

RADICAL RESTORATION

F. LaGard Smith

(Notes by John Gibson)

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1. “Not Rules, but righteousness” and “Not Ritual, but spiritual” are put in quotation marks as the words of Jesus. (p. 22)
 - a. How can one know how to practice righteousness without any rules? Mt. 7:21-27
 - b. Is ritual really the opposite of spiritual? Did Jesus not say, “Do this...This do...”? 1 Cor. 11:24, 25
2. On p. 24 Smith ridicules the notion of the Jerusalem Church of Christ, but how different are the terms used in 1 Cor. 1:2 and 1 Thes. 1:1?
 - a. In fact, more times than not I refer to the local church the way it is done in Rev. 1-3.
 - b. Though I make no effort to avoid the term church of Christ, I will simply speak of the Pepper Road church or the church at Holland’s Gin or some other term identifying a place where saints meet.
3. On p. 35 we see a broad generalization about “*Restorationists*” who are concerned with doing doctrinal battle and are little concerned about personal spiritual development and discipline.
 - a. *Restorationists* are said by Smith to be reformers, crusaders and warriors, while *Christians* seek sanctification, purity, and spiritual growth.
 - b. Not only is this unfair to those who have done doctrinal battle (cf. Acts 15:1f) without losing interest in sanctification, character development, etc., it raises an important question. Does Smith think Christians are never to be reformers, crusaders and warriors?
4. Smith decries the modern church as an institution whose “doctrinal and organization superstructure has overshadowed the more sublime purposes for which it was established.” (p. 37)
 - a. But when doctrine and organization are God-revealed they cannot be separated from the purpose for existence.
 - b. In fact, doctrine and organization can guide us to God’s purpose.
5. Smith argues on pp. 37, 38 that we must begin to see the church not as “the *institution* for which Christ died,” but the “*collective body of people* for whom Christ died.”
 - a. One wonders why he thinks this is a new discovery. While most have not seen this as clearly as they should have, many have preached it for years (esp. see Robert Turner’s writings) and there are many Christians who have grasped the nature of the church as the saved people.
6. On p. 39 we are cautioned against treating the symptoms and not the root causes.
 - a. Noble sentiments, but that is exactly what this book ends up doing.
 - b. Paraphrasing Smith: We will make worship grand again, not by changing the hearts of worshipers, but by putting them in small groups.
 - c. Paraphrasing Smith: We will solve the conflict over women serving the Lord’s Supper by having it as part of a meal in a home.
7. P. 40 contains a discourse on “our” failure to preach repentance. As one reads Smith, he often finds himself thinking, “Speak for yourself.”
 - a. In dealing with Acts 2:38 we often deal with repentance and baptism differently, but emphasize both.
 - b. Baptism must be “proven,” while repentance must be exhorted.

8. On pp. 42-44 Smith compares the modern church to the temple when Jesus cleansed it and acts as though Jesus condemned the entire temple system.
 - a. First, Jesus condemned the making merchandise of the temple and says nothing about a “highly-structured political, social, and economic system that more often served to obscure faith rather than promote it.”
 - b. Second, if some within the church are not radically committed, does that mean the system has failed or the individuals have failed? Sardis as a whole was dead, but it must not have been the fault of the system, for a few remained pure. Rev. 3:1ff
9. In his call for “honest and open search for truth,” Smith prejudices the entire matter. Pp. 57, 58
 - a. He condemns *ad hominem* arguments, while in essence saying that those who object to his reasoning are only “strident defenders of our denominational status quo.”
 - b. Smith would make it seem as if all who are “Restorationists” engage in slander, innuendo and dishonest debate. These things can be found, but are they characteristic of most?
 - c. In this same discussion he seems to lay a lot of the blame for the bitter words of some at the feet of Campbell and Luther. Certainly, these men changed the world, but most preachers today have read little, if any, of the writings of either man.
10. On p. 59 Smith argues that the Anabaptists were saved because of an “adult, faith-prompted immersion.”
 - a. That ignores the historical fact that not all Anabaptists practiced immersion.
 - b. Does Smith consider modern Baptists, Mennonites and others who practice “adult, faith-prompted immersion” to be part of the body of Christ?
11. On p. 59 the following question is asked. “To what extent is the verifiable existence of the Lord’s church predicated upon complete and total restoration of primitive Christian practice as compared with simply being a collective body of Christians?”
 - a. If “complete and total restoration of primitive Christian practice” is unimportant, why write the book? Why tear up churches if it doesn’t really matter?
 - b. Can the “collective body of Christians” do anything and everything it might desire? Smith knows better, but seeks to prejudice those seeking the careful restoration/practice of NT Christianity.
12. On pp. 59-61 Smith condemns the vestigial remains which we have inherited from Catholicism and Protestantism and includes elders who are administrators and not shepherds; the “ritualized, sacramental-like ‘communion,’” which omits the “*koinonia* fellowship meal;” and the “highly-structured worship format.”
 - a. The first criticism is a broad generalization that does not apply to all elders/shepherds.
 - b. The last two criticisms are valid only if Smith can prove his point, which he has not done. Merely calling something a vestigial remain of Catholicism and Protestantism does not make it that.
13. Why call something a “*koinonia* fellowship meal,” when the Greek word *koinonia* means fellowship? Is he unaware of the redundancy or does he think it sounds more Scriptural to use a Greek term?
14. “Ironically, it is we who continue to worry more about whether we are doctrinally restored than about whether we are spiritually restored?” p. 73

- a. Who is the “we” he speaks of? Smith would do well to speak for himself. I believe I know many that are deeply concerned about the spiritual qualities of themselves and others.
15. On pp. 79, 80 Smith speaks of the difficulties one encounters in discerning the pattern for the NT church and concludes, “this is intentional on God’s part, consistent with the broader pattern of minimizing externals under the new covenant.”
 - a. Apart from the assumption that we are to minimize externals, this book is largely about externals.
 - b. According to Smith, we need to change the number of people in the gathering, the way we get a song started, the procedure for eating the Lord’s Supper, etc.
 16. While not important to the overall argument, the statement that Ezra built the temple (p. 86) may demonstrate the careless way he deals with the facts on the way to reaching his conclusions. The temple was built by Zerubbabel more than 50 years before Ezra returned to Jerusalem.
 17. On p. 97 a valid emphasis on hospitality is found, but he introduces a term he calls “table fellowship” to describe their meals eaten together.
 - a. Table fellowship is a term not found in Scripture. In fact, common meals are never described as fellowship.
 - b. He then says the “table fellowship” was extended to “love feasts” observed in connection with the Lord’s Supper. “It is important to understand that gathering around *the table* on the Lord’s Day would have had little meaning for them were it not a natural extension of their gathering around *a table* from day to day throughout the week.”
 - c. Is he serious when he says that the gathering for the Lord’s Supper would have little meaning if you have not been sharing common meals throughout the week? Why? These are two entirely different types of meals. Does the Lord’s Supper have little meaning if I eat it with people I don’t know?
 - d. What were the love feasts of Jude 12?
 - 1) Smith interprets them in light of later extra-biblical readings and believes them to have been common meals eaten in connection with the Lord’s Supper.
 - 2) If that were the case Paul’s rebuke in 1 Cor. 11 seems to have gone in the wrong direction. Instead of merely correcting the “abuses,” Paul exhorted them to eat at home. 1 Cor. 11:22, 34
 - 3) The love feasts of Jude 12 (the Greek is simply the plural of *agape*) may have been the kind of meals we find in Acts 2:46 and 1 Cor. 5:11 or possibly even the Lord’s Supper itself.
 18. “Standing up for Jesus” is described as “familiar lyrics in a jaded hymn.”
 - a. For whom does he speak? If the words of the familiar hymns have become jaded to Smith, it does not necessarily follow that they are jaded for all.
 19. Pp. 106-108 call for a radical realization that Christ will one day return. Smith wants us to “plunge ourselves with abandon into truly being his people!”
 - a. Who could argue with that sentiment, but his answers seem to be more external than anything else.
 - b. To paraphrase again: Let’s sit in a circle or in a living room. Let’s not have one man who has devoted hours to study and preparation teach us, but instead let’s have everyone participate. Instead of 10 minutes on the Lord’s Supper, let’s make it 45.
 - c. Many of Smith’s ideas are not necessarily wrong, but are ineffective. How were Peter and the other apostles able to baptize 3,000?
 - 1) One thing is certain—it wasn’t because of the intimacy of the setting for the sermon.

- 2) And it wasn't because everyone "shared" his or her ideas. The man with the knowledge delivered the message and souls were saved. Cf. Rom. 1:16.
20. When emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit Smith talks of the apostles wondering about the promise that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them. In another of the statements that seems to ignore the facts he describes the promise made just 10 days before as being "many days ago." P. 113; see Acts 1, 2.
- While not a highly significant point, it seems to reflect Smith's penchant for hyperbole and dramatics, rather than careful exegesis.
21. P. 117 describes the Holy Spirit as "mystically dwelling" in Christians.
- Since he doesn't define what he means by the phrase I can't be sure what he is saying.
 - Mystical can mean no more than "having a spiritual meaning or reality that is neither apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence." But it can also refer to subjective experiences, mysterious, unexplainable things, magical properties.
22. Interesting that on pp. 119-121 he leaves the door open to the possibility that miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit have not ceased, though he clearly believes they have.
- Smith does not accept the charismatic/Pentecostal position on the gifts, but interesting that he doesn't mention 1 Cor. 13 in connection with the cessation of the gifts.
23. On pp. 121, 122 we read of "almost exact parallels between the miraculous gifts and those which are non-miraculous." Joy, peace, hope and singing are described as ecstasy, similar to that of miraculous tongues.
- Ecstasy is defined as "a state of being beyond reason" or "a state of overwhelming emotion."
 - Where are miraculous tongues ever described that way? They are not in Scripture, but are in Pentecostalism.
 - Where is it suggested that singing with ecstasy is a non-miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit? Singing results from being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18, 19), which is parallel to allowing the word to richly dwell in one (Col. 3:16).
24. On p. 122 it is said that the "continual, ongoing gift of the Holy Spirit is wisdom and discernment." Eph. 1:17-19 seems to be his proof of this proposition.
- While acknowledging the need to pray for wisdom (cf. Js. 1:5), it is not clear that the indwelling Spirit is to be the source of that.
 - If the Holy Spirit was already "mystically dwelling" in the Ephesians, why would Paul ask that they be given the Spirit of wisdom? Why would they need to be given that which they already had?
 - I am not at all certain that Eph. 1:17 even refers to the Holy Spirit. Spirit is often used of an attitude or mind and the NKJV translators (who can be wrong) did not render spirit in the uppercase in this passage.
25. On p. 124 Smith speaks of the "over-worn phrase—'Guide, guard, and direct us'" and tells us we "must be open to the only avenue by which it can be answered: a powerful, active, genuine working of the Spirit!"
- "The only avenue?" What about the providential workings of God? Could angels not play a part in answering that prayer (Heb. 1:14)?
26. On pp. 127, 128 Smith relates the story of presiding at the Lord's Table where he unwittingly broke "the rules and not the bread," when he failed to "break" the "loaf" into pieces after he had given thanks.

- a. Though he dismisses “breaking” the bread as an obscure detail of little significance, he asks, “wouldn’t such a practice be consistent with following New Testament pattern to a T?”
 - b. If it is indeed part of the pattern, how can we decide it is insignificant?
 - c. What we ought to do is compare the institution of the Lord’s Supper with the feeding of the 5,000 and we would see that breaking the bread after giving thanks was the first century method of passing it to others. Their bread didn’t come in slices, so it had to be broken. See Matt. 14:19; Mk. 6:41; and Lk. 9:16 where Jesus “blessed and broke” and then compare it to John 6:11 where He gave thanks and *distributed*.
27. Also on p. 128 Smith is amazed that we overlook “patently obvious matters of far greater significance” and then says that “from all appearances” the Lord’s Supper was observed in conjunction with a fellowship meal.
- a. Somehow *from all appearances* doesn’t sound like something that is *patently obvious*.
28. To establish his hypothesis that the Lord’s Supper is to be eaten as part of a larger fellowship meal Smith describes its institution “in the context of a shared meal.”
- a. Though Smith in an appendix disputes the fact that this was the Passover (pp. 279-282) the Synoptics are clear that it was the day the Passover lambs were sacrificed and was the first day of Passover/Unleavened Bread. Matt. 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-16
 - 1) Smith seems to be seeking to do two things. One, he wants to eliminate the unique nature of the gathering and meal at which the Lord’s Supper was first instituted and secondly, he argues that unleavened bread is not required.
 - b. Jesus did not simply use the occasion of a shared meal to institute the memorial. He used the occasion of the meal that foreshadowed the work He would do the next day (1 Cor. 5:7) to give a new memorial.
 - c. Note that it was separated from the Passover supper. 1 Cor. 11:25
29. On pp. 130-132 Smith labors to establish that “abuse shows use” and that 1 Cor. 11 does not prohibit the eating of a “common, ordinary meal at a time when Christ’s memorial is being observed.”
- a. He writes of “what was meant to be a time of table fellowship for the whole church (in which the Lord’s Supper was to be the centerpiece).”
 - b. The above statement is key to the way Smith works. He has assumed the point about “table fellowship,” so from that he reinterprets 1 Cor. 11:22, 34 to mean that if all you want is a belly-filling meal (even though that is what he thinks it was) you stay home and eat. Amazingly, he contends that it is “clear” that this is what Paul was saying.
 - c. Simply reread the entire passage and see Paul do three things.
 - 1) Rebukes their selfish, divisive spirit.
 - 2) Shows them how the Lord’s Supper was actually to be eaten.
 - 3) Tells them to take their hunger-satisfying meals at home.
 - 4) Far from rendering the exhortation to wait for one another meaningless when the meal was removed, it eliminated much of the temptation for someone to say that they were too hungry to wait on the ones who were late.
 - d. Smith contends that not only was the Lord’s Supper eaten in conjunction with a meal, the Lord’s Supper was itself “an actual food-and-drink meal” and not a “token ritual” with our “typical 21st-century crackers and grape juice.” P. 132
 - 1) How much bread is necessary to remember the Lord’s death?
 - 2) If the Lord’s Supper was being eaten in conjunction with a full-fledged “table fellowship” meal and was itself an actual meal, were 1st century Christians guilty of gluttony?

30. On pp. 132-134 Smith argues that the “eating and drinking” of 1 Cor. 11:29 includes both the Lord’s Supper and the fellowship meal. In what I view as one of the more amazing quotes found in the book he writes...
 - a. “The Lord’s Supper gave meaning to their table fellowship, and their table fellowship gave meaning to the Lord’s Supper. Each was a picture of the other.” P. 133
 - b. If that is the case, why did Paul talk only of the bread and the cup and how they were to be taken? Why did he not go over the eating of the meat, nuts, and various other items?
 - c. In 1 Cor. 10:14-22 as Paul warns against being involved in idolatry he speaks of the unity of the one body, but only mentions the Lord’s Supper as symbolizing that. He does not talk about unity in a “fellowship meal.”
31. On p. 135 Smith again makes his assumption that the Lord’s Supper was originally eaten in conjunction with a fellowship meal and suggests that the Lord’s Supper may have been reduced to “merely a token meal” and quotes A. T. Robertson’s *Word Pictures* as support for his idea.
 - a. First, he assumed but did not prove that there were two meals being eaten with apostolic approval.
 - b. Second, Robertson may have been an excellent linguist, but he was not an inspired historian.
32. On p. 136 Smith raises a valid point when he notes that some churches rush through the Lord’s Supper, but are bigger loaves and glasses really the answer?
 - a. How much time are we to spend? The fact is that we are given no guidelines regarding time, but the records of its institution and the regulation of its observance do not seem to depict a long, drawn-out affair.
33. On p. 142 we read about how our traditional “services” could never be the same, but virtually everything he says is based on his unproven assertions about the Lord’s Supper being a full-fledged meal eaten in conjunction with another meal.
 - a. If Smith is not granted that assertion his whole proposition falls.
34. “Knowing what we know about first-century fellowship meals, the question isn’t so much whether there ought to be a kitchen in the church, but whether the church ought to be in the kitchen.” P. 142
 - a. “Knowing what we know” is a poor way to describe that which he has asserted as fact without any real proof.
 - b. After his lecture on the nature of the church (pp. 37, 38), it seems strange that he would use the word church to mean the building.
35. On pp. 142, 143 Smith writes that there were “no purpose-built houses of worship, complete with pulpits and pews, stained glass and steeples...the primitive church met in homes...”
 - a. As a lawyer, Smith knows that throwing in “stained glass and steeples” is prejudicial. Not every building has those.
 - b. Did the primitive church always meet in homes? Let’s explore that briefly.
36. Where did the churches meet?
 - a. There is no argument about some meeting in homes, but...
 - b. In Acts 2:46 the church met daily in the temple.
 - c. Acts 19:9 speaks of the school of Tyrannus.
 - 1) When Paul meets with the elders from Ephesus in ch. 20, he does not exhort them to protect the various flocks found in house churches, but speaks of both church and flock in the singular.

- 2) That does not mean that there could not have been some small groups meeting in houses, but it does mean that the bulk of the disciples at Ephesus (and there were “many,” Acts 19:10, 17-20) functioned as one flock.
 - d. Though we should probably not make too much of it, James 2:2 uses the word synagogue to describe the Christian assembly. (See the Gr. and the ASV). To a 1st-century Jewish reader, what would the word synagogue have suggested?
 - e. I don’t know if the upper room in Acts 20:7-11 was part of a private dwelling, but it was not a small group sitting around a table. There were 9 people in Paul’s group and the room was large enough to necessitate “many lamps.” 20:8
 - f. Consider the church at Corinth.
 - 1) While I don’t know where they met, it was a place large enough to hold a group that was in danger of dividing into four factions.
 - 2) In ch. 12 and 14 we read that several were able to prophesy, speak in tongues, interpret, etc. The assemblies described in 1 Corinthians seem to be fairly large groups.
 - 3) In ch. 11 Paul condemns their corruption of the Lord’s Supper and reminds them that they have houses to eat and drink in and contrasts that with coming together as a church. “Eat at home” in 11:34 is contrasted with the place of assembly.
37. P. 146 is a great illustration of how Smith engages in speculation, theory, guesses, etc. On the one page we read of...
- a. “From what we can tell....Apparently....apparent...presumably....I wonder....this might have taken place....But it is also possible....If that were the case....might have been...equally possible....”
 - b. If, might have been, possibly, etc. constitute weak proof of the need for a radical remaking of the church.
38. “It is worth noting from this special greeting [to the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila—jrg] that not all the Christians in Rome worshiped together.” P. 147
- a. Who would argue that in a city with a population estimated at between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 they would have all been able to congregate in one place?
 - b. Smith uses several groups meeting across a huge, metropolitan area (Rome) to justify breaking into small pieces a church meeting in one area.
39. On p. 148 we have another example of Smith’s careless exegesis. He wonders how 3,000 and growing daily could meet in one place and says the group gathered in Acts 12:12 at the house of Mary “may have been one of the newly-established house churches.”
- a. First, Acts never says even one word about house churches as subsets of the whole church in a community.
 - b. Second, the events of Acts 12 take place long after the scattering that took place in Acts 8. The church in Jerusalem was probably of significant size (see Acts 15), but not the size it was in Acts 2 and 4.
 - c. In a footnote on p. 148 Smith acknowledges that some commentators point to the temple courts as a place large enough for 3,000 to gather and cite Acts 2:46 as proof. Yet, because Smith insists that the Lord’s Supper be eaten as a meal, he tells us that Acts 2:46 and the commentators don’t tell us where the Lord’s Supper was eaten.
 - 1) If we know where they met and we know the Supper is eaten when assembled together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11), then we can know where they ate the memorial supper.
40. On P. 148 we read that “historically, of course, we know” that it was the 3rd century before we find “church buildings” and “piecing together archeology and history, it appears that the primitive church

typically met in a room (sufficiently large enough for probably 40-50 people) in the house of a wealthy member.”

- a. Some documentation of his historical and archeological proof would have been nice.
 - b. If this is true, does “typically” constitute proof that there are not other ways in which it was done then?
 - c. Though he insists he doesn’t want to “draw any arbitrary ‘line’ regarding magic numbers for size,” he cites *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell and its “Rule of 150.” Pp. 238-240
 - d. Even though 150 is not a biblical limitation, it is far beyond the size that a house would accommodate.
41. On p. 149 Smith says that he doesn’t know if the “larger church” (i.e. the one of 40-50 people that met in the spacious house of the wealthy) broke into smaller groups in various homes for the Lord’s Supper or the smaller groups all came together as one for the Lord’s Supper. (He cites 1 Corinthians 11 as proof they might have come together in one place).
- a. Smith wants to radically remake things and doesn’t know how it was done in the 1st century. Amazing!
 - b. A huge part of the problem is that he never reads of the larger church composed of smaller churches, yet bases much of his thinking on its existence.
42. Over and over again we read about “table fellowship.” (On p. 150 we read that this was a key difference between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian assembly, though James 2:2 calls the disciples gathering the synagogue).
- a. Smith builds so much on a term that is not found in Scripture and I believe is even contrary to Scripture.
43. On pp. 150, 151 Smith urges that we “not overlook that Jesus himself taught in private homes....” He goes on to tell us that His disciples did the same.
- a. Does he really think that this touches on the real issue? What preacher hasn’t taught in homes? Jesus taught in homes, mountainsides, boats, synagogues, temple courts, etc.
 - b. The issue is not even if the early church met in homes, but the nature of the worship and esp. the observance of the Lord’s Supper.
44. On p. 151 Smith pushes the house church as more effective in evangelism than the “relative coldness of auditoriums in church buildings.”
- a. Some auditoriums are quite warm and friendly.
 - b. If the house church is all about reclaiming the table fellowship that is missing in the church buildings of today, how will that aid in evangelism?
 - c. Where is evangelism most effective? Where we do it. People of the 1st century were converted in the temple, synagogue, prison, riverside, etc.
45. On pp. 152, 153 Smith argues that 1st century worship was more participatory than passive (as he says most of us are today). He emphasizes the word “everyone” in 1 Cor. 14:26.
- a. Even Smith doesn’t really believe everyone means that every single member acted in a leading way. Cf. 14:34f.
 - b. One of the points of 1 Cor. 14 was to reduce the number of leading participants.
 - c. Smith says Christians today “participate only minimally through singing and partaking of the emblems.”
 - 1) Perhaps he cannot participate more than minimally when he is not in a leading role, but is that true of all?
 - 2) It speaks poorly of both our humility and spirituality if we are only spectators and not participants when we are not the one out in front leading the prayer, teaching, etc.

46. On p. 153 as part of his emphasis on informal, spontaneous worship Smith says the following.
- a. “The issue is not so much whether we meet in an actual *house* as opposed to a *church building*. Rather, it’s the contrast between *small* versus *large*; *participant* versus *spectator*; *active* versus *passive*; *personal* versus *impersonal*. It’s simply axiomatic: The larger the gathering, the less personal, interactive, and truly participatory it’s likely to be.”
 - b. Axiomatic is not biblical proof and does not even hold up to examination by personal experience. For example, at a sporting event the larger the crowd the more involved the fans often become. Involvement is not determined by size.
 - c. Smith has created his own definition of participant, spectator, etc. However, the NT never suggests that listening to a sermon, reflecting quietly on the Lord’s death, singing with others (regardless of how the song was started), listening so as to be able to say amen to a prayer, etc. constitute lack of involvement.
47. On p. 154 we read about the “truly, informal spontaneous worship of first-century Christians.” (On pp. 151-154 we have forms of informal and spontaneous used 12 times).
- a. That may be a fairly accurate assessment of what was going on at Corinth, but Paul intended to change that.
 - b. Spontaneity suggests acting on impulse and without external constraint, but Paul commanded that things be done “decently and in order.” 1 Cor. 14: 40
 - 1) Decently denotes “gracefully, becomingly, in a seemly manner.” Vine
 - 2) Order is “an arranging, arrangement, order.” Vine
 - 3) Do we not see the danger in acting on impulse? So much of Scripture condemns the actions of impulsive, without external constraint worship. E.g. Nadab and Abihu. Lev. 10
48. On p. 156 Smith ridicules the “invitation” and notes that “there is nothing to indicate that the memorial meal on the Lord’s Day was ever intended as an evangelistic outreach.”
- a. No one ever argued that it was, but the sermons could be.
 - b. The invitation is also, as is sometimes stated, a convenient time for Christians to seek the prayers of others.
 - c. I certainly don’t think the invitation mandatory, but neither is it unscriptural.
 - d. On the consistency angle, Smith urges that the memorial meal be the key focus of the worship and acknowledges that it is not to be an evangelistic outreach, but says the new church in the kitchen is going to be evangelistic. Strange reasoning.
49. On p. 158 we read, “If a sin had been committed against a first-century congregation, you can be sure that everyone in their small group would already have known about it.”
- a. He continually assumes without any proof that all first-century churches were small, “homey,” “intimate” house churches.
50. On p. 159 Smith says, “Let’s Get Practical” and talks about what would happen if his suggestions were followed and there were “no sizeable congregations meeting in church buildings, but only small house churches.”
- a. “Perhaps it would be an instant open door to evangelism...I would like to think that [it]...might perhaps bring about a greater sense of belonging.
 - b. Unless one is absolutely certain (and Smith is not—see p. 146) that the changes are required by God, how can he propose such a radical remaking based on “perhaps?”
51. On pp. 160, 161 Smith suggests that house churches will solve the problem of gender disputes regarding the serving of the Lord’s Supper and leading singing.

- a. It borders on the ludicrous to think that in the midst of a culture war facing the church, we are going to solve the problems by a change of venue.
 - b. A “homey” worship will not solve questions about women’s roles. If anyone thinks it will, they ought to take a look at homes where the Biblical gender roles are clearly confused or ignored.
52. In arguing against the weekly collection that results in a treasury, Smith insists that 1 Cor. 16:1f does not contain a command. “Consistency demands that we hold our funds until Paul himself comes and delivers them to Jerusalem.” P. 164
- a. First, Paul was not even certain that he would make the trip to Jerusalem. 1 Cor. 16:3f
 - b. Second, I would not argue that 1 Cor. 16:1f alone is a command to give and establish a treasury.
 - 1) This passage is part of a pattern that shows how churches functioned in the realm of “finance.”
 - 2) Churches collected funds from free-will offerings (cf. Acts 4, 5) and from 1 Cor. 16 we learn that when there is a need these collections are taken on the first day of the week.
 - 3) There are other passages that help form the complete picture, but it is important to realize that 1 Cor. 16 is a vital part of the picture, but not the only part.
53. On p. 165 Smith writes of the Macedonian gift in 2 Cor. 8:1-5 as the wages sent to Paul in 2 Cor. 11:8f, but the two acts of generosity are different.
- a. 2 Cor. 8:4 has reference to the Macedonians taking part in the “ministering to the saints” and not the sending of wages to Paul.
54. On p. 166 Smith is not “prepared to say unequivocally that the house church was a divinely-intended arrangement” and could not say “that it plainly violates God’s will if we meet, instead, in purpose-built houses of worship.”
- a. How can you embark on a radical deconstruction and reconstruction if you are not certain of your ground?
55. “Knowing what you know about how the early disciples functioned when they assembled...” P. 166
- a. The problem is that we don’t know all the things that Smith has assumed/asserted were part of those early assemblies.
56. On pp. 171, 172 Smith takes his tear-down-the-big philosophy and stands it on its head. Though he won’t say it unequivocally, he seems to believe that the church in each city (or metro area) is composed of all the house churches. He strongly hints that “there was only group of elders over all the house churches in Jerusalem.”
- a. Again, he has made an unproven assertion that the norm was for disciples to meet in small house churches.
 - b. The NT never even hints at the notion of churches made up of churches. Churches are always made up of saints.
 - c. On p. 173 we read that “we’ve always assumed that ‘the flock of God among you’ must surely apply to each congregation,” but it is obvious that Smith no longer believes this.
 - 1) Why not? If you grant Smith his arrangement of many churches composing one church overseen by a group of elders, you do not have men shepherding the flock among them.
 - 2) The word among is robbed of its meaning when you have a group of men overseeing saints that they don’t even assemble with.
57. From the fact that elders in the OT functioned on various levels (even nationally), Smith asserts that “there is nothing to rule out the possibility that the role of elders in the early church might have encompassed more than one level of involvement—even simultaneously.” P. 178

- a. This is another example of Smith not feeling in anyway limited by the silence of the Scriptures. We have authority for elders to oversee the flock among them, but where do we have any authority for elders over anything bigger than a local church?
 - b. If Smith can use OT precedent to establish his city-wide eldership, will he eventually use it to justify a national eldership?
58. On pp. 181, 182 churches are criticized for choosing men more for their worldly success than their spiritual maturity. The elders are then criticized for being a “corporate board of directors” and not shepherds.
- a. These are probably valid criticisms of some, but certainly not all.
59. In the chapter “Pulpit Ministers: Patent Pending” (pp. 191-212) some valid, thought-provoking criticisms are offered.
- a. All of them are worth considering, but many of them apply much more to large, institutional churches than anyone else.
 - b. But Smith also makes the same mistake many “anti-located preacher” brethren have made through the years.
 - 1) Paul may have focused on evangelizing the lost, but he also spent a lot of time revisiting and strengthening churches.
 - 2) Paul also utilized Luke, Timothy, Titus, et al to preach to the church.
 - 3) In 2 Tim. 4 we read that Timothy was to do the work of an evangelist, but when he read through the books of 1 and 2 Timothy we find that much of his work involved helping the churches.
 - 4) Certainly there should be “mutual ministry,” but everyone serving has never meant that everyone was to be a teacher.
60. On pp. 246, 247 Smith says that we may have a treasury and when we do that we will need some “account name.” He then adds, “my personal preference would be almost any...other than ‘Church of Christ,’ simply to move us all beyond the current denominational usage of that term.” Names he suggest include: “Christ’s church,” “The Lord’s church,” “The Church,” “The church of God,” “The family of God,” “perhaps even ‘The Way.’”
- a. But how are we going to “move...beyond the current denominational usage” of Church of God and The Way?
 - b. While some are denominational in their usage of church of Christ, that results from untaught thinking and can happen with every other name.
 - c. Church of Christ is not the only Scriptural name/designation found in Scripture, but it is scriptural and one is not automatically denominational because he uses it.