experience is the same. So perhaps it is easier for some Christians to open their homes than it is for others who may not have been raised to practice it. But early Christians were urged to learn its graces, and they did. So can we.

I believe that God commands kind, genuine, loving hospitality because that's the way He is Himself. Through Jesus, we see Him in action. He cares for people, feeding all men. And He plans to bring us all home someday to live with Him.

As Jesus promised: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:2-3). God practices hospitality, and we can learn to practice it too.

One of the gems of hospitality is what you gain when you do it. People open up and talk more freely, and you get to know them much better. You will learn things about your guests that you would not have learned otherwise. Good food makes people happy, including the ones providing it. And the next time you see them on a Sunday morning, you will feel closer.

"Above all things, keep fervent in your love for one another.... Be hospitable to one another without complaint" (1 Pet.4:8-9). The church needs it. Strangers need it. You need it.

Barrie ON

A New Testament Church in the 21st Century

Written on: May 1, 2022

Article by: Dave Knutson

A number of years ago, brother Legard Smith authored a book entitled “*the Cultural Church*” in which he identified a number of societal pressures influencing us all. Pressure from outside of the church is what the apostle Paul warned the church at Rome about when he urged them “not to let the world squeeze them into it’s mold.” (Rom 12:2a) The paganism of Paul’s day is alive and well in much of the world but has in ‘western’ societies been replaced by secular atheism and postmodern philosophy. The singularity of the Lord’s church in the first century has given way to hundreds of churches all of whom claim to teach God’s truth and to follow Jesus Christ.

All of this is happening in a ‘communication age’ where we are ‘messed’ to death, and drowning in a mix of information and disinformation. Post-moderns have redefined truth, replacing objective content with utility. If a ‘truth’ gets the job done, if it brings about the reality that you seek, then *that is true*. This new view of truth and the pressure to accept it is what you find when you peel back the label called ‘inclusiveness’. It turns out that there is nothing less inclusive than the cancel-culture of ‘inclusiveness’. The pressure to accept the subjective nature of truth is coming at us in a form that discourages dialogue by silencing and ostracizing all contrary voices. The ‘exclusiveness’ of ‘inclusivism’ threatens to silence the gospel by shaming those who want to speak a good word for the Lord.

True inclusiveness is what Jesus offers in the gospel. The apostles of Jesus were given a universal mandate – to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to all creation (humankind). Salvation in the name of Jesus is available without respect to race or gender, or social standing. God wants all people to come to a knowledge of His word which is truth, and the only truth capable of saving us. God’s inclusiveness is based on truth that absolute – anchored his unchanging being, and objectively grounded in the historic reality of his work within history and as completed by his Son, Jesus Christ. It is when we get back to God’s truth that we are able to arrive at truth that is always true and universally applicable.

At the same time, God’s universal offer of salvation in Christ is his one and only offer. There is salvation in no one other than in Jesus. There is salvation on no other terms than those set out by the Lord through his apostles. The gospel therefore excludes every other ‘offer of salvation’ and every other set of terms of acceptance. It is thus both universal and exclusive: available to all while alone able to save.

The same must be said of the kingdom of God on earth. Life and worship in God’s kingdom is directed by God’s word which is normative for both. We are free to accept it

anjul enterprises
10571296 Canada Ltd.

Bookkeeping & Tax Preparation
We help you take care of your business!

- Personal Taxes
- Business Taxes
- Efile
- Government Remittances
- Pick up & Drop off Services
- Business Services
- Experienced Team

"Andrea has filed Joyce's and my income tax papers the past two years promptly, effectively and cheerfully. No Problems. I heartily recommend her services."

- Ralph Perry

Contact us at: (905)964-9887
(289)799-2338
asharondes7@gmail.com

or reject it and to accept the consequences of our actions. When Paul shared the gospel with those in the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, some believed and others did not. Paul did not fault the gospel when some contradicted it and began to blaspheme the name of Jesus. He observed that they had 'counted themselves unworthy of eternal life' (Acts 13:44-46). Many of the epistles of the New Testament were written to correct false doctrine along with unacceptable practices and wrong behaviour in the church. These have been written and preserved also for our benefit, so that we may know how to be saved and how to live a 'saved life'.

Given then that we wish to please God, by accepting salvation in Jesus and by living as citizens of his kingdom on earth (his church), is there such a thing

as a New Testament church in existence today? And if so, what would it look like.

Some find the whole notion of a New Testament church both quaint and out of date. When we lived in the Waterloo region, we often saw horses and buggies with people wearing clothing whose style had not changed in a century. Yet, some of those buggies had inflated tires, bucket seats and were driven by someone talking on a cell phone. Faith and practice had a way of mixing old and new.

Which brings us to another question: just what is it about the first century that ought to be preserved? Why not be a thoroughly modern church?

There is a sense in which we are not really interested in being a first century church at all. What we really want to be is the church that is set out in the New Testament – which happened to be written in the first century when the church began. To some degree, what we mean by the question is understood through our heritage in the Restoration Movement which is in turn taken from the Bible.

The story of God's people which we find in the Bible, is all about restoration. God made a covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai about 3500 years ago. Time and again, God's people strayed from their theological roots and Biblical practices only to have God call them back to His covenant. This was the task of every prophet until that first covenant was taken out of the way. King Hezekiah and Josiah both tried to restore Israel to the faith that had been delivered by Moses...but the people wouldn't listen. But lest we miss the point...the concept of restoration is wholly Biblical and to the degree that God's people stray...continually needed.

When the Mosaic covenant was fulfilled, God put another in place. It was God's own Son who enacted it. Jesus shed his blood to put it into force. He sent the Holy Spirit to direct his affairs on earth, leading the apostles and guiding them into all the truth. And this took place in the first Christian century.

The church that began at that time had God's approval. The writing of the New Testament was finished by the end of the 1st century. It was written by the apostles and inspired writers. And it set out God's will for his people, furnishing a standard that has been in place ever since.

The New Testament as a whole is the written record of God's final revelation through his own Son. It does not merely *contain* the word of God but it *is* the word of God. It is full and complete, lacking nothing. It is the faith delivered once for all to the saints (Jude 3). It is both final and complete with the result that no one is to add to it or to take from it.

The apostle Paul said something profound about the authority of God's word in his letter to the Galatians:

“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (Gal. 1:8-9)

There are to be no alterations by men or angels. None. The Word of God trumps modern miracles and stands unchanged. When we ask the question then about being a New Testament church, we are thinking about a church that is based entirely and exclusively on the teachings of the New Testament. It is with the conviction that God has granted unto us all things pertaining to life and godliness – and that a knowledge of such is found only in the pages of that book, that we engage in a process of ongoing restoration.

Now there are certain things that we do not mean, as we set out to be a New Testament church.

We do not mean that we want to be a people who worship the New Testament. God is the one whom we worship. The New Testament is his verbal propositional communication to us and as such is the truth that alone can bring us to salvation.

As God's final revelation, the New Testament commends itself to us as our only source of faith and practice. But we do not gather together to worship a thing. The Bible in general and the New Testament in particular are gifts from God to bring us to Him but

are not themselves the proper objects of worship.

We also do not think that the New Testament is infinite in content. It is God's finite revelation, written by and written to finite men. It is sufficient to accomplish the purposes that God had in mind when he gave it. The terminal point – the boundary of its authority is the end of time. When Jesus returns to this earth, he will fulfill all of the promises that remain and this earth will be no more.

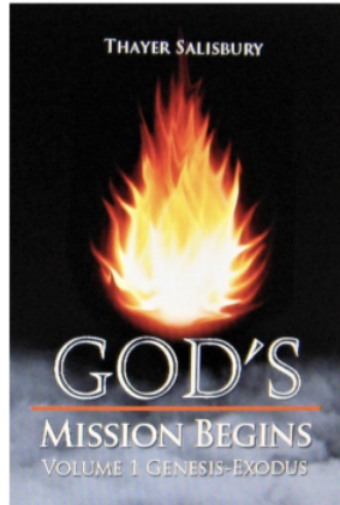
Regarding the nature of God's revelation in the New Testament: whatever it meant in the first century, is what it still means today. Whatever the Holy Spirit meant when he guided the prophets to write, that is what is still means. The principles set out in its pages remain intact and in force right now. It cannot now mean what it never meant in the past. What I am saying is that the New Testament is objectively true. It is not made up of a growing body of revelation. There are no inspired men among us

today nor are there inspired interpreters. It is very important then that we do not supplement God's word in any way, not even with church tradition.

The word of God is certainly not some kind of religious Ouija board or divining cup. We do not come to it expecting a supernatural event to take place. The truths of the Bible are not better felt than told. As a matter of fact, salvation comes through faith and faith is made possible by hearing or reading the word of God. The word of God is filled with content – it is true bread out of heaven

The word of God speaks to our minds. It changes our hearts by changing our minds. It stirs us to love and good deeds. It is God's revelation to us – in language that can be

GOD'S MISSION BEGINS



A practical study of the Pentateuch.

Originally designed for use in African Bible colleges, but found to be useful to all English speakers.

Volume 1
Genesis-Exodus

Volume 2
Leviticus-Deuteronomy
COMING SOON!

Available on Amazon.ca
Kindle \$5.04
Paperback \$12.62*

*Occasionally paperbacks become unavailable on Amazon.ca and must be ordered from Amazon.com



understood. It is given to men and women who have the capacity to know it. And it is clear that God expects us both to know it and to do it.

Which brings us to a summary description of what a New Testament church is.

A New Testament church then is a church that accepts the New Testament as God's final word and appeals to it as its ultimate guide and standard. It does this by settling every question with a "thus says the Lord". It submits human preferences and sensibilities to the authority of God's word.

The New Testament church is not a democracy in which God gets a vote. It is a kingdom in which no one votes. It is a kingdom in which the king's word is final. It is a kingdom whose subjects seek to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven.

What then should we look for...or what should we be in order to be that church?

- What are some of the teachings and principles found in the New Testament?
- How should these find expression in the church belonging to Jesus?

Now it may seem like a trivial thing, but since the church belongs to Jesus, it seems right that it ought to be identified that way. There are a number of descriptive phrases in the N.T. for the church, such as:

The kingdom of heaven

The assembly of the firstborn

The bride of Christ

The body of Christ

The Israel of God

The way

The church of God

The churches of Christ

Any church seeking to be a New Testament church ought to identify itself as it was identified in the New Testament. At the heart of this... is the principle of giving glory to the one to whom the church belongs.

Now a New Testament church is a church that understands the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. It understands itself as the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and to Israel. It stands in continuity with the historical people of God.

A New Testament church is a church that is able to give a full Biblical answer to the question "what must I do to be saved". This is perhaps the place where we should have started, because a New Testament church is a church made up of Christians.

It is made up of those who have:

1. Come to faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

2. Those who have confessed faith in Jesus as the son of God and continue to do so.
3. Those who have repented of or renounced their former life of sin
4. Those who have been united with Christ by being immersed into his death and in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of their sins.
5. And who are now indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Any collection of people who call themselves a church but who have not been saved in this way have no Biblical reason to think that they are saved at all. There is salvation in no other name but the name of Jesus. And there is salvation in the name of Jesus only for those who have accepted His salvation on His terms.

This was how the church got started on the Day of Pentecost. It is how the church spread all over the world. And it is the only way that the church can spread throughout the history of the world. A useful *rule of thumb* is – that if you cannot find any other kind of ‘Christian’ in the New Testament then you have no reason to believe that you can find such ‘Christians’ outside of the New Testament either.

A New Testament church is a church that teaches the truth in its entirety. It does not seek to find the truth within the truth. It is not in search of the *essential gospel*. It is not in search of the lowest common theological denominator. It preaches and teaches the *whole counsel of God* (Acts 20:18-26) taking its stand upon the faith delivered once for all to the saints.

A New Testament church does not pursue union with organizations that are not the church. It recognizes the difference between those who are ‘churched’ and those who are saved. And it pursues the salvation of the unsaved wherever they may be found¹ (Acts 18:24-19:7)

A New Testament church is a church that preaches the truth about Grace. Salvation is not our doing. It is God’s initiative and the work of God from first to last. Grace is rooted in the person of God. God was moved by grace to create Mankind. It filled and shaped God’s thinking before the world ever began. A New Testament church is a church that gives full credit to God for it’s salvation.

A New Testament church understands that our common union with God is that thing that creates fellowship among us.

- Our fellowship is an organic oneness that is precious to God.
- It is a sanctified state brought about by the truth of God’s word.
- When you and I obey the truth, we are set apart for God’s use.
- A New Testament church is a church that preserves this divine unity by loving each other.

A New Testament church is a church that understands that unity *must first take place in Christ* before there can be any unity for the church to *preserve*.

A New Testament church is one whose organization is drawn from the scriptures. When there are men qualified to lead, each congregation ought to be served by a plurality of elders. These men lead by feeding God's people on the word of God and among other things, guarding the flock against spiritual danger. When men who qualify are chosen to be deacons, they serve both the temporal and spiritual needs of the congregation. In addition to these, teachers and evangelists instruct and encourage.

A New Testament church is one that understands that all of its members are ministers. While that is true, it also recognizes the distinct and separate roles that God has given to men and to women. Spiritual leadership is provided by those men of the congregation qualified to do so. Each of these is crucial to the welfare and progress of God's kingdom. Older women who are mature in the faith provide instruction and an example for younger women to follow (Tit 2:3-5)

A New Testament church is a church that has no other head but Jesus who presently rules the church from heaven. It recognizes no earthy headquarters and no supra-organization regulating its life and worship. Each congregation with its own leaders is directly answerable to God. But following the example of the New Testament church, congregations are free to work with each other to accomplish God's work on earth. This is true of benevolence (I Cor 16:1-4, 2nd Cor:8, 9) evangelism (Acts 13:1-3, Phil:15-19) and other Christian ministries.

A New Testament church is a church that recognizes, fellowships and works with other faithful congregations. It is also a church that understands that it is merely one part of Christ's worldwide kingdom on earth.

A New Testament church is a church given to worship, to prayer and praise.

- It meets together on the Lord's Day and partakes of the Lord's Supper
- It honours God's instructions for worship, praising God in song, in prayer and in word.
- It gives central place to the reading of scripture and to preaching the gospel
- It devotes itself to the word of God and seeks the *will of God* in order to properly seek the *face of God*.

A New Testament church is known for its love. It speaks the truth in love, understanding that there is no conflict between them. It is unselfish and forgiving, yet it dares to discipline because it truly cares.

A New Testament church is a giving and serving church. It understands that ownership is really stewardship. It gives from the heart, knowing that God has given first.

A New Testament church is a church that is not at home in this world. It is a colony of heaven – a corner of the kingdom of God. Or if you will – it is that part of God's kingdom that exists on earth.

A New Testament church is a church that exists to do the will of God. It is a church that exists as an answer to Jesus' prayer: for the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10)

A New Testament church is a church filled with and led by the Spirit of God. It is made up of those who are Christ's special possession (Rom 8:9). Its members are growing daily into the image of God's Son (Eph 4:13-15) and for that reason, it is a church passing from one level of glory to the next (2nd Cor 3:12-18).

A New Testament church is a church consumed by the great commission. It seeks new opportunities to share the gospel. Its members encourage each other to reach out with God's word. A New Testament church understands that evangelism is not merely something that it does. Evangelism is at the heart of what this church is. It must be evangelistic in order to be the church.

A New Testament church is a church that is looking for the return of Jesus. It believes that this same Jesus who disappeared into heaven as the the apostles watched – is coming back. It is ready for him to come back. And it stays ready...not by suspending life but by living it to the full – for Jesus.

A New Testament church is a church that does not go beyond what has been written. But it is also a church that goes *as far as* what has been written. It lives by sound doctrine and not man-made creeds and it makes the good confession, without consulting confessions of faith.

A New Testament church is the church that belongs to Jesus Christ.

The question for us is: are we that church? May God help us to be a New Testament Church.

May God help us to be His church.

1Consider the case of Apollos and the certain former disciples of John the Baptist.

There Is No Future In Reliving Your Past

Written on: May 1, 2022

Article by: Brian Thompson

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service; even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. And yet I was shown mercy, because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” (1 Timothy 1:12-16)

“Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of perfection yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead.” (Philippians 3:13)

I believe it's true, that each of us have at some point done or said something we wish that we hadn't. If only we could go back in time and change it! However, the reality is, that that will never happen.

Reality also teaches us that we have to move forward regardless of our past. We can't be successful in life by dwelling on our past. Today is tomorrow's past so if we change the way we think today then tomorrow's past will be different than the one that has plagued us for years.

In the two scriptures above the apostle Paul referred briefly to his past but only to mention that with Christ's help and forgiveness he was able to move on to a more meaningful and productive life. By sharing what Jesus had done for him, others could learn of God's perfect patience and mercy. And as he was able to put the past behind him, others could see how God is willing to change their lives as well.

I know it's impossible to forget the past especially when living with the consequences of those mistakes today. But one thing that helped Paul to forget the past was his life of service and his focus on that which lies ahead. He thought more about tomorrow than about yesterday. And most importantly, He believed that God had forgiven him. He also knew that God could make use of him to fulfill His will, regardless of what he had or not done in the past.

Paul called himself the foremost (chief) of sinners. What a past he had! Homes and property were taken away from Christians because of him. Some were imprisoned;

Excerpt from <https://gospelherald.org> May 2022 issue

others were killed. Yet Paul was able to move on despite his past and enjoy his life to the fullest. How about you? Can you do the same? Jesus Christ enabled Paul to live a meaningful life and He can do the same for you.

Remember this: Living in the past has no future.

Owen Sound, ON



We're Hiring!

Paid

- **Program Manager--OPEN**
- Kitchen Manager--filled!
- **Counsellors x 8--OPEN**
- Lifeguards--filled!
- Groundskeeper--filled!
- Office Assistant--filled!

Volunteer

- Weekly Directors--filled
- Bible Teachers--OPEN
- Activity directors--OPEN
- Caregivers--OPEN
- Kitchen Staff--OPEN
- Craft Directors--OPEN