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CONTENTS

FOREWORD Editor 4

ARTICLES

WHAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW:
TRADITION IN THE EARLY CHURCH
James W. Thompson 5

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION: TWO ESSENTIALS
IN THE SEARCH FOR THE ANCIENT ORDER
Allan J. McNicol 15

BOTH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT:
ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND TRADITION
Gary N. Holloway 31

A TRADITION AT RISK
Michael R. Weed 41

BOOK REVIEWS

*The Service of God: How Worship and Ethics
are Related* by William H. Willimon
Bob Burgess 57

*The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical
Hermeneutics* by Michael Fishbane
Michael S. Moore 61

The Church in Exile by James W. Thompson
Joe Crisp 64

CONTRIBUTORS 67



A Tradition At Risk*

Michael R. Weed

But we shall surely never learn where we ought to be going or how we ought to get there if we do not learn how we have come to be where we are.

Jeffrey Stout

I have been asked to address two questions: Are we (Restoration Movement/Churches of Christ) a theological tradition? What is our present situation? I have attempted to frame an argument which I think both has some plausibility, and may also be fruitful for discussion purposes. At the outset I confess to using and conflating sociological, theological, and historical categories.

Tradition

Unlike nonsentient objects and other animal forms, humans not only exist in history but exist historically; humans are uniquely constituted by an awareness of existing in time. Human existence is marked by the experience of change and by the manner in which one relates both to past and to future. As historical beings, humans both experience history and make history.

Tradition is an inescapable and necessary structural entailment of human existence as historical existence. Tradition designates aspects of continuity with the human past which survive the process of change. Tradition is the continuation of the human past in the present. Tradition is necessary for human identity to survive the flux of change.

*This paper was presented at a conference on "The Church and the Postmodern World" held at the Disciples Historical Society in Nashville in July of 1991.

It is customary and helpful for analytic purposes to distinguish between *traditum* and *traditio*; the former designates the content of beliefs or wisdom passed down while the latter designates the means of maintaining and transmitting *traditum* (e.g., rites, procedures, institutions, etc.). Obviously the distinction is not absolute. Not only do means of transmission tend to become "traditional" and thus become included in *traditum*; means of transmission may otherwise alter the content itself (a fact not insignificant for reflection on theological traditions).

In an inclusive sense, however, tradition not only links us with our own individual pasts; it locates us within transpersonal realities and relationships which precede and shape our individual histories. Tradition also links us to communities of others whose individual lives are located within and receive their identity from the same traditions. Tradition thus locates us within structures of historical existence (e.g., language) which not only link past and present but also significantly determine the future.

In providing continuity with the past, however, tradition is not antithetical to human freedom. Tradition provides us with a depth and breadth of accumulated wisdom from the past with which we may meet and shape the in-breaking future.

Theological Traditions

Tradition lies at the heart of the Christian faith. The Christian movement not only develops traditions as it exists in time, but it is founded on an authoritative body of tradition (1 Cor. 15:3). The early church understood itself as called to transmit faithfully the received traditions (2 Thess. 2:15). These apparently included both dominical and apostolic sayings and instructions dealing with morality (1 Thess. 4:1f.) and even church order (1 Cor. 14:33). The charge to "stand firm and hold fast to the traditions" itself gives rise to traditions for doing just this. Clearly this process is one in which *traditum* and *traditio* converge in the life of the early church. In fact, through the apostolic office and the Holy Spirit, the resurrected Lord is viewed as responsible for the transmission

of the tradition (*paradosis*).¹ The principle of canon only further strengthens (and complicates) this process by separating apostolic tradition from ecclesiastical tradition which, while capable of illustrating and even illuminating the former, is ultimately subordinate to Scripture as both norm and guide.

Christian theological traditions emerge as the Christian movement exists in time and pursues the theological task. That task is, in the first instance, disciplined reflection on the Christian faith by the faithful with a view toward comprehension, clarity, and faithfulness. Nor is this task pursued in a vacuum; the terms, concepts, and methods employed in theological reflection are taken not only from Scripture but also from the surrounding society and culture in which the church is embedded. And theology pursues its task in part by bringing the historic faith into conjunction with challenges (dogmatic and pastoral) arising out of the church's life in particular historical situations. In this struggle for both fidelity and intelligibility, over generations, theological formulations (confessions, creeds, metaphors, images, practices, etc.) and processes of transmission develop, interact, and are refined and enriched.

A Christian theological tradition may be defined as a distinct body of beliefs, creedal formulae, rites, images, and practices (e.g., liturgical, institutional, ethical) which has been developed and transmitted over an extended period of time. In a qualified sense, each theological tradition is a particular "arrangement of the theological furniture" (i.e., *traditum* and *traditio*) which has proven itself capable of surviving.

Understanding and Assessing Theological Traditions

Theoretically, representatives of a theological tradition would be those who are fundamentally and consciously shaped by a particular theological tradition in forming their own beliefs and

¹Oscar Cullmann, "The Tradition: The Exegetical, Historical and Theological Problem," *The Early Church* (London: SCM, 1956) 73. Cullmann's classic article is still instructive on this issue.

practices. They may also be assumed to be committed to the transmission of the received traditions. Although broad distinctions are possible (e.g., Roman Catholic and Protestant), in practice it may become quite difficult to identify precise contours and boundaries of many contemporary American representatives of the Christian tradition(s), much less comprehend their internal dynamics.

Accordingly, the task of adequately understanding and assessing theological traditions poses numerous methodological difficulties. Among the most common errors appear to be various reductionist tendencies. These no doubt arise in part out of difficulties in locating adequate sources. In this regard the "great man" theory of history and various intellectualist approaches should be avoided. A theological tradition cannot be explained solely on the basis of the insights and personality of a single individual and it is reductionistic to explain longstanding traditions (theological, intellectual, etc.) on such grounds.²

Further, treating a religious tradition simply as an intellectual tradition may be seriously misleading. One must not only "listen to the soloists but also to the chorus."³ Reconstruction drawing simply on written and/or intellectual sources may construct a drastic distortion of the actual spirit and practice of a tradition (e.g., the student-archaeologist assuming ancients employed themselves breaking pottery). Not infrequently theological traditions demonstrate considerable variance between the voices of official spokespersons and laypersons, and between dogma, practice, and piety. And, although lay practice and piety are difficult to study, they are not irrelevant in discussing theological traditions.

A somewhat different version of reductionism is that of "morphological" comparisons. While it may be useful to compare structural or organizational components of traditions--and perhaps

²To understand Augustine is not to explain either the lasting effect or the attractiveness of Augustinianism; nor can understanding Augustine be equated with understanding the mind of a sixth-century Augustinian (much less that of a sixteenth-century Augustinian).

³See Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale, 1984) 17.

inviting to do so given the difficulty posed by the less tangible components--it may also be seriously misleading. Structural parallels do not necessarily indicate common origins or common functions within different traditions. For example, to speak of paedobaptists as a group may be useful; but to speak of the "paedobaptist tradition" obscures quite different understandings of the practice among those so designated.⁴

Among the most common methodological errors is that of combining reductionist tendencies with the so-called "genetic fallacy." The operative assumption here is that one may satisfactorily describe, understand, and even explain a theological tradition simply by marking off the intellectual, social, and cultural climate in which it emerged. While it is clearly difficult to isolate such source components with sufficient precision, it is even more problematic to identify how the tradition itself is born out of the rich interplay of various components with one another (e.g., historical circumstances and personal faith) which imprints the tradition with its own uniqueness.⁵ The genius of a theological tradition is always more than the sum of the identifiable parts (great men, psychological and intellectual components, cultural setting, etc.).

If identifying and understanding a theological tradition is problematic, an evaluative assessment is perhaps even more difficult. Before addressing this, however, it should be noted that implicit (if not covert) assessment may be carried by certain of the methodological approaches/errors already discussed. There may be implicit invalidation (intentional or unintentional) carried in reductionist tendencies to identify and explain historical phenomena solely with regard to their historical/intellectual location. Thus, for example, one reads "Jesus was one of several Jewish reformers and messiah

⁴A similar point could be made about the rather casual use of the term "free church tradition."

⁵Thus, for example, however interesting Luther's *Anfechtungen* experiences, his Augustinianism, his introduction to the *via moderna* at Erfurt, and the German political situation of his time, one does not completely understand (much less explain) Luther's theology (and certainly not Lutheranism) on the basis of these.

types that appeared in the era 150 BC to AD 70," or, "Christianity was one of several religions entering the Empire from the East whose spread coincided with the demise of the Emperor cult and the failure of the old gods;" etc. Similarly, in dealing with theological traditions, the statement that "tradition X is one of several 14th-century movements" may have the effect of conveying that tradition X is *merely* or *just* one of several such movements. Such information may cast light on certain conditions of origin but not explain (much less invalidate) a theological tradition.

To avoid the subtleties of implicit evaluation, some clearly specifiable criteria are needed in identifying and evaluating theological traditions. It is apparent that in order for a tradition to exist, it must endure in time.

However, a Christian theological tradition must not survive in name only; it must be fundamentally committed to and capable of transmitting the historic Christian faith. And it must do so in a manner congruent with the content of that faith. That is, it must develop methods adequate to the task of transmission of the faith. *Traditio* must not diminish, distort, or otherwise alter the fundamental content of that transmitted. Further, a theological tradition should be able to draw on the resources provided by its own arrangement of the "theological furniture" and be fundamentally shaped by theological commitments, practices, and attitudes from its own past. (Here it might be observed that the term "eclectic tradition" is something of an oxymoron.)

Based on these reflections, the following criteria are suggested as providing minimal criteria for evaluating theological traditions. A Christian theological tradition should

- 1) intend to maintain and reflect faithfulness to Christian Scripture and to the historic Christian faith;
- 2) demonstrate the capacity for transmitting the Christian faith and enabling faithful Christian lives; and
- 3) have an identifiable character and style (a way of approaching and understanding Scripture, a way of reflecting on

theological issues, a way of "doing church," and a way of "being Christian").

Additional "instrumental entailments" of the above appear to be the necessity of developing

- 1) a capacity for on-going reflection, self-correction, and self-criticism drawing on and refining the basic theological commitments of the tradition (i.e., an openness to reviewing practice and belief in light of Scripture, tradition, experience, etc.);
- 2) some means for discussing controversial issues and arriving at some functional resolution of doctrinal conflicts; and
- 3) the capability of critical engagement with the issues, ideologies, and gods of the age.

Does the Restoration Movement Constitute a Theological Tradition?

In attempting to assess the Restoration Movement and Churches of Christ in particular as a "theological tradition," general comparisons with recognized theological traditions may be instructive. Churches of Christ have no "officially" recognized summaries or statements of faith similar to the *Augsburg Confession* (Lutheran, 1520), *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Reformed, 1646), or the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (Church of England, 1563), which formally shape and guide reflection on faith and practice in a distinct manner. Alexander Campbell himself not only rejected the role of such statements (as divisive and scripturally unauthorized) but also opposed "theology" per se (e.g., Bethany College charter).

Further, Churches of Christ have no governing body for the church at large. They have no official or standardized catechetical procedure through which a recognized and systematic body of teachings and beliefs is consciously transmitted. They have no officially recognized schools or seminaries, nor do they have

procedures for examining and ordaining ministers to insure that they know the "historic faith" and are capable of and committed to its transmission. Thus the initial impression left by a very general comparison of the Restoration Movement/Churches of Christ with other theological traditions is quite simply that the former does not constitute a theological tradition.

On closer examination, however, this initial impression appears less conclusive. In spite of the apparent absence of so many features associated with older and recognized theological traditions, Churches of Christ, until recently, have had a distinct character and style and have maintained a remarkable continuity in practice and uniformity in beliefs. While this identity has been highly indebted to a friendly environment or "supportive ethos," it has also been made possible by virtue of the development of "unofficial" versions of many of the structures and practices which sustain theological traditions. Although without official creeds, Restoration churches have had charter documents (e.g., "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*, Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law," etc.). Campbell's objections to "theology" notwithstanding, his own *The Christian System* and other works (e.g., Robert Milligan's *The Scheme of Redemption*) provided theological underpinning to the movement regarding foundational matters such as the authority of Scripture, principles of interpretation, and biblical doctrines. Likewise, countless published debates and sermons addressed matters of doctrine and shaped Church of Christ belief and practice.

Para-ecclesiastical institutions and organizations also evolved which, however unofficially, nonetheless with considerable effectiveness performed the function of maintaining and transmitting central and distinctive beliefs and practices. "Lay leaders" and ministers were educated in church-related colleges which also were instrumental in offering initial training to a number of biblical scholars (some of whom have gained international recognition in their respective areas).

Sunday school materials and other publications were produced by "brotherhood publishing houses," and various brotherhood periodicals addressed perceived issues. Perhaps more importantly these publications evoked in readers a sense of belonging to "the church" beyond their own local congregations.

Further, regional and doctrinal disagreements notwithstanding, Churches of Christ reflected a common way of reading the Bible, common practices of worship (e.g., congregational a cappella singing, weekly communion), and liturgy (order of worship, hymns, and prayer phrases), and a common style and content in preaching. Church of Christ members were generally characterized by a high level of biblical knowledge and commitment to a clearly defined and tenaciously held set of theological and moral distinctives. Underlying and supporting all of this was a common vocabulary which offered a sense of identity if not also uniqueness and even exclusiveness (e.g., "auditorium," not "sanctuary"; "gospel meeting," not "revival"; "added to," not "join"; "obey the gospel," not "receive Jesus"; etc.). From Bainbridge, Georgia, to Lompoc, California, members of large and small congregations self-consciously referred to each other as "brother and sister," as "members of the church," and to themselves collectively as "the brotherhood."

Thus an attempt to assess the Restoration Movement in terms of recognized theological traditions, while methodologically and theologically problematic and inconclusive, is instructive. Perhaps the most obvious fact is that Churches of Christ have, in some ways contrary to many of their own stated intentions, nonetheless developed unofficial versions of supporting traditions (institutions and practices) roughly parallel to those developed in the recognized theological traditions. Further, there are clearly certain "strengths" (sociologically and theologically) to this approach to "doing Christianity." The more obvious include

- 1) a seriousness about the Bible and an earnestness about biblical faith;
- 2) a high level of biblical knowledge among laypersons;
- 3) a high level of lay participation in the life of the church;

- 4) a clear and practical approach to Christian faith and life; and
- 5) freedom from the burden of an unwieldy ecclesiastical bureaucracy and dependence upon clergy.

There are also definite weaknesses in the Restoration model that has evolved especially among Churches of Christ. These include

- 1) a tendency to divide over minute points of interpretation;
- 2) a tendency to emphasize "theological distinctives" to the neglect of the "common faith";
- 3) a tendency for doctrines to be anchored in a view about the Bible rather than integrated into a framework of biblical theology;
- 4) a juridical model of the Christian life tending toward legalism and works righteousness; and
- 5) an ignorance of the Christian movement in general and of their own history in particular.

These are real difficulties and ones that are extremely damaging to Christian faith and life. Nonetheless, with the possible exception of number 5 (and I suspect it could be included), they are not substantively unique to the Churches of Christ or even to the Restoration Movement. Although all might to some degree be regarded as reflections of human finitude and sinfulness, it may also be argued that all of the above-mentioned "weaknesses" are endemic to Protestantism.

Doctrinal disputes, divisions, rationalism, individualism, and a host of related plagues were unleashed by Protestantism's view of Scripture.⁶ Unless these various tendencies, however lamentable,

⁶Although Martin Luther had a highly nuanced understanding of Scripture, internal disputes and struggles with Roman Catholicism quickly drove Lutheranism (as early as the Formula of Concord, 1577) to demonstrate a formal view of Scripture as "a law book" containing "a comprehensive system of doctrine." Likewise Calvin, as a second-generation reformer and with legal training, emphasized even more the

are taken somehow to invalidate the Lutheran and Reformed traditions as theological traditions, I can see no basis for using them as grounds to invalidate the Restoration tradition.

Preoccupation with scriptural authority, concern with inspiration, viewing the Bible as containing a system of doctrine, concern for purity of doctrine, and consequent divisions over theological distinctives which these perpetrate--all these coalesce in Protestant scholasticism but appear implicit within Protestantism's cry of *sola scriptura* from the outset.⁷

In fact, in terms of such comparison, Churches of Christ are perhaps best understood theologically not as part of the "free church tradition" (morphological comparison), much less as historically related to the Anabaptists, but rather as a post-Enlightenment religious tradition with deep roots in the Reformed tradition. While the Enlightenment and frontierism strongly color the Restoration Movement, its substantive theological commitments (view of Scripture, hermeneutic, concern for church government, etc.) lie in the Reformed tradition.⁸ Not surprisingly, most of the

authority of Scripture and especially a concern with restoring the "order which Christ instituted." See Bernhard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966) 218ff.

⁷Both Lutheran and Reformed traditions addressed these inherent tendencies in various ways. Confessional statements give a false impression of unity and mask the divisions and level of discord present within these respective traditions.

⁸This was no doubt carried through English Puritanism and Campbell's own upbringing in Scottish Presbyterianism, but it was also "in the air." One can find in Campbell echoes of Calvin's own pre-Enlightenment rationalism, of his view of Scripture as offering a "unique pattern" (*Institutes* IV.iv.1), his hermeneutic (commands of Jesus, apostolic example, practice of the ancient church, and what may be inferred as necessary to maintain "decency and order"), his preference for weekly observance of the Lord's Supper (IV.xvi.43; xvii.46), and even his opposition to the use of organ music in worship ("spiritual songs can only be sung from the heart"). See John Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981) 177.

problems which appear in Restoration Movement are inherent in the Reformed tradition.⁹

Still, numerous difficulties do appear. Rather than address these serially, however, they all may in large part be traced to a major, persistent, and underlying problem for the Restoration Movement, viz., the inability to construct a theological framework fully adequate to the tasks of faithfully sustaining and transmitting Christian faith. This inadequacy is illustrated by two closely related problems.

First, Churches of Christ have failed to devolve an adequate approach or system for resolving doctrinal conflicts and addressing significant issues. We are not, contrary to impressions, more disputatious than other groups. We simply have no adequate way of dealing with controversies or finding functional solutions. More fundamentally, serious theological reflection is not done in any coordinated, responsible, and representative fashion. The church is thus deprived of the theological resources necessary for nurturing faithful lives (and doubly vulnerable to irresponsible voices from both within and outside).

Second, Churches of Christ have been unable to legitimate and deploy transmission apparatus (colleges, seminaries, publishers, periodicals, etc.) in a theologically coherent, coordinated, and consistent manner. Quasi-legitimation has taken the negative form of "licit by virtue of not being excluded in Scripture." This has meant that, good will and good intentions notwithstanding, there

⁹Recently much has been made of the fact that the Restoration Movement in general and Churches of Christ in particular possess an "anti-tradition tradition" with the implication that this not only demonstrates our Enlightenment roots but also catches us in an inherent contradiction. It should be noted that the Protestant Reformation itself launched an "anti-tradition tradition" under the battle cry *sola scriptura*. Luther and Calvin were both caught in the irony of developing practices and traditions to maintain their anti-tradition stances (Calvin more consciously than Luther). The practice of developing functional or secondary traditions to maintain foundational traditions is hardly surprising, unique, or particularly significant. Nor is the confusion of instrumental and substantive traditions particularly surprising, however problematic.

has been minimal coordination among these structures and no coherent theology guiding their roles in the life of the church.

Still, it must be admitted, set within the context of a "character and style" of doing Christianity, all of this somehow avoided fragmentation and helped hold "the brotherhood" together surprisingly well under the circumstances. At least this has been the case until recently.

Where Are We? What Are the Prospects?

It is my impression that, along with other religious groups, we have suffered greatly from the process of change that has blown through our society over the last several decades. Especially the accelerated rate of change has offered churches little time to understand and adjust to the new situation. It has also exposed and exploited the weaknesses of many branches of the Christian movement.

For Churches of Christ this has meant the loss of the quasi-Christian supportive ethos (Bible Belt, etc.) on which we had become so heavily dependent. This friendly climate had permitted us to neglect transmission of the common faith and allowed us to concentrate on our theological distinctives (narrowly defined) and to engage in fierce internecine arguments.

Unfortunately for Churches of Christ, the changes in our social setting coincided with certain internal developments with devastating effects. Many leaders in Churches of Christ, reacting against longstanding tendencies toward legalism and sectarianism and drawn by desire for acceptance, success, and sophistication (the lures of upward mobility), became increasingly open to a society which was simultaneously becoming increasingly hostile to basic tenets of the Christian faith.

Further, the rapid disintegration of the friendly environment has meant the erosion of the "character and style" which provided an identity and offered some shape (if little theology) to the array of transmission apparati we had spawned. Thus the very problems that required the need for a theologically responsible (coherent,

coordinated, and consistent) supportive framework simultaneously weakened the already fractured "structure" that had evolved and exposed a fundamental weakness in the Restoration "tradition."

Whether or not the situation today is substantially different from that of forty years ago, various components are now left to pursue their own institutional needs and the interests of influential individuals or groups. The role of "brotherhood publishers" and Christian colleges illustrates the problem this poses. For both, theological accountability and responsibility is minimal or nonexistent in any formal sense. Publishers may appoint recognized names to editorial boards but practice is far more subject to commercial, political, and institutional concerns than to theological accountability.¹⁰

Christian colleges have had little vision of what it means to integrate Christian faith with modern education in any significant fashion.¹¹ For colleges, facing the demands of an increasingly secular constituency, the canons of academic excellence, and mounting financial difficulties, any concern with "theology" is passed on to Bible department and/or public relations people.

Moreover, faculty highly trained in methods and procedures of their respective disciplines (many antithetical to the Christian tradition) are not particularly knowledgeable of the Christian faith. Few have any sense of the relationship of their particular discipline to the Christian faith.¹²

¹⁰This has recently been illustrated by long-standing "brotherhood" publishers courting the so-called "evangelical market" and virtually abandoning attention to Restoration concerns.

¹¹See Michael R. Weed, "Christian Education: Convention or Commitment?" *Faculty Bulletin* of The Institute for Christian Studies, No. 9, 23-35.

¹²Even Bible or Religion faculties appear to be unable to function consciously as a faculty, much less as John Calvin's "doctors of the church." Little or no serious theological conversation occurs among faculty members, certainly not in any formal sense (e.g., colloquies, common projects, etc.). Scholars, isolated in their own areas of expertise, are more subject to the canons of the academy and professional societies than to the life of the church.

Perhaps the real test for a theological tradition is to be seen in terms of the local congregation and the individual Christian life. Is there a clear understanding and faithful practice of the Christian faith? Is the faith being passed on? It is here that a number of the processes we have described converge with destructive results. Churches of Christ are increasingly unable to transmit the historic Christian faith, let alone their own theological distinctives.

There can be little question that we are in a period of major changes within the church. "Continuity of practice and uniformity of belief" are in serious jeopardy. The sense of belonging to a "brotherhood" is rapidly disappearing and with it any sense of loyalty or obligation to "the church." The once high level of biblical literacy and common way of reading the Bible are fast being displaced by a common way of not reading the Bible and biblical illiteracy. The once shared vocabulary is no longer functional ("Brother" Smith sounds quaint and slightly embarrassing). A common liturgy is giving way to an assortment of experiments due in part to confusion regarding the meaning of worship.¹³

Not surprisingly, with the loss of biblical knowledge and any clear understanding of what the church is, the divisiveness that once characterized Churches of Christ is disappearing. This disappearance, however, is due as much to indifference as to tolerance.¹⁴

In all of this, the gods of the age (individualism, pragmatism, and hedonism) are increasingly evident and the Christian faith is not being responsibly transmitted. Shallow preaching and "pop psych" classes and seminars are prevalent. In a society facing fundamental moral issues, the church is increasingly unable to confer Christian moral identity, to engage in moral discourse, or to give moral direction. Christian lives are being placed at risk.

¹³Michael R. Weed, "Amusing the Saints: Edification Without Transcendence," *Faculty Bulletin* of the Institute for Christian Studies, No. 8, 46-58.

¹⁴People who believe less and are tentative about the little they do believe are more likely to become exercised over protocol at the church's annual talent show than over doctrine.

Conclusion

I have argued that the Restoration Movement/Churches of Christ is a development of post-Enlightenment Reformed theology. While much of its methodology is indebted to the Enlightenment, its fundamental theological commitments are Reformed.

Further, a basic and endemic (if not inherent) problem is that fundamental theological reflection is short-circuited in a manner which curtails not only the recovery of biblical theology but also the ability to deploy a theological framework adequate to the task of giving coherence, coordination, and direction to the supportive apparati (institutions, practices, etc.) necessary for maintaining and transmitting Christian faith. This problem is only heightened as the church finds itself in an increasingly hostile environment.

I have not argued that Churches of Christ are faring any worse in the struggle with modernity than are other traditions. It is my impression that others are also in considerable difficulty. However, I do not take their plight to invalidate their respective traditions, much less invalidate the inescapability and necessity of theological traditions. Rather, their difficulties serve to punctuate the fact that the modern temper is fiercely and seductively antithetical to the Christian faith. For Churches of Christ, two related tasks appear to be of critical importance. First, there is the need to recover a biblical theology and to deploy a theological framework fully congruent with biblical faith.

Second, there is need to develop and deploy methods of transmitting the Christian faith which are "theologically legitimated" by being fully congruent with and appropriate to a biblical-theological framework. Clearly this would also enable and entail close scrutiny and correction of the present transmission apparati (not to mention the countless techniques and methods presenting themselves as "value neutral").

It is my impression, and hope, that this project is in keeping with the best intentions of the Restoration tradition.



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