



January -
February 2023

Restoration PRESSBYTERIAN

a bi-monthly publication of Restoration Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Our VISION

To be a church,
a community and a world
continually restored
by the grace of Christ.



Our IDENTITY

We are strugglers, sufferers,
and sinners who share
in God's restoration
of all things -
our life with God, our
relationships, our community
and our world -
through the Gospel.



Our MISSION

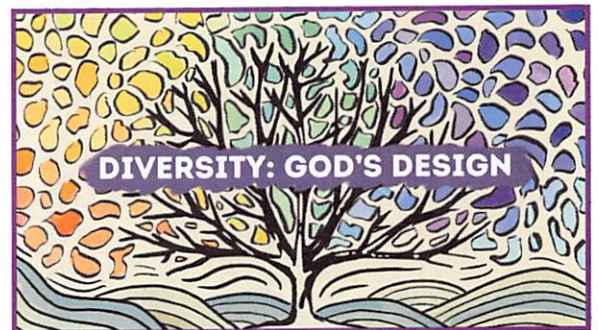
To proclaim the Gospel
and serve in love
with the hope that God
will bring continual
restoration to our lives,
relationships, community
and world for His glory.



Intentional Diversity

by Bob Strain

I'm sure you have heard someone say or perhaps you have said, "I want to be a New Testament Christian, I want to be part of a New Testament church." Behind that statement is the desire for a Christian walk that embraces the realities of experience and practice of believers who had a face-to-face relationship with Jesus. Don't you yearn for a firsthand knowledge of Jesus, not a whisper-down-the-lane version that obscures the truth by the addition of layers of human tradition? A firsthand knowledge will bring you face to face with intentional diversity. One of the great church fights found in the New Testament was over a question concerning diversity within the church herself. Before we get to that fight, understand that the universality of the gospel's reach was not an afterthought.



We get a glimpse of the mind of God on this point before the world was created. Theologians speak of the "covenant of redemption", the arrangement between God the Father and God the Son concerning the salvation of a people of God before time ever ticked. In John 17:1-9, we eavesdrop on Jesus' conversation with the Father. It is obvious Jesus is referencing a prior agreement between the Father and the Son concerning a group of people given to the Son by the Father.

John 17:2 - "Since You (the Father) have given Him (the Son) authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him."

John 17:4 - "I glorify You on earth by finishing the work You gave Me to do."

The work of redemption, the lamb of God taking away the sins of His people, the substitutionary atonement is the work spoken of by Jesus.

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Intentional Diversity

Continued from page 1

What do we find? Jesus' work was universal in its scope. The people given to the Son in John 17: 6 came from every tribe, people, language and nation.

The command of Jesus' great commission announces the good news is for all the peoples of the world.

Matthew 28:19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Acts 1:8 - "...you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."



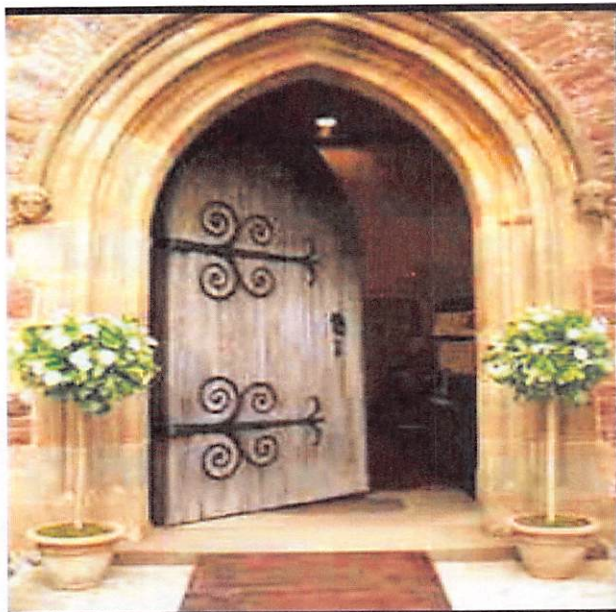
The persecution of the church in Acts 8:1 was God forcing the point of universality. The believers pretty much held up in Jerusalem and Judea. What do we find? God uses the persecution to disperse the Church so the Gospel can be taken to the ends of the earth.

In Revelation, the makeup of heaven bears witness that the Gospel is universal in its accomplishment.

Revelation 5:9 - "They sang a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slaughtered and by Your blood You ransomed for God saints from every tribe, language and people and nation.'"

Our great church fight is found in Acts 10 [I encourage you to read the entire chapter]. We see the juxtaposition of God's dealings with Cornelius versus Peter's dealings with Cornelius. We see acceptance on the part of God versus rejection on the part of Peter. We see initiative on the part of God versus reluctance on the part of Peter. We see understanding on the part of God versus astonishment on the part of Peter. Peter's Jewish-ness was in conflict with his Christianity. It took special revelation from God, which had to be repeated three times to open Peter's eyes to his imperialistic attitude. Such imperialistic thinking is tenacious, difficult to root out. Peter is called before the church on his return to Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18) to justify his preaching the gospel to non-Jewish people. In Acts 15, it is obvious the issue is still not yet resolved. A church council is called to settle the matter. Even after the council's decision the problem re-surfaces in the church at Galatia. Do you remember who had to be rebuked? [Galatians 2:11-13] Peter! Even Barnabas was carried away with the hypocrisy. The prevalence of an imperialistic mindset does not minimize the seriousness of the wrong. Discrimination strikes at the heart of the Gospel.

*This is the first in a series of articles on how the church is to be intentionally diverse.
Be an active part of the conversation!*



*To all who are weary and need rest,
To all who mourn and long for comfort,
To all who feel worthless and wonder if God
cares,
To all who fail and desire strength,
To all who sin and need a Savior,
This church opens wide her doors and offers
welcome in the name of Jesus Christ.*

When Does Planning Lead To Sin?

by Pastor Steve Wilson

When Moses knew that he would be passing the mantle of leadership on to Joshua, he gave his people one final message which we now know as the book of Deuteronomy. As your interim pastor, I would like to pass on some of the wisdom Moses gave to his people before I pass the mantle of leadership to your new pastor.



How important is planning? Is there a time or circumstance where planning and research would replace faith? What is the relationship between planning and faith/trust? In Deuteronomy 1: 22-24, Moses reminds the people that they had asked him to send men ahead to spy out the land of which God had told them to take possession. He pointed out that the idea seemed good to him (v. 23), so he selected twelve men, who brought some of the fruit of the land back and reported, "It is a good land that the Lord our God is giving us." Yet, they "would not go up, but rebelled." They complained that the people were too big and the cities too large.

So, was it wrong for the Israelites to send out the spies? If not, when did it become wrong? Sometimes, if we knew how difficult things would be following God's directions, we might well choose differently. Many commentators write that the decision to send the spies in the first place came from unbelief. However, though the people initiated this plan, and Moses thought it was a good idea (Deuteronomy 1:22-24), it would certainly appear that the Lord agreed to it (Numbers 13:1-2). The Scriptures have many examples of planning and strategizing, particularly in the book of Joshua. As someone once said, "If you aim at nothing, you will be sure to hit it." And our Lord, Himself, in Luke 14:28-32 encourages us to "count the cost" before we begin something. The point: The Israelites were not wrong when they sent out the spies to scope out the land. Even when God tells us to do something, it is prudent to plan carefully.

However, that being said, we need to plug in the crucial component of faith or trust. Hebrews 11:6 – "Without faith it is impossible to please God." As Proverbs 3:5-6 instructs us, we must "trust in the Lord with all [our] hearts and not lean on [our] own understanding". We must acknowledge His sovereign hand in all that follows, trusting HIM to direct our steps—even when things seem to go horribly wrong, or quite differently than what was planned.

So, when does planning lead to, or become sinful? The sin of the Israelites, in this event, was not in sending out the spies. It was in putting the information the spies brought back ahead of the clear command of God. Moses, there in Deuteronomy, cuts right to the chase. He reminds the people that God had promised them this land, and commanded them to enter and possess it. The problem was unbelief that led to disobedience. The people were unwilling to trust God in the face of frightening obstacles. As one commentator put it, "Unbelief makes God a liar and questions the dependability of His Word. Our responsibility is not to question God, but to believe God and do what he commands" (Warren Wiersbe). One last thought on this: The other side of planning which leads to sin, besides unbelief which leads to disobedience, is presumption: presuming to know what is, or is not, going to happen in the days to come. (James 4:13-16; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 16:9; Proverbs 19:21, etc.)

Planning is prudent and wise. Being well prepared and being well aware of potential pitfalls will save us from much grief and frustration. However, may it not be that we trust in our plans and our own resources, or demand that God act according to OUR plans. May we, indeed, plan carefully and thoroughly! However, may we then NOT lean on our own understanding. May we, in ALL things, acknowledge Him.



The Rear View Mirror

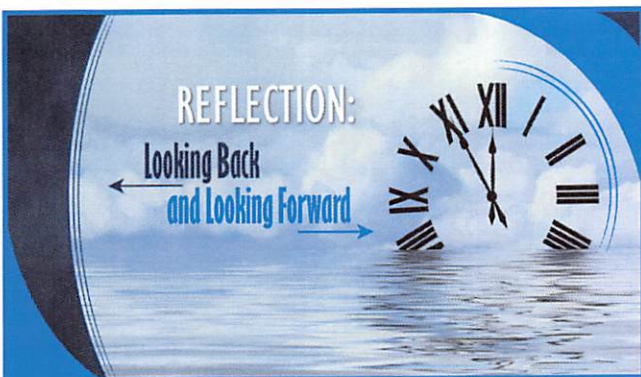
by Crystal Phipps

Do you remember when you learned to drive? It was an exciting time for me. I had completed Driver's Education in school, but I wasn't yet 16, so had to wait all summer until my birthday. Let me tell you, I was READY! I took the written permit test 60 days in advance, the earliest the law allowed. That may have been the longest 60 days I have ever experienced! I think my parents were just as excited for me to drive as I was because of all the afterschool activities I wanted to be involved in. I spent the first several hours of my 16th birthday behind the wheel, cruising on the mountain roads with my dad in the passenger seat desperately trying to teach me how to see the road and everything around me. As a professional truck driver, he could give me help and provide insight into driving that my mom could never give me. My driver's education teacher didn't even have the experience that my dad had. So, I knew I wanted my dad to be my primary teacher. I tried to listen to everything he said. I already knew so much from studying and being in class. It was time to put my head knowledge to work and that I did. The day after I turned 16, with my fresh license in hand, I drove home from my grandparents' in Virginia. I don't know how many miles, but it took about 8 hours. What a trip! From the mountain roads the day before, to busy highways with three lanes of bumper-to-bumper traffic, I certainly got some much-needed hands-on experience. One of the things my dad continued to stress was how important it is to use the mirrors. All the mirrors. If I could learn to use those mirrors properly, taking time to glance at each of the mirrors every few seconds, I would be able to really SEE the road. The mirrors could help me know what was on either side of me, and I would be better equipped to anticipate what was coming. Knowing how and when to use the mirrors would make me a better driver. What happens when we use the mirrors of our lives? What can we learn from these driving principles for our own lives, especially as a church family?



At the beginning of each new year, we find ourselves reflecting on the year that has just ended, and we usually look forward to the year ahead. We have a new burst of energy and resolve to be better, to do better with x, y and z. In a sense, we look into the rear-view mirror of our lives. We all have our own time table for this reflection. Some may spend a few seconds or minutes, others may take hours, days or weeks in reflection. How long we spend isn't necessarily the most important thing if we are just glancing to check our surroundings. However, if we are not careful, we can end up staring at the past (in the rear-view mirror of our lives, so to speak), and forget to look around us to the side. We put ourselves in danger of crashing because we are not looking forward to the road in front of us. We have to remember that if we want to move forward in our lives, we have to keep our eyes on "the road" ahead. We can plan all we want for the year ahead (as much as the "law" allows us). As a church family, we can tell ourselves that we will welcome a new pastor, happily serve under him, follow his lead, and join him in the building of the Kingdom in our community, but we will be better prepared when we know where we are, where we want to go, and what is coming at us from behind.

Hebrews 12:1 reminds us that *"we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses."* Our mirrors can help us see who those witnesses are, both past and present. We are not alone on this journey. We can give each other the strength and encouragement we need to be what God has called us to be. That verse encourages us then, that because of these witnesses, we are to *"throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."* Brothers and sisters, we have to be able to identify the troubling issues that brought us to this point, and be willing to correct them. This means we have to be humble enough to admit we have caused offenses and seek forgiveness, and with resolve, TO BE a different church family. We have to change if we want to move forward on the path God clearly has for us *"fixing our eyes on Jesus"* (Heb 12:2).



Continued on page 6

Francis and Edith Schaeffer

by Alan McCarrick

Probably one of the more important and somewhat forgotten Christian writers of the twentieth century is Francis Schaeffer, who with his wife Edith began the L'Abri fellowship ministry in Switzerland. The two photos I include are from quite early (straightlaced Presbyterian minister) and much later (note the turtle neck and goatee, you can't see the knickers and wool socks he often wore).



I chose the Schaeffers for this short article because of their specific influence in my life. Growing up in an active church with wonderful youth programs, I was introduced to my savior probably in 4th grade Sunday school class. However, I was very interested in many subjects especially science and philosophy writers. Neither topic played much of a role in the Christianity at church. The two worlds sort of lived side by side in my mind. It seemed that any time science came up at church, it was described as anti-Christian or used in such a way that one could sense that it was being misrepresented. As far as the great philosophers, they played no part in Christianity. Additionally, critical questions about biblical interpretation or theology were not very welcome. Late in high school, my Youth Pastor presented me with Escape From Reason, a small book by a fellow I had never heard of named Francis Schaeffer. Suddenly, here was a Christian who read Augustine and Aquinas as well as Plato, and Aristotle. He studied great art and philosophy and critically applied it to his theology or disagreed and explained why. I felt an immense freedom open before me. All "secular" fields are open to Christians willing to do the hard work to become prepared and honest questions from our secular colleagues deserve thoughtful well informed responses. The interplay between "faith" and "reason" is a complex one, but I don't believe we are to be Christians with our "eyes" closed.

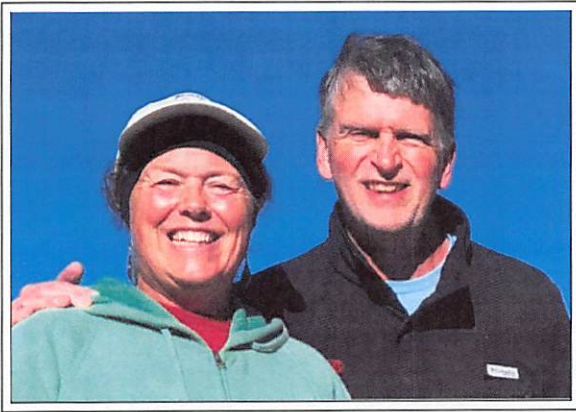
Francis Schaeffer is originally a local man born in Germantown (1912). His initial training was at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) and then Faith Seminary (Hatfield). He married Edith Seville whose parents had served with China Inland Mission. He was the first pastor ordained in the Chester Bible Presbyterian Church (ask Pastor Steve about the complex history of the smaller Presbyterian denominations). After serving as pastor in a couple of churches including Chester Presbyterian (he also preached at Boothwyn at least once), he felt called to a different type of ministry. Edith and Francis moved to Switzerland in 1948 and started a ministry to the many young people hosteling through Europe searching for "answers" through philosophy, drugs and anything else. Their home was to be a place of refuge where any and all were welcome. Edith was the chief concerege making all visitors know they were welcome and loved with clean bedding, food and warm fellowship. Francis used every opportunity to listen and bring a Biblical worldview to bear on whatever topics were brought up. Their conviction was that authentic Christianity held the answers to the questions their visitors brought. He asked his supporters back in the US whether they would dare step out of their comfortable lives to meet the needs of the lost. When the ministry outgrew their home they were able to purchase a chalet they named "L'Abri" meaning "shelter" in French. L'Abri became a magnet for Christians and non-Christians alike where nightly discussions ranged from philosophy to art to politics with Francis holding the orthodox position. Our church's missionary couple Hugh and Martine Wessel both attended L'Abri and Francis actually performed their marriage ceremony. Our church adult saturday school class many years ago watched Schaeffer's film "How then Shall We Live" over several weeks.

Edith's lengthy book L'Abri chronicles their life in Switzerland.

Francis' books include Escape From Reason, The God Who is There, Genesis in Space and Time, The Mark of the Christian, and Pollution and the Death of Man.

No man can be an expert in every field and Francis is no exception, but he taught me that Christians need to speak up in any field of life with knowledge.





This Is Us..

by Mark and Laura Durkovic

We met at Eastern University as Math majors in Differential Equations class. It took a semester before we really started to get to know each other. We very quickly became friends and in the summer before Mark's senior year he proposed and we were married in June 1985 after Laura graduated. We have lived a majority of our lives in the greater Philadelphia area - between Newark, Landenberg, New London, and Elkton. We also lived in Pittsburgh for two years and Nashville, TN for 6 years - some of the more formative years for our family.

Laura: I homeschooled our 4 daughters and taught and tutored math and science at Towle Institute for several years. I have worked as a horticulture assistant at Longwood Gardens for over 10 years. I enjoy knitting, cooking and baking, music and gardening. I enjoy singing and Children's ministry, including being a grandmother of 4. I am active in Community Bible Study in Newark. I was a spiritually sensitive child and came to trust the Lord as a freshman at Christian college after growing up both Catholic in my early years and then Presbyterian. I love the passage about the vine and the branches in John as well as the story of the prodigal son and the book of Colossians. Mark and I enjoy reading through the Bible every year. We sing together in the Joyful Community Choir and enjoy playing bridge weekly.

Mark: I have worked almost 40 years most of this related to managing employee benefit programs for DuPont originally and now for Corteva Agriscience (spin-off from Dow-DuPont merger). I enjoy hiking, playing and watching tennis, learning about wine, playing various games and spending time focused on family and relationships. We enjoy travel and experiencing different cultures. I came to faith when I was 10 years old. I was raised in a Baptist church in a small town in northeast Ohio (not literally but we spent a lot of time there) with much of my extended family attending the same or other local churches. My mom was the choir director and my grandmother taught Sunday school and my uncle was our summer youth director. I have a lot of favorite verses - one that I am focused on currently is Ecclesiastes 8:11-13. My favorite book of the Bible is I John - I love how John speaks of the lavish love of God.



We came to the reformed faith while we were attending a church in Pittsburgh. We felt like we had a lot of Bible truths, but no particular framework - the reformed faith provided the framework to understand these truths. We have enjoyed being a part of several church plants/revitalization works and consider that our calling. Each one has been unique with various opportunities to serve and for God to grow us.

We felt called to Restoration after visiting and attending once Rachel and Drew began worshipping here. We feel blessed to be a part of Restoration and look forward to seeing what God will do here in the future.

Editor's Note: The editor sent Mark and Laura the usual questions normally asked when a "Getting to Know You" article is done. Thanks to Mark and Laura for their response which is printed here unchanged. Please reach out to Beth McCarrick if you would be interested in being the subject of "Getting to Know You."

The Rear View Mirror *Continued from page 4*



Do you know what hinders you and entangles you? Have you been made aware of habits, attitudes or decisions that have weighed you down in your growth as a member of Christ's body, of this local body? Life is hard, and we all make mistakes. We all fall into sin. We are by nature all sinners. The question is, are we willing to throw it off? We have to, or we will continually repeat the past, and live in the past, rather than move into the future. In order to run with perseverance, the race that is set before us, being prepared for what is coming in the new year (and beyond), we have to prepare ourselves with what,

and who, is around us by glancing, without staring, in the rear view mirror.

Church Calendar!

(LS: live-streamed)

Every Sunday: Sunday School, 9:15am for children & adults
Worship Service, 10:15am, LS

JANUARY

- 4 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 4 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, church
- 8 ... Pastor Jon Bonomo, Pastoral Candidate, 10:15am**
- 8 ... Fellowship Lunch with Pastor Jon Bonomo and family following the Morning Worship service**
- 10 ... Women's Bible Study, 6:30pm, zoom, Gloria Snyder
- 11 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 11 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, zoom
- 14 ... Men's Breakhast, 9:00-10:45am, church
- 15 ... Communion, during Morning Worship
- 15 ... Congregational Meeting, following Morning Worship**
- 15 ... Naaman's Creek Country Manor, 2:00pm
- 16 ... *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*
- 18 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 18 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, church
- 24 ... Women's Bible Study, 6:30pm, zoom, Gloria Snyder
- 25 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 25 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, zoom
- 27 ... Community Game Night, 6:30-8:30pm, church

FEBRUARY

- 1 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 1 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, church
- 7 ... Women's Bible Study, 6:30pm, zoom, Gloria Snyder
- 8 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 8 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, zoom
- 11 ... Men's Breakfast, 9:00-10:45am, church
- 14 ... *Valentine's Day*
- 15 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 15 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, church
- 19 ... Communion, during Morning Worship
- 19 ... Naaman's Creek Country Manor, 2:00pm
- 20 ... *Presidents' Day*
- 22 ... Coffee Break, 10:00am, church
- 22 ... Prayer Meeting, 7:00pm, zoom
- 24 ... Community Game Night, 6:30-8:30pm, church
- 28 ... Women's Bible Study, 6:30pm, zoom, Gloria Snyder



Community Calendar!

February 13, 2023, Noon to 2:00pm
Ladies! You are invited to a Pet Therapy Luncheon for the next **Wilmington Women's Connection** on Monday, February 13, 2023 at Iron Hill Restaurant located at 620 Justison St., Wilmington, DE 19801 on the Riverfront near the Blue Rocks Stadium. The cost is \$22.00 inclusive. Our speaker, Cynthia Allan of Howell, NJ, taught special education for 43 years. Her story is entitled "A Single Mom's Journey to Security". Cynthia also does pet therapy with her dog Pippin, a 7-year-old Cairn Terrier. Pippin will also be joining us. She is a trained trick dog and has a huge wardrobe of costumes and a variety of tricks and skits she will perform for us. If you'd like a reservation or more information please see Beth McCarrick.

Did you make a resolution to get active?
Please see Beth McCarrick if you are interested in bowling :)

Happy Valentine's Day!

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV)



*As you meditate on Intentional Diversity,
please consider these thoughts about love for others...*

The measure of our love for others can largely be determined by the frequency and earnestness of our prayers for them. A. W. Pink

If God should have no more mercy on us than we have charity one to another, what would become of us? Thomas Fuller

One loving heart sets another on fire. Augustine

Nobody will know what you mean by saying that "God is Love" unless you act it as well. Lawrence Pearsall Jacks

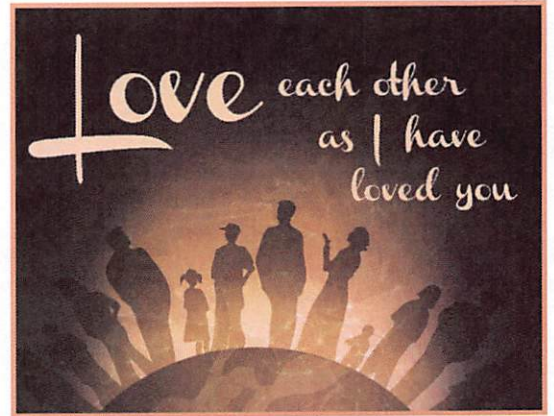
Love is service rather than sentiment. John R. W. Stott

Many love at their tongue's end, but the godly love at their fingers' end. Anonymous

The primary test of life is not service but love, both for man and for God. William Still

All men are our neighbors, and we are to love them as ourselves. We are to do this on the basis of creation, even if they are not redeemed, for all men have value because they are made in the image of God. Therefore they are to be loved even at great cost. Francis Schaeffer

Whatever of outward service or obedience we render to God or man, if love is withheld, the law is not fulfilled. F. B. Moyer



RESTORATION

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