

The Lion's Roar

An Apostolic-Prophetic Proclamation

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Apostolic Reformation-Restoration

What is Apostolic Reformation and Restoration?

What is Apostolic Reformation and Restoration? **Reformation** is making changes in the church in order to improve it. According to *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, "reformation (Greek *diorthosis*, 'a setting right,' 'a making straight,' Heb 9:10) refers to the times of perfecting things, by a change of external forms into vital and spiritual worship, referring to the times of the Messiah and the salvation He brought."

By definition, **restoration** is 'the re-establishment, the putting back into an unimpaired, or much improved condition, the putting back into nearly or quite the original form'.

Restoration is returning to the original state of being and proper working order of the church. The church's original state of being is as it was in the heart of God in eternity past, before time began.

The *model* and *blueprint* of the original form of the church are revealed in the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. **Since it is the ideal, it is worthy of imitation.**

Apostolic is that which relates to apostles. Therefore, apostolic reformation and restoration perfects the church by changing its external form. This is done by the authority, anointing, and ministry of present-day apostles bringing about a vital and unimpaired spiritual working order, returning it to the original form and state of being God determined before the foundation of the world.

Apostolic reformation is more than the present trend to simply call churches and ministries 'apostolic' with no real change in their form or state of being. True apostolic reformation includes the complete restoration of the church to the biblical pattern. Reformation of the church without conformation to the original divine design and biblical pattern is only making changes to improve the existing form.

The apostolic reformation is restoration of the local churches to the biblical pattern. This has a sevenfold purpose. Restoration of the local churches to the biblical pattern is the means by which God:

- conforms us to the image of Christ corporately,
- brings us to the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- accomplishes the ministry of Christ through us,
- completes the work of the church,
- is properly worshiped and exalted,
- manifests His glory and the fulness of His essence, and
- reveals His kingdom in the earth.

Apostolic Reformation Includes the Restoration of Divine Order

Apostolic reformation is the restoration of the church into divine order and design. When we look at the creation of God, the one thing that stands out is its orderly design and divine pattern. God is a God of order and design, and all of His creation reflects this attribute of His nature. He set the heavens in an orderly design and pattern to the extent that we can calculate the movement of stars and planets thousands of years ago, and determine seasons and times to come by their same orderly movement.

When Abraham built the altar to sacrifice Isaac, he put the wood **in order**. When the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, He revealed the **order** of the camp of Israel, the orderly pattern of the tabernacle, its services and sacrifices, the orderly pattern of the priesthood, and the orderly pattern of the high priest's garments. When David returned the Ark of the Covenant to Israel, he had to follow God's pattern and **divine order**. When David desired to build a 'house' for the LORD, the Spirit revealed to him **the pattern** of the temple and **the order** of the priestly service and worship.

Because God is concerned about divine order and the biblical pattern, the Lord is commissioning and sending last-day apostles and prophets to reform and restore the church in accordance with the revealed pattern and order of the LORD.

Restoration of the Local, City-wide Church

Apostolic reform of order and design includes the re-establishment of the biblical local, city-wide church. This is an overwhelming, if not an impossible, task for men to accomplish; however, it is possible with God. According to God's design and biblical pattern, all the assemblies in the city make up the local church. The Word of God identifies the local church with its city.

One of the most important reasons for the restoration of the local, city-wide church is kingdom authority. A vital component of apostolic reformation is the restoration of the biblical pattern of proper church government, which will result in the effective exercise of the spiritual authority of Christ against the powers of darkness.

As the end of the age approaches, greater emphasis will be placed on the church conforming to the biblical pattern of kingdom government. This is in preparation for the coming of the Lord and the setting up of His kingdom on earth.

The foundation and distinction of any nation is its form of government. This is also true with the holy nation and kingdom of God. *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people..." 1 Peter 2:9*

As the spiritual expression of the kingdom of God on the earth, the church is the holy nation of God. The biblical church functions in accordance with the principles and form of government as the kingdom of God. Therefore, it is very important that the local church conform to the government of the kingdom of God in order to be its representative on earth.

The local church is the representative of the kingdom of God and is the *spiritual authority* in the spiritual realm of its community and city. Unless the local church is functioning according to *the biblical pattern*, the spiritual authority of Christ given the church over its city is not fully efficacious or effective. Even though an assembly may be a member of a denomination, association, or fellowship, the governing bodies of the denominations and associations have no authority in the city except within their assemblies.

Individual assemblies do not have the authority that the unified, local church has as the representative of kingdom authority. If there is no unified functioning local city-wide church, there is no fully functioning kingdom government to deal with spiritual powers of darkness operating in a city. Without conformation to the biblical pattern, there is no true representative government of the kingdom of God over the city or community.

If there is no church government in accordance with the biblical pattern effectively working in the world, there is no effective government of the kingdom of God exercising the full authority of Christ against the powers of darkness in the world.

The Pattern of God's Kingdom Government as Revealed to Moses

The pattern of government given to Moses for Israel was according to heavenly things, as the author of the epistle to Hebrews writes of the service of the priests, *"who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.'"* [Hebrews 8:5]

The heavens declare the glory of God, reflect divine order, and harmonize with divine government.

The order and arrangement of the camp of Israel was patterned after heavenly things. The twelve tribes and their standards revealed God's authority and kingdom government on the earth as it was in Heaven. [Note: In biblical numerology, 12 is the number of 'government'.]

Moses established a council of elders chosen from the heads of the twelve tribes, who ruled and judged with him. A council of seventy elders, chosen from the elders or heads of the twelve tribes of Israel and anointed with the same Spirit as Moses, was established as the National Governing Body. They shared the responsibility of judging and ruling in Israel with Moses. *"So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand with you. Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone."* [Numbers 11:16-17]

After Israel entered into the Promised Land, a council of elders was established as the governing body in each city Israel inhabited. They were the authoritative body that governed city affairs and

judged in matters of Law and Covenant for the inhabitants of their cities. The following are several, but not all, scriptural references to the city elders.

Deuteronomy 19:12

" then the elders of his city..."

Judges 8:14

...he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men.

Ruth 4:1-2

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down.... And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

The Pattern Revealed During the Rule of Israel's Kings

Even though Israel had chosen a *monarchy* as their form of government instead of a theocracy, God was still the King of their kings. The elders of Israel retained authority, governed their tribes and cities, and anointed and counseled their kings. *"Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, 'In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you.'" [2 Samuel 3:17]* *"Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel..." [1 Kings 8:1]* *"Then king Rehoboam consulted the elders..." [1 Kings 12:6]* *"So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land..." [1 Kings 20:7]* *"Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the company of the elders."* [Psalm 107:32]

The Pattern Revealed in the Captivity and Restoration of Israel

Ezra 5:5

But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a written answer was returned concerning this matter.

Ezekiel 14:1

Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.

Joel 1:2

Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

The Pattern Revealed in Israel at the Time of Christ and the Early Church

The council of elders, or Sanhedrin, was still the governing body in Israel at the time of Jesus' ministry. *"As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him (Jesus) into their council (presbuterion), saying..." [Luke 22:66]*

Jesus followed the *pattern of government* established by Moses, which continued in Israel. Jesus appointed twelve apostles to be with Him. [In the Scriptures, the number 12 represents government.] He chose out twelve and sent them out with His authority as apostles, then seventy were chosen and sent out with the same authority. *"And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these..." [Matthew 10:1-2]* *"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into*

every city and place where He Himself was about to go." [Luke 10:1]

The twelve apostles, appointed as the first leaders and elders of the church, fulfilled the pattern already established by God in Israel. This pattern of the government established by God in Israel, according to the heavenly pattern revealed to Moses on the Mount, has been the pattern established from the beginning and is the pattern the biblical church follows into the kingdom age. It is the type (*tupos-example*) of government which Jesus established.

The heavenly scene depicted in the Revelation of Jesus Christ reveals the source of the pattern: *"Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne... Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads."* [Revelation 4:2-4]

The Pattern of Kingdom Government Revealed in the New Covenant Church

In the New Testament local church, a *presbytery* (council of elders) governed and ruled the local church.

1 Timothy 4:14 (KJV)

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (presbuterion).

1 Timothy 4:14 (NKJ)

Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership (presbuterion).

Presbuterion (pres-boo-ter'-ee-on) is a body of elders, a presbytery, a senate, or a council. It is used of the Jewish elders, and is also used of the elders of any body or assembly of Christians.

The *presbytery*, or *council of elders* of the church, is according to the *pattern* of the Sanhedrin of Israel and the local Jewish synagogues. The rulers, or *the council of elders*, were under the oversight of a leading elder. Later in the history of the Church this person held the title of archbishop (from the Greek *arch*: *first, chief*; and *episcopee*: *overseer*, meaning *first, or chief overseer*). The chief overseer, or leading elder, was similar to the chief ruler of the synagogue.

Acts 18:8,17

Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue (archisunagogos), believed on the Lord ...

Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue (archisunagogos)...

[*Archisunagogos* (ar-khee-soon-ag'-o-gos): *chief ruler of the synagogue*. It was his duty to select the readers or teachers in the synagogue, to examine the discourses of the public speakers, and to see that all things were done with decency and in accordance with ancestral usage.]

The church in Jerusalem followed the *pattern*. The apostles and the elders of the church were the *presbytery*. They, along with other leading men, gathered to consider the affairs of the church. *“Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him.”* [Acts 11:1-2] *“Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.”* [Acts 15:2]

The apostles Paul and Barnabas followed the *pattern*. In every city where they established churches, *they appointed elders* to oversee and shepherd the churches. *“And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many*

disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’ So when they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” [Acts 14:21-23]

The apostles Paul, Timothy and Titus *appointed and confirmed elders* in every church and in every city where they had established new churches. *“From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.”* [Acts 20:17] *“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”* [Acts 20:28] *“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you...”* [Titus 1:5]

Significance of the Restoration of the Council of Elders

God gave all authority to the Lord Jesus Christ when He defeated the devil on the cross, was resurrected, and ascended on high. As the head of the body, He has given all authority to the church. *“Then Jesus came and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”* [Matthew 28:18-20] *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”* [Ephesians 1:22-23]

Spiritual authority is limited to the realm of authority designated by God. A believer or local assembly does not have all authority. The pattern

reveals the designated realm of authority to be associated with the boundaries of the city and its sphere of influence. The fullness of authority of the city is the sum of the authority of the assemblies of the city.

As the governing body and representative of the local, city-wide church, the council of elders has been invested with the spiritual authority over its city. The elders of the cities in Israel are a type and shadow. This is the pattern for the church. The elders of the city are those ministers ordained by God who serve as elders in the local assemblies. They are the *presbytery* or *council of elders* of the local church of their city.

Without the *council of elders*, there is no effective spiritual authority over a city. The council of elders is necessary for the authority of God to be fully realized and effective in the spiritual realm over a city. It is also necessary for the church to accomplish its commission in its city and surrounding communities.

The Lord through apostolic reformation and restoration is raising up a remnant who conform to the pattern of the local church to represent God's kingdom government to establish His authority in their cities. Therefore we cry out like *the roaring of a lion* and declare the distinct message to the Church: *Restore My Vision, My Secret Design and Hidden Purpose!*

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