

# THE Restoration Movement

*"The North American  
Restoration Movement"*

*The Principal Promoters and Religious Philosophy*



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*"One Lord... One Faith... One Baptism"*

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## The Restoration Movement and the Restorationists – It's Effects Then and Now David C. Penn, Ed.S., D.Min., Ph.D.

### PRÉCIS SECTION I

#### Introduction:

The Restoration Movement in North America is a distinct phase of ecclesiastical history that had its impetus in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The close of the eighteenth century and dawning of the nineteenth century were characterized by periods of intense spiritual fervor along with a great deal of interest in religion. This was especially true in the United States, where massive camp meetings were commonly held with multiplied thousands exercising their religious freedom and turning to a deeper study of the Bible – something they were not privileged to do in Europe.

The term “Restoration Movement” is used almost exclusively by the Churches of Christ and the Christian Church. To them it refers to the religious enthusiasm and passionate zeal that brought about the attempts to restore New Testament Christianity and worship. Religious historians usually include this epoch of vigorous religious activity in the United States (1790-1840) during the “Second Great Awakening.”

The Restoration Movement, part of the broader Movement called “restorationism,” sought to reform the Church from anti-scriptural and non-scriptural practices. Leaders of the Movement rejected rules and procedures that they believed divided the Lord’s Church and emphasized instead Christian unity based on the Bible. Inspired writers of the New Testament foretold of a “falling away” and an “apostasy” from pure New Testament Christianity (2 Thessalonians 2:3). Paul warned “...that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

The New Testament Church of Christ became corrupted by a perverted gospel and eventually lost its scriptural identity. False teachers brought in “damnable doctrines” and signs of the “falling away” were evidenced before the close of the first century Christian era; by the seventh century the prophecies of apostasy had been fulfilled. The New Testament Church of Christ in the first century became so perverted that it no longer looked to Jesus Christ as its head; it had rejected His doctrine as set forth by His holy and inspired apostles. God could no longer accept the perverted worship of the apostate Church. The apostate Church is historically identified, first, as the Catholic Church. Later in 1054 CE, it divided into two disparate religious conglomerates: the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church.

From the moment error and doctrinal perversion violated the New Testament Church of Christ, a need arose to refute the error, stem the encroachment, correct the perversions, and “restore” the Church to its purity of truth and faith. It was from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE until 1453 CE before an effective movement to restore the Church to its New Testament image began. This period is known as the “Middle Ages” or “Dark Ages” when the Church of our Lord with its victories of faith, defeats, and trials was hardly visible to medieval historians.

Eventually, efforts in Europe to reform the Church resulted in the historical period identified as the “Protestant Reformation.” This period found certain men such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale, Ulrich Zwingli and others, playing leading roles as religious Church reformers. Their labors were not entirely fruitless, yet they assumed an impossible task in their endeavors to effect a reformation in the apostate Catholic Church. The perverted Catholic Church would not and could not be reformed; subsequently, the attempt of the would-be reformers to reform the apostate Catholic Church failed.

While Luther and a few others committed themselves to the task of religious reformation, there were some who embraced the idea of preaching the simple truth as revealed in the Bible and establishing congregations among those who were receptive to New Testament biblical truth. This “spiritual awakening” was first evidenced in Scandinavia, Europe, England, Scotland, and then France along with Switzerland; and finally in the New World of the United States of America. The New World of frontier colonial America began to experience a “spiritual awakening” with their freedom of religion and individuals were meeting in North Carolina, Virginia, Vermont, and New Hampshire, before the close of the eighteenth century.

Commencing with the nineteenth century, men began to preach in denominational Churches where they served. Several of these men were known as “circuit preachers” who preached for as many as three or more congregations simultaneously. Individuals in many parts of the country were beginning to ask questions and ponder the seriousness of religious division so prevalent in their day. Carroll Ellis stated that “at this time there were twelve kinds of Presbyterian Churches, thirteen different types of Baptist faiths, and seventeen different Methodist communions.”<sup>1</sup>

All too often, the shadows of Roman Catholicism could be witnessed in existing denominations. The forms of Church government, their interpretation of ecclesiastical doctrines and practices reflected the hand of the Pope instead of the hand of God. To those who began studying the New Testament for the first time seriously, a desire arose to “restore the ancient order of biblical teaching.”

Promoters of the American Restoration Movement ardently and seriously felt the need for a return to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and His apostles as it is revealed in the New Testament. James M. Tolle remarks that “they [the restorationists] saw what the reformers had failed to see: the all-important truth that what the world needed was not a reformation of apostate religion, but a complete full return to the purity of the first century Church... Their work was expressly a work of restoration.”<sup>2</sup>

The proposed rediscovery of biblical principles was further advanced with the publishing of a number of religious journals. As early as 1808, Elias Smith published the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Its circulation was limited chiefly to the New England states. Barton Warren Stone heavily influenced reformers with his *Christian Messenger* published at Georgetown, Kentucky, (1826-44). However, it was *The Christian Baptist* of Alexander Campbell

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<sup>1</sup>Carroll B. Ellis, *Restoration Preaching*. David Lipscomb College, September, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>James M. Tolle, *The Church, Apostasy, Reformation, and Restoration*.

(1823-30) and his *Millennial Harbinger* (1830-70) which influenced North American religious reformers more than any of the other periodicals. Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell along with several others will be mentioned later in this précis.

The Concord Association of Baptist Churches in Northern Kentucky became enthused followers of Campbell's teaching in *The Christian Baptist*. The Concord Baptist Association for more than fifty years recognized the Bible alone as its rule of faith and practice and held substantially the same views as did Campbell. The influence of *The Christian Baptist* resulted in some eight or ten thousand to align themselves with the Restoration Movement ideology. Beginning in 1830 the *Millennial Harbinger* Campbell's second paper, began to be published and it had a tremendous influence on the reading public. It effectually encouraged many to abandon the sects and take a firm stand on the truth.

In many quarters, the Stone/Campbell Churches were willing to claim that they had indeed, "restored" both the faith and practice of the primitive New Testament Christian communities. This interpretation has been central ever since to the self-understanding of many conservatives and is best reflected in the multivolume work of Earl Irvin West, who compiled and published *The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement*. Richard T. Hughes, C. Leonard Allen, Douglas Foster, and Don Shackelford (to some degree) have also placed the Stone/Campbell Movement in the larger context of American antebellum primitivism.

Without question, both Stone and Campbell hoped to establish Christian Churches that adhered simply and exclusively to the authority of Scripture. This aspiration was completely consistent with the broader Reformed tradition and was frequently expressed by American predecessors such as James O'Kelly, Abner Jones, "Raccoon" John Smith, Walter Scott, and others.

Aside from restorationism motives, however, there were other forces that fashioned this Movement from the soil of the New American Republic. This was particularly true for Campbell and it is evident in the title of his *Millennial Harbinger*. He was enthusiastic about the prospects of Anglo-Saxon civilization and was intrigued by the perceived decline of Catholicism. In keeping with the impulse of American "Manifest Destiny," he believed the Bible foretold a millennial age, the "ultimate amelioration of society." Simple Christianity, absent from sectarian baggage, could deliver a global renovation of politics and religion.

Thomas Campbell had been a gifted educator for his family and his son Alexander was greatly influenced by his own brief experience at the University of Glasgow (1808-09). Therefore, the younger Campbell wrote extensively, campaigned for a state-sponsored "common school" education that used the Bible as a textbook, attended educational conventions, and founded Bethany College, of which he was president for twenty-five years.<sup>3</sup> This millennial impulse was also central to the creation of Bethany College.

More recently, many have interpreted the earliest movement between Stone and Campbell in 1832 as a "unity movement." This approach is represented by Leroy Garrett's historical portrait, entitled "The Stone/Campbell Movement." It is also prominent in numerous other essays and

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<sup>3</sup>*The Christian Standard*, November 12, 2020.

works including *A Life of Alexander Campbell* by Doug Foster. The early ecumenical efforts, however, were exceedingly narrow and were easily overshadowed by the Movement's contentious reputation. Despite its edifying intentions, this interpretation fails to account for the frontier spirit that pervades the Stone/Campbell narrative.

### **Emergence of Churches of Christ**

The Stone/Campbell congregations prospered with nearly 200,000 adherents by the start of the Civil War. Technically speaking, the Civil War did not create a division in the Movement; the conflict however, served to magnify some familiar tensions. The American Christian Missionary Society, a point of controversy since its inception, became a symbol of northern arrogance and perfidy. Moreover, some congregations mostly northern began to use mechanical musical instruments in their worship assemblies and this "innovation" added fuel to the fires of division.

Throughout the Deep South (particularly in Tennessee and Texas) the Movement's congregations were inclined toward the a cappella position. Under the leadership of Tolbert Fanning (1810-74) and David Lipscomb (1831-1917) who published the *Gospel Advocate* from Nashville, Tennessee, these congregations were generally known as "Churches of Christ." Before and after Emancipation, this influence would persist in African American communities as well, as they began to establish their own congregations.

In the mold of Campbell's early iconoclasm, the Churches of Christ were strongly resistant to the encroachments of mainstream Protestant theology. A new provocation, however, arose by the end of the 19th century, when they became agitated by the concept of "higher criticism." This academic discipline, largely built on liberal German scholarship, posed a challenge to the time-honored belief of biblical inspiration and was wholly incompatible with the Movement's biblicism trademark. This controversy, paralleled in other Protestant fellowships, was forcefully engaged by persuasive conservative voices.

From the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, John W. McGarvey (1829-1911) exerted the most effective opposition. In spite of such protests, many Ministers became sympathetic toward the trend of "theological liberalism" and they gained a significant coalition. In Ohio and northern Kentucky especially, the "Disciples of Christ" experienced capable representation in the *Christian Standard* of Isaac Errett (1820-1888). Division existed *de facto* and was soon recognized by the national census of 1906, where the Churches of Christ were listed as a separate religious denomination with 160,000 members.

The Disciples of Christ would later suffer another rupture when a confederation of conservative "Christian Churches" withdrew from their midst and formed a separate fellowship. Without an official corporate structure, however, the Churches of Christ have retained a tenuous statistical continuum ever since the 1906 census publication. First, their journals provided a large degree of communication and cohesion. In addition to the *Gospel Advocate*, the Texas-based periodical *Firm Foundation* was established in 1884 by Austin McGary (1846-1928) and *The Christian Echo* was established in 1902 G. P. Bowser (1874-1950) for African American Churches of Christ. Over time, these papers have been joined by many others.

Second, Churches of Christ have been linked by a collection of several liberal-arts colleges, where members could collaborate and students could receive a “Christian education.” The Nashville Bible School (now known as Lipscomb University) began in 1891, and Abilene Christian College (now known as Abilene Christian University) in Abilene, Texas, was founded in 1906. Two others, Harding College (now known as Harding University) in Searcy, Arkansas, and Freed-Hardeman College (now known as Freed-Hardeman University) in Henderson, Tennessee, were founded in 1919. Unable to receive racial equity in these all-white institutions, Black Churches of Christ established Southern Bible Institute in Fort Worth, Texas, (now known as Southwestern Christian College) in Terrell, Texas, in 1948.

By the end of two World Wars, the Churches of Christ were driven toward the mainstream of American Protestant culture due to the pressures of American patriotism. Yet, they retained their distinctive opposition to mechanical instruments in corporate worship and they held aloof from the broader Protestant spectrum. The 1950s and 1960s were particularly heady days with the Churches of Christ experiencing an explosion in numbers. To answer the call for additional Ministers, preaching schools and colleges were established especially in the South. North Central Christian College (now known as Rochester Christian University) was a rare exception in the North, a reflection of the booming automobile industry in Detroit, Michigan.

Graduate programs were added to the religious curriculum in 1944 at George Pepperdine College (now known as Pepperdine University) in Los Angeles, California, Abilene Christian University in 1953, and Harding University in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1954. Through the generous donations of numerous congregations, the “Herald of Truth” radio ministries were launched in 1952 and television programs were added the following year. Moreover, countless missionaries flowed from these new institutions and by 1970 the Churches of Christ in the United States numbered close to two million members.

Meanwhile, the Churches of Christ suffered from persistent racial divisions and a lukewarm engagement with the Civil Rights Movement. Nonetheless, characterized by the dedication of leaders such as Marshall Keeble (1878-1968), R. N. Hogan (1902-1997), Levi Kennedy (1899-1970), R. C. Wells (1933-2019), G. P. Holt (1923-2001), J. S. Winston (1906-2001), G. E. Steward (1906-1979), Eugene Lawton (1937-2022), Jack Evans, Sr., (1937-2019), W. F. Washington, and several others, African American congregations continued to grow in spite of cultural barriers.

As Churches of Christ moved into the second half of the twentieth century, their growth began to stagnate. Many Churches sought to distance themselves from a notoriously disputatious heritage and they began to adopt new points of emphasis. For example, *Mission Magazine* appeared from 1967 to 1987, dealing frankly with cultural topics such as racial injustice, militarism, and feminism. In 1993 the International Churches of Christ was organized and this Movement became a separate fellowship from the mainline fundamental conservative Churches of Christ.

Predictably, strong reactionary forces have tried to preserve the “sound doctrine” of previous generations. In their quest to distinguish themselves from mainstream American Christianity, these Churches have been represented by journals such as *The Spiritual Sword*, which began in 1969 (now managed by “House to House, Heart to Heart”) and *Contending for the Faith*, which

began in 1970. These journals rigorously seek to defend the non-instrumental music platform and they continue to wield a certain amount of influence. Unfortunately, some Churches of Christ today have moved in the opposite direction. A few have embraced “Evangelical Associations” and some have even pursued the archetype of non-denominational “Community Churches.” Only time can tell what the outcome will be.

### **Doctrinal Developments**

Despite the heritage of Barton W. Stone, the Churches of Christ have been primarily underscored by the early legacy of Alexander Campbell. Churches of Christ have favored his intent to overturn denominational creeds and to “restore” the purity of primitive Christianity. In Churches of Christ, the centuries of Catholic development have been rejected as being a time of “apostasy” and the reformations of Martin Luther and John Calvin have been characterized as only a partial move in a first-century direction. For Churches of Christ, the restorative work of Stone and Campbell is viewed as an essential moment in North American Christian history.

When these Churches interpret Scripture, Campbell’s influence is quite evident. His approach to the Old Testament as proposed in his 1816 “Sermon on the Law” has been a most powerful force. In accordance with Campbell’s view, the Old Testament is “fulfilled” and it is not authoritative for the “Christian Dispensation.” This attitude has led to a focus primarily on the New Testament; especially the Epistles and Acts. For many Churches of Christ, this inspired canon is sufficient to find a biblical pattern of “direct commands” and “approved precedents” as Thomas Campbell proposed in his Declaration and Address.

For instance, Acts 2:38 is frequently cited as an obligatory commandment from Peter, who said, “repent and be baptized, every one of you.” Meanwhile, in Acts 20:7 we discover where Paul “broke bread on the first day of the week.” This example is treated as a normative precedent for every Christian believer. In this quest for a coherent, authoritative, first-century pattern, the Churches of Christ are convinced about the clear-cut authority of scriptural data and have defined their doctrine with qualitative scientific certitude.

This interpretive method undergirds a nexus of distinctive practices in the Churches of Christ beginning with baptism. In keeping with a literal translation of the Greek word *baptizo* (and the example of the first-century Church), it is important for Churches of Christ to define baptism as a full bodily immersion. More distinctively, the purpose of baptism has been defined as a means for receiving grace and forgiveness. It is not understood to be a meritorious act in its own right; nonetheless, it represents an essential, visible, and salvific moment of obedience. Once again, Acts 2:38 has been determinative here, along with Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:21, and other “direct commands.” This doctrine has been foundational for all three branches of the Stone/Campbell Movement and it is a trademark for the Churches of Christ.

With an appeal to approved New Testament precedents, the Churches of Christ also insist that first-century Churches were autonomous and were individually governed by a plurality of elders. Along with Stone and Campbell, they have rejected the concepts of authoritative councils and regional bishops, wherever clerical power might be centralized. As noted above, this persuasion has led some Churches of Christ to become wary about Missionary Societies, located preachers,



institutions of higher learning, and radio programs. On the other hand, it has also allowed for remarkable freedom of expression and is largely responsible for the bewildering diversity that presently characterizes the Movement.

Most famously, the conservative Churches of Christ are known for their insistence on a cappella music. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 are frequently cited because they both command “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” without any mention of instruments. Recently, there has been one preacher in the Church of Christ who said that “instrumental music in New Testament corporate worship is only *unnecessary*.” Yet, in the absence of a command or a precedent the employment of instrumental music in New Testament corporate worship has been judged to be “*unlawful*” rather than “*unnecessary*” and the issue is treated as a litmus test for obedience.

David Edwin Harrell has convincingly argued that this issue was exacerbated by 19th century sectional and sociological forces, but it continues to persist in the 21st century.<sup>4</sup> Harrell also states: “The ‘big four’ (Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, Thomas and Alexander Campbell) were conscientiously opposed to using instrumental music in the Church, and none of the approximately ten thousand congregations they are estimated to have started used the instrument.”<sup>5</sup>

It is not known for certain when or where the first congregation began to sing with instrumental music accompaniment. It is likely that several small obscure Churches were doing such in the 1850s. The first one of which we know was in Midway, Kentucky, in 1859 under the leadership of L. L. Pinkerton. Pinkerton was far more liberal than most in the Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ/Christian Church (the names were used interchangeably). At any rate, a melodeon was brought into the meeting house to assist in congregational singing. At night one of the elders came in and removed it, but another one was put in and the Church divided over the issue.

Through the 1860s more and more congregations introduced instrumental music and in just about every place the most active and scripturally grounded members who had founded the congregations, were forced to leave or accept the instrument in defiance of their conscientious convictions.<sup>6</sup> The obvious fact [is] that most of the time, wherever the musical instrument has gone, strife and division have ensued.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, it is typical for most Church of Christ congregations to sing without instrumental accompaniment.

With regard to “leadership,” normally, the Churches of Christ have reserved public leadership roles for male members only. With their emphasis on the Pauline epistles they have appealed to biblical passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15, where feminine leadership roles are clearly prohibited. Egalitarian advocates by contrast, have argued that gender equality is an essential feature in the visible kingdom of Christ and they have challenged the hermeneutical assumptions with what they call a “hermeneutic of proclamation” to support their argument.

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<sup>4</sup>David Edwin Harrell, *The Churches of Christ in the 20th Century: Homer Hailey’s Personal Journey of Faith*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000.

<sup>5</sup>David Edwin Harrell, *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900: A Social History of the Disciples of Christ*. Vol. 2. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>7</sup>Gordon Wilson, *A History of Instrumental Worship in Divine Worship*. December 13, 2020. <https://churchofchrist-porthueneme.com/articles/>

The issue of female leadership in the Church has been hotly contested by radical feminists such as Mary Daley, Rosemary Lauer, and Valerie Goldstein. Also, feminists such as Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni maintain there is no spiritual authority reserved for only men in the Church and women can assume all positions of Church leadership freely. Nevertheless, in conservative Churches of Christ for the most part, male leadership continues to be normative standard.

In recent years, Churches of Christ are called upon to reevaluate several of their doctrinal and historical interpretive assumptions. Some have concluded that the pattern-seeking strategy has neglected crucial biblical themes, leaving Churches of Christ in a theologically shallow position. This concern was expressed by Thomas H. Olbricht (1929-2020) as early as 1965 who suggested that Campbell had led the movement in “the wrong direction.”<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, subsequent critics have articulated that the genre of biblical literature does not lend itself to systematic, “patternistic” manipulation. Presumptions such as these have received a mixed reaction as conservative Churches of Christ rightly recognize that a “new hermeneutic” infers that there is an “old hermeneutic” in need of replacement. In short, hermeneutics is the method of interpreting and applying Scripture. So then, how is the New Testament Church to understand Scripture? The answer is by “command,” “example,” and “necessary inference.” Under the “old hermeneutic” the goal is to imitate whatever practices we find in Scripture in the form of either direct “commands,” biblical “examples,” or any other “necessary inferences” which might flow therefrom. The idea is that, if we pattern our Christian walk and worship on biblical “commands” and “examples,” we can become the same kind of Christians of the first century.

What are the concerns of some that call for a “new hermeneutic?” These concerns range from scriptures taken out of context, to an over emphasis on Church organization and function, to the role of women in New Testament worship, to praise teams with women “leading” songs in the corporate assembly of worship, to beat-boxing in microphones, to the freedom of expression in the worship assembly. Other concerns include but are not limited to a biblical response towards abortion, euthanasia, genetic control, LGBTQ issues, environmental and ecology issues, along with many other matters. The Churches of Christ remain stridently conservative, but a scriptural response and perspective is needed for the 21st century visible kingdom of Jesus Christ.

### **Evaluation**

The Churches of Christ have a vibrant heritage and a unique historical narrative based on the authority of biblical patterns. This is because the Word of God cannot be amended or changed to suit the cultural ethos of the 21st century. Traditionalists will continue to defend the “old paths” and they will not be dissuaded by disapproval of the majority. Liberals and progressives will press for hermeneutical changes along with ecumenical “false fellowship” among religious circles because they desire to be like denominations; but it will be difficult to do this without a change of religious affiliations. Some congregations have removed the name “Church of Christ” from the signs on their buildings; some have become infatuated by the millennial “amelioration of society.” Nonetheless, the Churches of Christ are still producing preachers who preach “sound doctrine” and they constitute an important and unfinished chapter in ecclesiastical Church of Christ history.

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas H. Olbricht, *The Bible as Revelation*. *Restoration Quarterly* 8 (1965).

Of the Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Baptist Church, Anabaptists, Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Christian Church, the remnant of Restoration Movement Churches are: Churches of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Independent Christian Church. Will the Independent Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian Church, Anabaptists, Methodist Church and Baptist Church under the pretense of so-called “unity” and “fellowship” be in “full accord” on such doctrinal matters as the steps necessary to become a member of the New Testament Church of Christ? If not, how can “unity” and “scriptural fellowship” be attained and realized? Fellowship suggests being in “full accord” and the New Testament Church of Christ is not in “full accord” with the doctrines of these denominations.

Inasmuch as these Churches share the same historical roots from the Restoration Movement, further distinguishing characteristics is their usage of mechanical instruments of music in their corporate worship on the Lord’s Day, with the exception of conservative Churches of Christ who sing a cappella and do not use mechanical instruments of music. Additionally, some point to the division in the Restoration Movement as a result of tension between the intentions of “restoration” and “ecumenism.” The Churches of Christ resolved the tension by stressing “restoration” while the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) resolved the tension by stressing “ecumenism.”<sup>9</sup>

After the separation from the Churches of Christ, tensions remained among the Disciples of Christ over theological liberalism, the nascent ecumenical movement and “open membership.”<sup>10</sup> Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ also have both organizational and hermeneutic differences with the Churches of Christ.<sup>11</sup> For example, they [Independent Christian Churches] view “scriptural silence” on an issue more permissively.<sup>12</sup> Which means to them that when the Scripture is “silent” regarding any matter of concern, subjective permission is thereby given to exercise “freedom of expression.” This existential approach to interpreting the Scripture falsely implies that the Word of God only prohibits, precludes, and excludes doctrinal practices by explicit “thou shalt not” statements.

### **Précis Summary and Conclusion**

At a time in which denominational “false fellowship” practices along with extra-biblical and anti-biblical methodologies are making inroads within the New Testament Church of Christ, at a time in which the inspired Scripture is being questioned by heretical teachers who have become apostates, the call for New Testament Christians in the New Testament Church of Christ to take an affirmative stand rings loud in the ears of the faithful. Paul states: “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10, 11). The fiery darts of Satan came in the form of false teachers in the early Church and so he is about his same work today (1 Peter 5:8).

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<sup>9</sup>Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, Charles Reagan Wilson, *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005.

<sup>10</sup>Douglas Allen Foster and Anthony L. Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel S. Hill, Charles H. Lippy, Charles Reagan Wilson, *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

C. Leonard Allen has contended that Christians within Churches of Christ need to rethink their traditional view of Scripture because of the influence of eighteenth century “Enlightenment” thought on the one hand, and a pervasive spirit of self-reliance born of secularism on the other.<sup>13</sup> This scientific/secular approach to Scripture follows anything but the “ancient order of things.” Allen further counsels that the Bible must be rediscovered along with all of its strangeness and mystery if it is ever to be understood and appreciated by modern believers. He also argues that the Church must reconnect with its history and face the challenges posed by secular culture.<sup>14</sup>

Today, it appears that one person particularly speaking in the African American Church of Christ is attempting to foster “unscriptural fellowship” between the New Testament Church of Christ and the Independent Christian Church. This is not a “new ideology” or a “new argument” being espoused by this liberal individual. Since the division between the Churches of Christ along with the Christian Church in 1906 and in more contemporary times from the late 1950s, the early 1960s, and the 1980s, such dialogue has once again surfaced. Some have even articulated that there are “Christians in other Churches” separate and apart from what the Scripture identifies as the “New Testament Church Christ.”

**For example, this individual posted on a blog page:**

*“Preferences must always be categorized as unnecessary. The local church should debate preferences, while the universal church experiences unity on the basis of the essentials of the Christian faith.”*

**The response given to this post was:**

*“...adhering to New Testament doctrine and the ‘essentials’ of faith is not a ‘preference’ or ‘choice’ one has and neither is it ‘unnecessary.’ Is the doctrine of the New Testament a ‘preference’ for Christians to obey? Is the doctrine of the New Testament ‘necessary’ for Christians to obey? The local New Testament Church of Christ [the visible kingdom] is a colony or protectorate of the universal Church of Christ [the heavenly Kingdom] and ‘preferences’ along with ‘doctrinal essentials’ are mandated by Scripture. Furthermore, ‘preferences’ along with ‘doctrinal essentials’ effected by the universal heavenly kingdom must be in concord with the local visible kingdom. Our citizenship [conversation] is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).*

**Secondly he posted:**

*“To this end, believers must recognize that we are brothers and not twins, and allow for unity in diversity within the boundaries of apostolic truth.”*

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<sup>13</sup>C. Leonard Allen, *The Cruciform Church: Becoming a Cross-Shaped People in a Secular World*. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1990.

<sup>14</sup>C. Leonard Allen & Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ*. Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1988.

**The response given to this post was:**

*“The Apostle Paul most poignantly recognized ‘unity in diversity’ among Christians in the New Testament Church of Christ; simply because not every baptized believer is ‘gifted’ in the same manner (Romans 12:4-8). The axiom of ‘unity’ Paul speaks of in Ephesians 4:1-3 cannot be supplanted with ‘false fellowship’ between various denominational religious bodies i.e. the Christian Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Independent Christian Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, and etc. This proposition of ‘ecumenism’ is not only foreign to the New Testament Scripture; it is heretical, anti-biblical, and unbiblical. Unity that is built upon the essentials of New Testament doctrine among New Testament Christians in the New Testament Church of Christ is what the Lord Jesus ‘requires.’”*

*Ecumenism* refers to a liberal theology which promotes unity among various religious groups despite differences in doctrines and practices. The Bible does not say anything about *ecumenism* in the way that we hear of it today. This is because there were no denominations in the first century when the New Testament was written. While the New Testament stresses the categorical imperative of “unity,” it also condemns the concept of denominationalism.

- Rather than being based upon the Word taught by the apostles, *ecumenism* is only possible by ignoring certain passages found in the New Testament.
- Instead of the commands of Christ applying to all people everywhere, *ecumenism* claims that there are different standards for different people.
- Instead of teaching the same thing as the apostles taught from generation to generation, advocates of *ecumenism* tolerate any new doctrine that people want to promote.
- Rather than abiding in the teaching of Christ, to maintain fellowship with the Lord and with other New Testament Christians in the New Testament Church, *ecumenism* seeks to promote “false fellowship” with “all” religious faiths even when they go beyond the doctrine of Christ.
- Paul taught that those who teach a different doctrine are to be “marked” and “avoided,” but *ecumenism* says those who teach a different doctrine should be “welcomed” and “accepted.”
- Although Paul teaches New Testament Christians to “stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle,” *ecumenism* teaches that we are to extend “false fellowship” to those who reject the traditions handed down by the apostles.

When false doctrine regarding interfaith “false fellowship” is being advocated, it becomes a hindrance to the mission of the New Testament Church of Christ and promulgation of the gospel. The process of genuine authentic “kingdom expansion” only occurs when one conforms and obeys New Testament doctrine. There is no “common root” shared with denominations, due to the fact that they do not teach nor fully practice New Testament doctrine within their religious organizations. The only “beneficial partnership” which interests God our heavenly Father is for His children to abide in the doctrine of His Son Jesus Christ (2 John 1:9) and not in the doctrines of denominationalism.

The “unity” promoted by *ecumenism* is NOT the “unity” depicted in the New Testament Scripture. What we see in the world today – denominational Churches with their own doctrines, practices, and organizational structure, is contrary to New Testament dogma. In His “High Priestly Prayer” during the “Upper Room Discourse” when Jesus prayed to His Father and said: “...that they all may be one...” (John 17:21) His prayer of petition was asking for unity and love between Himself, His disciples, and His would-be followers; NOT denominations with diverse religious beliefs!

The New Testament Church of Christ cannot be “joined together” scripturally with another religious body. The Independent Christian Church for example is “another body” hence, “another woman” just as the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, or any other Church. Based upon the marriage metaphor and symbolism provided in the New Testament Scripture, the Lord Jesus has but “one Bride” and this “one Bride” of Jesus Christ is the New Testament Church of Christ. Jesus who is the “Bridegroom” has sacrificially and indemnified the New Testament Church to be His “ONE” and only “Bride” (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Some preachers today have become so “theologically astute” that they are willing to compromise truth constructed upon a false interpolation of “unity in diversity.” Many religious denominations have created their own ecumenical perception of “unity in diversity.” Their fundamental idea is to unite people of widely divergent beliefs by encouraging them to simply “agree to disagree.” This is “pseudo-fellowship” thinking that people can share in something they truly do not share. It turns a blind eye to the source of division and it is “NOT” the unity the New Testament teaches.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10, the apostle Paul pleaded “...that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Those who promote a “unity in diversity” concept such as Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside argue that we ought to seek to have unity among “*all*” denominations while retaining our doctrinal differences. This is NOT the “unity” for which Jesus prayed and it certainly is NOT the idea of “unity” taught in the New Testament. Truth is truth and error is error by their very natures. The fact that truth and error will remain what they are makes it impossible for the two to be brought together.

Biblical “unity of faith” encapsulates the “oneness of belief” based upon what the Word of God authorizes. New Testament Christianity for the New Testament Church of Christ only acknowledges “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5); “one body” and “one Church” (Ephesians 4:4; cf. 1:22-23); and “one faith” rendering the multiplicity of “religious faiths” we see today as being unscriptural. The Bible NEVER speaks of “unity in diversity” in the sense of “interdenominational fellowship.”

Jesus desires “unity” among the members of “His” Church and this “unity” must stem from the principles of the New Testament. When addressing the subject of there being “*no union [unity] in heresy,*” David Lipscomb said: “Any act of worship not ordained by God, the observance of any ordinance or the performance of any act as religious service not provided for by the authority of God, is treason against God... to unite with anyone on anything else than complete surrender to the will of God, and a full obedience to his requirements, is treason of the grossest type.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>David Lipscomb, *The Gospel Advocate*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Publishing, 1885: 402.

In an oral interview given by the late R. N. Hogan concerning the Christian Church, Hogan stated: “Brother Bowser didn’t go along with their [the Christian Church] delegated conventions and also the mechanical instruments of music in worship... [Another issue] was their idea was of ‘shaking people’ in from denominational Churches without baptizing them for the remission of sin.”<sup>16</sup>

The doctrine of “unity” among members of the New Testament Church of Christ was emphasized in most all of the writings to the early Christians. If that “unity” or “oneness” had been maintained faithfully, the rise of denominationalism would have been impossible. If the Lord Jesus Christ had desired a plethora of Churches, why did He stop with just building “ONE” Church?

The Independent Christian Churches are a conglomerate of denominational Churches which stem from the Restoration Movement.<sup>17</sup> This religious denomination “theoretically” claims to have returned to a New Testament faith and practice. However, in worship, they use instrumental music in contrast to the non-instrumental Churches of Christ. History records that in the year 1968 they separated themselves from the prior existing “Christian Church” and “Disciples of Christ.”

Members of the New Testament Church of Christ are taught to “walk by the same rule and to mind the same thing” (Philippians 3:16). Members of denominational Churches such as the Independent Christian Churches are taught to walk by different rules and to mind different things. If to “walk by the same rule and to mind the same thing” is God's order for the New Testament Church of Christ and New Testament Christians, then to “walk by different rules and to mind different things” is “NOT” God's order. It is plain to see that denominationalism is at variance with what the New Testament teaches.

The Scripture is clear that false doctrine and false teachers cannot be tolerated among the people of God. Christians who embrace false doctrine and extend fellowship to false teachers do so in violation of the Word of God. The fact of calling a practice sin but fellowshipping those who practice the sin is repugnant and unacceptable according to New Testament doctrine.

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<sup>16</sup>R. N. Hogan, *Oral Interview*, 1969.

<sup>17</sup>Faith Communities Today, *Hartford Institute for Religion Research*. Hartford International University for Religion and Peace: Hartford, CT.

## The Early European Restorationists

### PRÉCIS SECTION II

#### Introduction:

Typical of the Restoration Movement during the timeframe between the years 1800-1830 was the perennial activity of “Raccoon” John Smith. What Smith did in his search for and conversion to New Testament truth was commonly repeated by a great number, especially preachers in the Eastern geographical areas of the United States.

#### “Raccoon” John Smith (1784-1868)

“Raccoon” John Smith became an early leader in the Restoration Movement. He was born on October 15, 1784, in Holston Valley, Sullivan County, in East Tennessee. Smith was the ninth child of George and Rebecca (Bowen) Smith, strict Calvinist Baptist members. John Smith was baptized into the Calvinistic Baptist faith by Isaac Denton on December 27, 1804, in the Church of his parents, Clear Fork Baptist Church and began to preach shortly afterward. He had been a Calvinist and profoundly preached the principle doctrines of Calvinism as largely accepted by Baptist and Presbyterian Churches. He preached the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of saints. These five cardinal doctrines of Calvinism otherwise regarded as the T.U.L.I.P. theory also includes predestination as taught by Calvinism [Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints].

An intense study of the Bible along with a tragic event in the life of Smith caused him to become dissatisfied with his religious beliefs. The turning point came for him when his two oldest children (Eli and Elvira) were burned to death in their frontier home during his absence on a preaching tour; his wife Anna had gone to attend a sick neighbor at their request. When he returned home to find his neighbors searching among the ashes and debris for their bones, his theology failed him. He could not accept the idea that his two children were of the non-elect. His wife never recovered from the shock; she became sick and died in April of 1815. Consequently, it was with great struggle and tremendous personal sacrifice that he accepted and began to preach the truth as he learned it, little by little.

Smith was a diligent student of the Bible and Campbell's *The Christian Baptist*. Slowly but surely, from the time he first began to understand God's plan of salvation, Smith found his way out of religious error. One by one he relinquished the principles of Calvinism. The Churches where he preached also began to disengage themselves from Calvinism along with their denominational designation and embraced biblical truth as “Raccoon” John Smith preached it from the Bible.

In 1827 Smith baptized 2000 people in Kentucky and nearly the same amount in 1828. By the year 1830, he had led Churches in Central Kentucky at Mount Sterling, Spencer, Upper Spencer, Grassy Lick, and others out of religious error into receiving by faith New Testament Christianity. On New Year's Day, January 1, 1832, when the Stone/Campbell Movement merged together at the High Street Meeting House in Lexington, Kentucky, it was Smith who representing Campbell's



Disciples of Christ that extended “The Right Hand of Fellowship” to Barton Warren Stone. It was also “Raccoon” John Smith who decisively declared at this gathering:

“Let us, then my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the light we need.”<sup>1</sup>

However, the historical record does not indicate where “Raccoon” John Smith was ever baptized by anyone into the New Testament Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, or the Christian Church. It has been said that Smith was baptized in 1804 by Isaac Denton a Baptist preacher.

In the absence of forming a creed or ecclesiastical statement, the Movement swept across the country. Nevertheless, there were certain fundamental beliefs, or propositions, that made the Movement successful and that were absolutely essential to the Restoration of New Testament Christianity. The principles of the Restoration Movement briefly stated are:

- To accept the Bible as the only source of authority in matters of religious faith and practice
- To call Bible things by Bible names
- To restore apostolic worship
- Observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week
- The sacrificial contribution of the saints on the first day of the week
- A cappella singing praises unto God
- To restore the Church of the New Testament in doctrine, worship and mission.
- To restore the zeal of evangelism of the first century

Four basic core tenets of the Restoration Movement in North America which mirror many of principles mentioned above include the following:

1. Acknowledgment of the New Testament as the only authoritative rule of faith and practice for Christians. A positive attempt to obey the “pattern whereunto we have been delivered.” To accept only those things in religion which are specifically prescribed in the New Testament by command, apostolic example, or necessary inference.
2. Renunciation of all human creeds and acceptance of the precepts and examples of Jesus as the only creed binding upon Christians. Human creeds are by their very nature divisive; only the Scripture furnishes a rational basis for unity.
3. Restoration of the apostolic and New Testament concept of the Church in the minds of men. Worshipping and patterning our lives after the divine pattern found in the New Testament Scripture.
4. The union of all Christians based upon the teaching of the New Testament Scripture.

### **James O’Kelly (1738-1826)**

In 1792, a Methodist preacher named James O’Kelly, who labored in North Carolina and Virginia, led in one of the earliest known attempts at restoration in North America. He and four other

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<sup>1</sup>Louis Cochran, *The Profile of a Pioneer Preacher: Raccoon John Smith*. Restoration Review Volume 06, Number 3, March 1964.

Methodist preachers of Virginia withdrew and separated themselves from their previous association on the date of November 1, 1794, because of the autocratic leadership policies of Francis Asbury; the Methodist Episcopal Bishop at that time. They formed a body known as the “Republican Methodist Church.” This group met at the Old Lebanon Church in Surry County, Virginia, on August 4, 1794 and distinguished itself by attempting to go back to New Testament doctrine and principles. At this meeting, a committee of “seven” was appointed to formulate a statement of the basic beliefs and plan for Church government. Rice Haggard, a member of the committee arose and told the assembly they were having difficulty formulating a creed. He said:

“Brethren this [holding up a Bible] is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. By it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move henceforth and forever that the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply.”<sup>2</sup>

Following Haggard’s appeal, a man who was referred to as “Brother Hafferty” of North Carolina, stood up and moved that they take the Bible itself as their only creed.<sup>3</sup> From these two motions became what is known as the “Five Cardinal Principles.”

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of Church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.<sup>4</sup>

In 1801, the name “Republican Methodist” was discarded in favor of the term “Christians only.” Although there were evident weaknesses in the beginning, nevertheless, a beginning was being made to return to the principles of New Testament Christianity. James O’Kelly did not believe baptism by immersion was necessary and that sprinkling would suffice. He was never immersed. In 1789, James O’Kelly wrote *Essays on Negro Slavery*, which was one of the earliest anti-slavery tracts written by a clergyman.<sup>5</sup> He died on October 16, 1826, and was buried in Chatham County, North Carolina.

Concerning the general spirit which prevailed at the meeting on January 1, 1832, when the Stone/Campbell Movement merged together, John Rogers wrote in 1844 twelve years later:

“No one ever thought that the Reformers, so-called, had come over to us, or that we had gone over to them; that they were required to relinquish their opinions or we ours. We found ourselves contending for the same principles of Christianity, and we resolved to unite our energies to harmonize the Church, and save the world... I entered into it upon this principle. I think immense good has grown out of it, that had it never taken place our cause in Kentucky would be far in the rear of the position it now occupies.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup>J. Pressley Barrett, *The Centennial of Religious Journalism*. Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1908.

<sup>3</sup>W. E. MacClenny, *The Life of Rev. James O’Kelley*. Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton, 1910.

<sup>4</sup>Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 1. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company.

<sup>5</sup>*Restoring the Church of Christ and New Testament Christianity 1790-1832*, No. 10. [www.gospellessons.info](http://www.gospellessons.info)

<sup>6</sup>C. C. Ware, *Barton Warren Stone*. St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press, 1932.

**Abner Jones (1772-1841)**

In Vermont, Abner Jones, a physician, preacher, and early reformer in the Restoration Movement became greatly dissatisfied with sectarian names and creeds. He was baptized in the year 1793 by Elder Elisha Ranson a Baptist preacher, but was later convinced that Baptist Churches along with denominational membership and party distinctions should be abolished. One of the major religious areas of concern for Abner Jones was the name of his denomination; Baptist. When he searched the New Testament to his great astonishment, he could not find the denomination of “Baptist” mentioned in the whole of it. He only found the name “John the Baptist” or “baptizer” in all of the New Testament Scripture. The Lord Jesus Christ did not call His disciples “Baptists,” the Christian Churches in apostolic times were not called “Baptists.” Christ called his disciples brethren and friends. In the time of the apostles, the disciples were first called “Christians” at Antioch. After this search, Jones denied the name of a “Baptist” and was then willing to own the names disciple, friend, and Christian until his death.

In September 1801 Jones established the “first free Christian Church” in Lyndon, Vermont, based upon restoration principles. He was soon joined by a Baptist preacher named Elias Smith. They both exhorted and preached together whereby several congregations discarded denominational creeds and called themselves “Christians.”<sup>7</sup> A significant fact to remember is that although the conclusions reached by various men in their efforts to restore New Testament principles, they worked most of the time without knowledge of one another.

**Elias Smith (1769-1846)**

Similar to Abner Jones, Elias Smith was a preacher, physician, and journalist. Smith, along with Jones, established a group of congregations in New England that became the denomination known as the “Christian Connexion.” Smith was born in 1769 at Lyme, Connecticut, in the County of New London In Vermont. In 1808 he began publishing *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* newspaper in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which is said to be the first religious newspaper in America.

The parents of Elias Smith were Stephen Smith and Irene Ransom Smith. His mother was the second wife of Stephen Smith and thirteen years younger than he. She was only nineteen years old when Elias was born. As a child Smith worried considerably over his sins. His spelling book had a form of prayer in it and Smith would take his book and sneak off to the barn and weep and pray. His mother was a “Newlight” Congregationalist who believed in sprinkling. Consequently, she had her three children sprinkled and Elias shared this fate; although he rebelled against it.

In May, 1779 while Smith was living in Connecticut, he became greatly concerned over the issue of baptism. He gave himself to considerable study upon the subject and finally convinced himself that believers were the only people to be baptized and that immersion was the proper method. The Baptist Church in Woodstock, Connecticut, was holding a monthly meeting and William Grow was preaching. Having expressed his desire to be immersed, Smith was subsequently taken by Grow to Queechy River, near the house of Ichabod Churchill and was baptized in the Baptist faith.

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<sup>7</sup>J. W. Shepherd, *The Church, the Falling Away, and the Restoration*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1929.

In the summer of 1789 Smith began to think of becoming a preacher himself. Meanwhile, he listened to several Baptist preachers and turned away in disgust for they appeared to be men of little ability. Smith said:

“If I could not make out better than that, I would never try again.”<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, he made up his mind he would never speak without first, having evidence of a call from God; and second, doing all he could to adequately prepare himself for the gospel ministry. In November of the same year, he went back to William Grow and asked for books that would help him learn how to preach. As a result, Smith found himself gradually working his way into becoming a preacher in the Baptist Church.

At some point in the fall of 1801, Smith began to have apprehensions about certain doctrines in the Baptist Church. He had not hesitated to espouse his views and before long found himself in disrepute among many Baptists. In addition, his old problem with Calvinism still bothered him. There appeared to be for a while no other alternative; it was either Calvinism or Universalism. In 1814 Smith became devastated when his wife Mary died of typhus fever leaving him with six children. One son committed suicide and Smith quickly remarried a woman 20 years his junior.

Then on October 1, 1817, to the great disappointment of his followers, Smith announced in his newspaper *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* that he was joining the Universalist Church. This was the last edition he ever published. Elias Smith was a Universalist the first time for fifteen days and he returned to his former belief. For a second, third and even a fourth time he espoused Universalism for brief periods of time and then denounced it.<sup>9</sup> In 1840 he returned to his flock before his death. Smith died in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1846.<sup>10</sup>

### **Isaac Errett (1820-1888)**

Isaac Errett was born in New York City on January 2, 1820. Both of Errett's parents were converts of Alexander Campbell. His father died in 1825 after which his mother remarried and moved the family to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1832 where they identified with the Church of Christ in that city. In 1833 Isaac and his older brother Russell who became a United States Congressman, were baptized into Christ by Elder Robert McClaren. They were faithful members of the Church in Pittsburgh.

Errett gave his first discourse on the date of April 21, 1839. He was set apart as an evangelist on June 18, 1840. He served the Smithfield Street congregation from 1840-44 and in 1843 he married Harriett Reeder. Between 1844 and 1849 he labored with the saints in New Lisbon, Ohio. Errett was the first located Minister of the Restoration Movement in Ohio, at New Lisbon. He was one of the first in founding Hiram College; one of the first in starting the Ohio Christian Missionary Society; one of its first secretaries, and one of its first presidents. He was one of the first to start

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<sup>8</sup>Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith*. Portsmouth, NH: Beck & Foster 1816.

<sup>9</sup>J. F. Burnett, *Elias Smith: Reformer, Journalist, Doctor; Horace Mann: Christian Statesman and Educator*. Dayton, OH: The Christian Publishing Association, 1921.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*

the Foreign Christian Missionary Society serving as its first president. He was among the first to help encourage women towards organizing the Christian Woman's Board of Missions; one of the foremost advocates of Church Extension, the Benevolent Association and Ministerial Relief. In addition Errett was also the first editor of the *Christian Standard* newspaper.

In 1857 Errett became Corresponding Secretary for the American Christian Missionary Society. In 1861 he became a co-editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* with Alexander Campbell when the Civil War broke out. Whether men in the Church should bear arms was an important question. Errett believed that they could. Men like J. W. McGarvey believed that they should not participate in carnal warfare. This was also the position of Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb. McGarvey tried to get Errett to throw his support against Church men engaging in war; but Errett refused, for the cause of the Union was too dear to him.

In 1861 Errett began laboring with a Church in Detroit, Michigan, with about fifteen members located at the corner of Jefferson and Beaubien. It seems that not everyone in the Detroit Church appreciated the vision that Errett brought to this congregation in Detroit as a division emerged. According to G. G. Taylor, this took place in November 1862 and was based on the premise of the “New Interests” preached by Errett.<sup>11</sup>

- “The desire to have instrumental music in the worship, to adopt missionary societies, to fraternize in Church work and Church worship with unbaptized Church people, to introduce the one man pastorate system, and other kindred innovations, became so pronounced that it finally overleaped all restraints and precipitated a division of the Church.”<sup>12</sup>

During this period of Errett’s time in Detroit, the congregation made use of the piano in worship and supported the American Christian Missionary Society.<sup>13</sup> While in Detroit he published what he called “A Synopsis of the Faith and Practices of the Church of Christ.” Errett had published it to let the community know what Churches of Christ believe. Many opposed his positions, including Benjamin Franklin and Moses E. Lard. On April 7, 1866, the initial issue of the *Christian Standard* came off the press. Isaac Errett was the editor.

The *Christian Standard* came out in favor of the Missionary Society and instrumental music in the corporate worship. We must note that the *Standard* as we know it today is not associated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denominations or the Church of Christ, but it is associated with the Independent Christian Churches. The *Christian Standard* was published in Cleveland, Ohio, until moving to Cincinnati, Ohio, in July of 1869. It has remained in Cincinnati until the present. Isaac Errett died in 1888.

### **Moses E. Lard (1818-1880)**

Moses E. Lard was born in Bedford County, Tennessee. He was one of six children born to the union of Leaven and Mary Lard. He entered Bethany College on March 4, 1845, after he was married and had two children. He completed in three years a four years course of study which

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<sup>11</sup>G. G. Taylor, *A History of the Plum Street Church of Christ*. Detroit, MI: 1906, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Laurence Girdwood, *The Stone Campbell Movement in Michigan*. 1:21.

entitled him with the degree of Master of Arts. Recognizing his talented gift as a writer, his friends insisted that he begin publishing his own periodical which came to be known *Lard's Quarterly*. Lard is well known for his numerous writings including *Lard's Commentary on Romans* and he also was the original chief editor for the journal called *The Apostolic Times*.

Lard was twenty-three years old when he was baptized in Clay County by Jerry P. Lancaster a former Methodist preacher.<sup>14</sup> He later became a follower of Alexander Campbell and was called upon by Campbell in 1854 to defend the New Testament Scripture against Jeremiah Jeter who had written a book which he called *Campbellism Examined*. Jeter was one of the most influential Baptist leaders of the mid-nineteenth century. Justice demanded that the Word of God not be perverted and truth needed to be proclaimed. Moses Lard probed and scrutinized Jeter's book as no other man had ever done. As a skillful defender of the faith, Lard's reputation was greatly enhanced and Jeter's work could be seen as nothing but sophistry.

Moses E. Lard was in every way a very unique man. He stands alone. He constitutes a class of his own. He was intellectual, bold, and fearless. He was not popular with the world or with a great number of his brethren at the time in which he lived. He has grown in the estimation of all who have read his writings. He was opposed to carnal warfare and did not hesitate to speak and write during the Civil War against Christians' participating in carnal warfare. No stronger arguments have ever been made by man than those made by Moses E. Lard. He moved from Missouri and lived in Lexington, Kentucky, where he died on June 17, 1880. Just before his death he closed his eyes and said: "There is not a cloud between me and my Heavenly Father."<sup>15</sup>

### **John William [J. W.] McGarvey (1829-1911)**

J. W. McGarvey the second child of four was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, to the union of John McGarvey and Sarah Ann Thomson-McGarvey. His father John McGarvey died when J. W. was four years old and after a few years his mother married Gurdon Flower Saltonstall, a doctor and hemp farmer. McGarvey attended Bethany College from 1847 to 1850 where he was taught by Alexander Campbell, W. K. Pendleton, and Robert Richardson. J. W. McGarvey was baptized by W. K. Pendleton [a Church of Christ/Christian Church Minister] in 1848.<sup>16</sup>

McGarvey wore a beard all of his adult life and in later years he was rarely seen without a long ear trumpet in his hand because he was very deaf. J. W. McGarvey was a man of deep convictions who believed the Bible most implicitly and could not tolerate men who cast a reproach upon it or rejected any part of it. His enemies referred to him as a "legalist" and a "conservative." If and when he noted a man forsaking the scriptures, McGarvey would attack with a relentless barrage of criticism often becoming very bitter. Yet, personally he felt no bitterness.

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<sup>14</sup>Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 1. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company.

<sup>15</sup>H. Leo Boles, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1932.

<sup>16</sup>Anthony L. Dunnavant, "McGarvey, John William." *American National Biography*, Vol. 15, 1999. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

As a speaker and writer, McGarvey's strongest point was his clearness of expression. There was no ambiguity or confusion in his ideas to be found in his writings. He used simple language and expressed himself with the fewest words possible. His style was dogmatic and after expressing his opinion he seldom ever changed. He had outstanding recollection and committed much of the Old and New Testaments to memory.

J. W. McGarvey was a profound student of the Bible. Many think he was the greatest biblical scholar of his day. He was the author of the following books: *Commentary on Acts of Apostles; Lands of the Bible; Commentary on Matthew and Mark; Jesus and Jonah; Evidences of Christianity; The Authorship of Deuteronomy; The Text and the Canon of the New Testament;* along with *Biblical Criticism*.

He was one of the editors of the *Apostolic Times* for seven years and conducted a department in the *Christian Standard* on "Biblical Criticism" for more than ten years. He published two tracts, one condemning the use of instruments of music in the worship and the other defending the Missionary Society. He condemned severely the use of instruments of music in the worship as sinful. In commenting on Colossians 3:16, he said: "If any man who is a preacher believes that the apostle teaches the use of instrumental music in the Church by enjoining the singing of songs, he is one of those smatterers in Greek who can believe anything that he wishes to believe. When the wish is father to the thought, correct exegesis is like water on a duck's back."<sup>17</sup>

His life was given to a defense of the Bible against the so-called "higher critics." Every phase of criticism against the Bible was met by J. W. McGarvey. He presented unanswerable arguments in favor of the inspiration and credibility of the Bible. No one could expose the shallow sophistry of Bible critics better than J. W. McGarvey. On Friday, October 6, 1911, at nearly eighty-three years old, McGarvey died in Lexington, Kentucky. His body was taken to the Central Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky, for the funeral service.

### **Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874)**

Tolbert Fanning was born in what later became known as Canton County, Tennessee. He eventually arose to be one of the distinguished leaders of Restoration Movement in North America. It was said by Earl Irvin West, "Unquestionably, the most influential preacher in the Southland before the War between the States was Tolbert Fanning. There were other great men of course... but for lasting influence Tolbert Fanning towers above them all."<sup>18</sup> Fanning received his initial religious training from his mother, a member of the Baptist Church who was considered as an intelligent woman. Since his teaching came from Baptists, Fanning at first accepted the doctrine that a person cannot do anything to secure their personal salvation. In fact, he was taught that he could not even understand the Bible without a special revelation from the Holy Spirit.

When he was sixteen years old, he began to give attention to two preachers, who claimed to be "Christians only," E. D. Moore and E. J. Matthews. These men encouraged him to read the New

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<sup>17</sup>J. W. McGarvey, *Short Essays in Biblical Criticism*. Cincinnati, OH: The Standard Publishing Company, November 30, 1895.

<sup>18</sup>Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*. Vol. 1. Carmel, IN: Religious Book Service.

Testament and find for himself the will of the Lord. As he did so, his understanding of the plan of salvation took the place of his gloomy doubts. Accordingly, he was baptized in response to a sermon preached by James E. Matthews at Cypress, Alabama, seven miles North of Florence, Alabama, around October 1, 1827.<sup>19</sup> Another account states that Fanning was actually baptized by James E. Matthews, but Benjamin Franklin Hall did the preaching.

Tolbert Fanning was not only a preacher; he was also a capable, successful and accomplished writer. He began the publication of the *Christian Review* in 1844; however, the name was later changed to *Christian Magazine*. Following this, he became senior editor of the *Gospel Advocate*.

His first article in the *Christian Review* was entitled, “Our Position in Reference to the Different Religious Denominations.” In this article he said among other things: “While we have the Bible, we can see no authority or plausible reason for the existence of any Church not designated and portrayed in the New Testament, and consequently we consider ourselves called of heaven to state our reasons in a friendly and courteous manner for such a conclusion...”

After ceasing to be an editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, in 1872 he began publishing a monthly journal known as *The Religious Historian*. In this publication he discussed many phases of Church government. His writings were always clear and sound.

Fanning opposed everything for which he could not find authority in the Book of God. He had no confidence in human plans and human organizations for doing the work of the Lord’s Church. He vehemently opposed denominationalism and the Missionary Society. No one was able to meet his arguments and all were afraid of his powerful, logical, and scriptural opposition to such things. He died on May 3, 1874. Had he lived till the tenth of the month, he would have been sixty-four years of age.

### **David Lipscomb (1831-1917)**

David Lipscomb was a Minister, editor, and one of the leaders in the Restoration Movement in North America. He was born in Franklin County, Tennessee, to Granville Lipscomb and his second wife Ann E. Lipscomb who were both from Louisa County, Virginia. Granville had previously been married in Spotsylvania, Virginia, to Ellen Guerner. David Lipscomb’s father initially belonged to the Primitive Baptist Church and served as a deacon in that Church. He was excluded from the Baptist Church because he advocated the New Testament teaching of undenominational Christianity and opposed all denominations in religion.

Educated at Franklin College in Nashville, Tennessee, he matriculated between 1846 and 1849. Tolbert Fanning baptized Lipscomb in a watering trough in 1845 while he was a student at the college. Lipscomb spent the remainder of his life within the Disciples of Christ and the seceding Churches of Christ. He married Margaret Zellner of Maury County in 1862; they had one son named Zellner, who died at the age of nine months from dehydration while teething.

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<sup>19</sup>*Three Biographical Sketches of Tolbert Fanning. Living Pulpit of the Christian Church.* W. T. Moore, ed. Cincinnati, OH: R. W. Carroll & Company Publishers, 1871.



On January 1, 1866, he began his work as editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, and continued his work as editor for a little more than fifty years. He had with him the first year Tolbert Fanning who remained as an editor until 1868. In 1891 with the help of James A. Harding, Lipscomb founded the Nashville Bible School, later David Lipscomb College (now known as Lipscomb University). Lipscomb never became president of either school but served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for both institutions.<sup>20</sup>

David Lipscomb was a clear and forceful writer. His pen was powerful and vigorous in contending for “the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.” During Lipscomb's career as editor of the *Gospel Advocate* the ongoing questions involving Missionary Societies and the use of instrumental music in worship were discussed fully. Lipscomb took a firm stand against the organization of human societies for the preaching of the gospel and he ardently contended for New Testament worship without the use of instrumental music. Perhaps he did more to keep the Churches in the South loyal and faithful to the New Testament order of work and worship than any other man.

He had deep convictions and profound faith in God. He studied the Word of God daily and was loyal to it. In addition to his editorial writings, Lipscomb was the author of the following books: *Civil Government—Its Origin, Mission, and Destiny*; and *Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*. He left in manuscript form *Commentary on the New Testament*. Some of his writings have been put in book form. These books are: *Salvation from Sin*; *Queries and Answers*; and *Questions Answered*. David Lipscomb died on November 11, 1917, at the age of eighty-six years old.

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<sup>20</sup>Robert E. Hooper, *David Lipscomb*. Nashville, TN: Tennessee Historical Society, 2017.

## The “Big Four” of Early European Restorationists

### PRÉCIS SECTION III

#### Introduction:

In this section discussion will be focused upon Barton Warren Stone, Thomas Campbell, his son Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott. These men are typically referred to by historians of the Restoration Movement in North America as “The Big Four.” Using a copious amount of quotes and from an outsider’s perspective, Richard Tristano connects the “Big Four” to earlier reformers in his work entitled *Origins of the Restoration Movement* within the early North American context.<sup>1</sup>

#### Barton Warren Stone (1772-1844)

Barton Stone was born to the parents of John Stone and Mary Warren Stone near Port Tobacco, Maryland. His mother was a member of the Church of England and Barton was baptized/christened by a priest named Thomas Thornton.<sup>2</sup> Barton entered the Caldwell Log College, in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1790.<sup>3</sup> While there, Stone heard James McGready (a Presbyterian Minister) speak.<sup>4</sup> A few years later, he was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister.<sup>5</sup> Yet, after researching the Calvinist doctrines of election, total depravity, unconditional election, and predestination, Stone began to question these teachings and also the doctrine of the Trinity.

Stone wrote, “I stumbled at the doctrine of the Trinity as taught in the Westminster Confession. I labored to believe it, but could not consciously subscribe to it.”<sup>6</sup> A great revival broke out in his region of Kentucky and Stone eventually traveled there in 1801 to witness and participate with Methodists and Baptists. He was greatly moved by the emotional fervor of the participants and what he interpreted as a free will response to the gospel. In August of 1801, he held what was called the “Cane Ridge Meeting” which claimed thousands of conversions. Furthermore, in 1801 Stone married Elizabeth Campbell and by her he had five children. In the winter of 1809 his only son, Barton Warren Stone, Jr., died; and during the following spring on May 30th his wife Eliza Stone passed away. In 1811 he married her cousin, Celia Wilson Bowen and soon afterwards settled in Lexington, Kentucky. They were the parents of six children.

Stone did not intend to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church. He thought that the whole Presbyterian Church would see that it was an unscriptural organization and that all would unite with him on the New Testament. In this he was disappointed. He soon realized that he could not remain in the Presbyterian Church and at the same time advocate the principles which he then believed. He had a higher regard for the truths of the New Testament Scripture than he had for the Presbyterian Church; so he left the Presbyterian denomination.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Tristano, *Origins of the Restoration Movement*. Cincinnati, OH: Glenmary Research Center, 1988.

<sup>2</sup>Adron Doran, *Restoring New Testament Christianity: Featuring Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and Hall L. Calhoun*. Nashville, TN: 21st Century Christian Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>3</sup>Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: The Story of the American Restoration Movement*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2002.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>Foster, Dunnavant, Blowers, and Williams, eds. *Grand Rapids, MI: Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 2004.

Stone met Alexander Campbell for the first time at Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1824 and they soon became friends. Each was in full sympathy with the other. They had so much in common and so little differences that the “Christians” led by Stone and the “Disciples of Christ” led by Campbell began to converge. Prior to this, both Movements were independent of each other, if not wholly ignorant of each other even though they seemed to be running parallel. At this time Campbell was publishing the *Christian Baptist* and Stone began publishing the *Christian Messenger* in 1826. These publications helped to bring together the two Movements.

As pointed out earlier in this précis, when the Stone/Campbell Movement merged together on New Year’s Day, January 1, 1832, at the High Street Meeting House in Lexington, Kentucky, in the absence of Alexander Campbell, it was “Raccoon” John Smith who extended “The Right Hand of Fellowship” to Barton W. Stone representing Campbell’s Disciples of Christ for the purpose of uniting these two Movements into a permanent union. Barton Warren Stone died at Hannibal, Missouri, in November 1844 and he was buried at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Beyond the handshake which ensued between the “Stoneites” and “Campbellites” there is no “accurate record” in our research findings which affirms Barton W. Stone having been baptized [immersed] according to New Testament doctrine.

### **Thomas Campbell (1763-1854)**

Thomas Campbell was born in the County of Down, of Northern Ireland, and raised as an Anglican.<sup>7</sup> Later he became ordained a Minister in the Presbyterian Church after graduating from the University of Glasgow in 1786.<sup>8</sup> Following his matriculation at the University of Glasgow, he entered the Divinity School at Whitburn for theological training. After completing his training at the Divinity School, Campbell devoted himself to teaching and preaching for several years. He was married in June 1787 to Jane Corneige. His first son, Alexander Campbell was born while Thomas Campbell was teaching and preaching in Armagh County, not far from the town of Newry.

When his son Alexander was seventeen years old, they both opened a school of their own near Rich Hill. After several years of hard work as teacher and at the same time discharging the duties of a Presbyterian Minister, his health became impaired. Campbell left Ireland for North America in April 1807 at the advice of his physician.<sup>9</sup> When Thomas Campbell came to North America he left his family in Ireland. Alexander then nineteen years old, operated the school at Rich Hill until the end of the term. He was further instructed to bring his mother and the six younger children to North America when his father gave the word. The word came when Thomas Campbell had been in North America about fifteen months.

Upon arriving in North America, disagreements arose between Thomas and other Presbyterians over several points relating to Calvinist doctrine. In 1809 Campbell published a treatise entitled:

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<sup>7</sup>D. G. Reid, R. D. Linder, B. L. Shelly, & H. S. Stout, *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

*The Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington*, in Washington County, Pennsylvania. This document stated his ideas about how the Christian faith should be practised.<sup>10</sup> This marked the beginning of what has come to be known as “The Restoration Movement” in North America. On May 4, 1811, the *Christian Association* reorganized itself as an autonomously governed Church. With the building it constructed at Brush Run, Pennsylvania, it thus became known as Brush Run Church.<sup>11</sup>

In 1815 the Brush Run Church united with “The Redstone Baptist Association.” It was not in full accord with Baptist doctrine, but the Brush Run Church was duly accepted into its fellowship. It continued as a member of “The Redstone Baptist Association” until 1824. Within “The Redstone Baptist Association” some of the Baptist leaders eventually became antagonistic and very hostile when Alexander Campbell began to publish his journal entitled *The Christian Baptist* in 1823. Anticipating an ongoing conflict, the Campbells subsequently moved their membership to the “Mahoning Baptist Association” in 1824.<sup>12</sup>

Although Thomas Campbell is historically overshadowed by his son, Alexander, in regard to the “Restoration Movement” in North America, his son Alexander never failed to seek his father's advice and counsel. While Thomas Campbell was not the greatest influential factor concerning the “Restoration Movement,” he was a very potent factor in it. Thomas Campbell along with the entire Campbell family which included Thomas and Jane Campbell, their son Alexander and his wife Margaret Campbell, Dorothea Campbell, Alexander's sister, and Mr. & Mrs. James Hanen were baptized at Buffalo Creek in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in 1812 by Matthias Luce a local Baptist preacher.

Thomas Campbell continued preaching regularly until he was eighty-three years of age. His last sermon was preached in his eighty-ninth year just a few weeks before his death. His life came to an end peacefully on January 4, 1854, at Bethany, Virginia, now Bethany, West Virginia.

### **Alexander Campbell (1788-1866)**

Alexander Campbell an Ulster Scots immigrant was born in the parish of Broughshane, County Antrim, Ireland.<sup>13</sup> His father, Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian preacher was of Scots descent and his mother Jane Corneigle Campbell was of French Scots descent. Young Alexander was very fond of reading and he read with interest the best books that he could find. During the years 1808-1809 Alexander attended the University of Glasgow. It was at the University of Glasgow where he began to prepare himself for preaching. He was converted early in life and joined the Presbyterian Church.

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<sup>10</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>11</sup>Lester G. McAlister & William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1975.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*

In 1809 Alexander immigrated to North America with his mother and siblings from Scotland to join his father Thomas, who had immigrated there in 1807.<sup>14</sup> Upon arriving in New York City, the family then traveled overland to Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup> They continued to Western Pennsylvania where Thomas Campbell was serving as a Minister in Washington County on the frontier. Alexander was ordained by his father's Brush Run Church on January 1, 1812.<sup>16</sup>

During the summer of 1812 as it has been previously mentioned, the entire Campbell family including Thomas and Jane Campbell, their son Alexander and his wife Margaret Campbell, Dorothea Campbell, Alexander's sister, and Mr. & Mrs. James Hanen were all baptized at Buffalo Creek in Washington County, Pennsylvania, by Matthias Luce a local Baptist preacher.

The year before on March 12, 1811, Alexander Campbell had married Margaret.<sup>17:18</sup> Her father John Brown owned a significant amount of land in Bethany, Virginia, (now in West Virginia).<sup>19</sup> The couple resided in what is now known as the "Alexander Campbell Mansion" near Bethany, and had eight children. Their first child, a daughter, was born on March 13, 1812.<sup>20</sup> After the death of Margaret Campbell in 1827, Alexander Campbell married again the following year to Selina Huntington Bakewell on July 31, 1828; they had six children.<sup>21</sup>

For seven years Alexander Campbell published *The Christian Baptist*. The first issue of this paper was published on August 3, 1823 and the last issue was published in 1830. In the *Christian Baptist* much to the chagrin of several Baptist leaders, Campbell attempted to correct many religious and denominational errors that were being practiced. Without experiencing any success in his efforts, he disengaged himself from all ecclesiastical bodies and called upon those who would worship God to do so according to the New Testament Scripture.

It is contrary to the facts of both sacred and secular history to state that Alexander Campbell founded the New Testament Church of Christ or any other Church. Jesus Christ who is the only begotten Son of God is the founder and builder of the New Testament Church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18).

Along with his many debates and writings, Alexander Campbell established Bethany College in 1840. Alexander Campbell died at the age of 77 on March 4, 1866 at Bethany, West Virginia.<sup>22</sup> His widow Selina Huntington Bakewell died more than three decades later on 28 June 1897.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Adron Doran, *Restoring New Testament Christianity*. Nashville, TN: 21st Century Christian Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>19</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>20</sup>Adron Doran, *Restoring New Testament Christianity*. Nashville, TN: 21st Century Christian Publishing Company, 1997.

<sup>21</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>22</sup>George Clement Boase, "Campbell, Alexander (1788-1866)" in Stephen, Leslie (ed.) *Dictionary of National Biography*. London, ENG: Smith, Elder & Company, 1886.

<sup>23</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnavant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

**Walter Scott (1796-1861)**

Walter Scott was an itinerant preacher who helped stabilize the Restoration Movement in North America that was led by Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Scott was born to John and Mary Innes Scott in the town of Moffatt, Scotland.<sup>24</sup> There were ten children in his family, five sons and five daughters. Walter was the fourth son and the sixth child. His father was a music teacher of considerable culture and agreeable manners. Both of his parents were members of the Presbyterian Church.

His father died very suddenly and his mother, who was of a deeply sensitive nature, also died immediately upon hearing of the death of her husband. They were both buried at the same time in the same grave. It was the wish of his parents that their son, Walter, devote himself to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church and it was the ambition of Walter to fulfill the wishes of his parents. He spent six years at the University of Edinburgh, leaving in 1818.<sup>25</sup> The same year he went to New York City at the invitation of his maternal uncle, where he taught languages at a school on Long Island.<sup>26</sup> Walter Scott was baptized in 1819 by George Forrester, an itinerant Haldanes Scottish Baptist preacher in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Scott met Alexander Campbell in Pittsburgh in 1821 and immediately became attached to him. He admired his brilliant intellectuality and eloquence of speech. These two, Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott became firm friends and found much in common. It has been truthfully said that they were nearly equal in genius, eloquence, talent, learning, energy, and devotion. It is difficult to think of the work of Alexander Campbell without associating it with Walter Scott.

In 1823 when Alexander Campbell was preparing to publish his paper, he originally intended to call it *The Christian*, but Walter Scott suggested calling it *The Christian Baptist*. Then in 1830 when Campbell was preparing to publish another paper, he thought of calling it *The Millennial Herald* and Scott suggested calling it the *Millennial Harbinger*. This shows how close Campbell and Scott were in their work and the respectful influence that Campbell had for Scott.

Scott married Sarah Whitsett in 1823 and they moved to Steubenville, Ohio, in 1826.<sup>27</sup> He began working with the Campbells in August of that year.<sup>28</sup> Following the death of Sarah Whitsett in 1849 he married Nattie B. Allen who was beautiful, young, and affectionate. When informed that she might outlive him she said: "I would rather be Walter Scott's widow than the wife of any other man."<sup>29</sup> She died in 1854. Finally, he married Eliza Sandidge, a rich widow who was intolerant and often drove him from the house. This was an unfortunate marriage.

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<sup>24</sup>Douglas Allen Foster & Anthony Dunnivant, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>John T. Brown, *Churches of Christ*, circa 1904.

Walter Scott was instrumental in leading many individuals out of denominationalism and teaching them his convictions about New Testament doctrine. From 1850 to 1852 he served as the first full-time Minister of the Mayslick Christian Church. He was a learned man and perhaps his greatest work was publishing the *Messiahship* or the *Great Demonstration*, written in 1859 on Christian principles. The latter part of his life was spent at Mayslick, Kentucky, where he died on April 23, 1861, at sixty-five years old during the first year of the Civil War.

Alexander Campbell wrote of him after his death: “No death in my horizon, out of my own family, came more unexpectedly or more ungratefully to my ears than this of our much-beloved and highly appreciated brother, Walter Scott. I knew him well. I knew him long. I loved him much.”

### **Conclusion of Précis One and Two Regarding the Early European Restorationists**

New Testament Churches of Christ trace their historical roots and origin back to the first century Church of Christ identified in the New Testament which began on the first Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ (Acts chapter 2).

Although the Restoration Movement in North America underscores the history of men such as James O’Kelley, Elias Smith, Abner Jones, “Raccoon” John Smith, Isaac Errett, Moses E. Lard, Tolbert Fanning, J. W. McGarvey, David Lipscomb, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton Warren Stone, Walter Scott, and many others not mentioned in this précis overview, these men are NOT the “founding fathers” of the New Testament Church of Christ.

Each of the above men “died” and they are “still dead!” Yet, the “founder” of the New Testament Church of Christ is who Zechariah prophesied about when he said: “Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:12, 13).

The “founder” of the New Testament Church of Christ is who the Hebrew writer declared to be “...the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and He is now sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

The “founder” of the New Testament Church of Christ said of Himself: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore...” (Revelation 1:18).

## The “Big Four” of African American Early Restorationists

### PRÉCIS SECTION IV

#### Introduction:

In this section discussion will be focused upon George Philip (G. P.) Bowser who is regarded as the “Father of Christian Education” among African American members of the Church of Christ; Marshall Keeble, Samuel R. Cassius, Richard Nathaniel (R. N.) Hogan, and “Special Mention” will be given to the “Alexander Campbell of African American descent.”

Let it be understood that G. P. Bowser is not only ascribed as being the “Father of Christian Education” among African Americans in the New Testament Church of Christ, he was also the principal founder of Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas, that was established in 1948 and is recognized today as a “Historically Black College” (HBCU) in the United States.

In addition, G. P. Bowser was founder of *The Christian Echo* which served as the literary voice for African American members of the Church of Christ, along with being the primary consulting founder of the Churches of Christ “Historical” National Lectureship which began in 1945.

#### George Philip [G. P.] Bowser (1874-1950)

G. P. Bowser was born on February 17, 1874, in Maury County, Tennessee. He was the son of Thomas and Charity Bowser and grandson of Frank Sowell a widely respected gospel preacher of the Maury County community. It was Frank Sowell who solemnized the marriage vows between Nathan George, the great-grandfather of Levi Kennedy, Jr., and his second wife Annie Wayneright on January 1, 1891. When Bowser was three years old his family moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he received his formal education in the Methodist tradition. He joined the Methodist Church at the age of fifteen and was licensed to exhort or make talks at the age of eighteen.

Bowser studied at Walden University mastering five different languages: Greek, Hebrew, French, German, and Latin. He once stated that upon careful examination of the scriptures, he realized that he was not a Christian. In the process of time he met and studied with Samuel Davis, who was another pioneer preacher and former slave of the Nashville area. Davis enlightened him further concerning New Testament doctrine and baptized Bowser into the body of Christ in the year 1896.

G. P. Bowser married Francis (Fannie) Rebecca Billups in November of 1896. Seven girls and one boy were born to this union; one of whom was Thelma Holt, mother of G. P. Holt. Although he was already a great preacher whose literary and language skills exceeded his contemporaries, Bowser turned his attention towards two great needs among African American members of the Church of Christ: 1) a Christian journal and 2) a school for African American Christians. With the knowledge and skills he had previously acquired as a printer, at twenty-eight years of age Bowser established *The Christian Echo* in 1902, of which he faithfully served as editor and publisher. *The Christian Echo* at one time held the unique distinction of being the first widely circulated religious periodical published among African American churches of Christ.



Only a few Blacks at the turn of the century gave serious attention to attending school with the whites, but as G. P. Bowser pointed out, Blacks looked with awe on white Christian schools and were ashamed to realize that nothing had been done for them. In October 1906, a meeting was called in Nashville to consider the issue. It was then decided to begin a school at the Jackson Street Church of Christ. This school was to become known as the “Nashville Normal, Industrial and Orphan School.” As events developed, the school opened January 8, 1907, with seventeen students. While using the Bible as a textbook, the school sought to meet all the requirements of a “Normal” institution. By mid-October 1909, the Jackson Street school was moved to Silver Point, Tennessee, seventy-five miles east of Nashville on the Tennessee Central Railroad.

Bowser later said, “Beginning with nothing save determination, we bargained for about ten acres of ground,” which they obtained for \$250.00 and on this land they erected a two-story frame building. G. P. Bowser and Miss P. H. Womack, another daughter of Sam W. Womack, were the teachers. Bowser also served as the school’s president. From the nine students who enrolled the first term at the Silver Point Christian Institute, the school grew to sixty-three by 1915, and reported its most prosperous year as 1913. Bowser gave himself unselfishly to the institution until the commencement exercises April 11, 1918, when he resigned as president; much to the dismay and surprise of many friends.

By the year 1920 according to many, the school was in a serious financial dilemma and had no choice but to close. The Bowsers later relocated to Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he continued his evangelistic work and publishing of *The Christian Echo*. In the year 1938, Bowser opened the Bowser Christian Institute, forerunner of Southwestern Christian College which is now located in Terrell, Texas. The students earned their board by working in the print shop where the *Echo* was produced as a bi-monthly journal. The subscription rate was \$1.00 per year or \$.50 for six months. The co-editors were R. N. Hogan and G. P. Holt. The staff writers were Levi Kennedy, Jr., J. S. Winston, G. E. Steward, Robert F. Nunley, T. H. Busby, Annie C. Tuggle, and E. D. Phillips.

Among the students who attended the Bowser Christian Institute were G. P. Holt, a grandson of Bowser, Preston Grey, L. H. Alexander, James H. Stewart, Jr., Samuel Melton, H. E. Mitchell, and Lemmie Cooper. Also associated with the Bowser Christian Institute were four men who became nationally renowned preachers in the African American Church of Christ. The names of these men were R. N. Hogan, Levi Kennedy, Jr., John Steve Winston, and George Edmond Steward.

After the closing of the Fort Smith school, Bowser moved to Detroit, Michigan. It was in Detroit, where his wife Sister Fannie R. Bowser passed away on June 6, 1947. However, Bowser’s dream of establishing a permanent school for Black Christians continued and during the fall of 1948, a school began operating at the Lake Como Church of Christ. This school was named the Southern Bible Institute with J. S. Winston as its first president. Due to its overall success, a search was made for larger facilities. The Texas Military School in Terrell, Texas, was then purchased but it could not officially open as Southwestern Christian College until September of 1950.

Although G. P. Bowser never witnessed Southwestern in operation as a Christian College, he was able to visit the campus before his death on March 23, 1950. G. P. Bowser has rightfully been acknowledged as the “Father of Christian Education” among Black Churches of Christ.

**Marshall Keeble (1878-1968)**

Marshall Keeble was born in Rutherford County, Tennessee, and baptized into the body of Christ in the year 1895 under the preaching influence of Preston Taylor. When he was four years of age, his parents Robert and Mittie Keeble moved to Nashville, Tennessee. One of the major influences on the life of young Keeble was Sam W. Womack, a pioneer preacher and teacher who along with G. P. Bowser, Alexander Campbell (the African American Alexander Campbell) and others, laid the foundation for a Christian school among African Americans.

The Womacks were members of the Lea Avenue congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, and next door neighbors to the Keebles. At the age of nineteen, Marshall Keeble was united in wedlock with Minnie Womack a graduate of Fisk University and one of the daughters of S. W., and Sally Womack. To this union three children were born. With the literary training of his Christian wife and the spiritual training of his father-in-law, Marshall Keeble subsequently became one of the greatest preachers of the gospel since the days of the Apostles.

The very first meeting held by Keeble which resulted in a large number of baptisms occurred in Henderson, Tennessee. Sixty-nine precious souls obeyed the gospel of Christ on this occasion. In 1927, during a meeting in Tampa, Florida, he baptized ninety-nine. At Valdosta, Georgia, in both 1929 and 1930, he baptized one hundred-sixty three in the first gospel meeting and one hundred sixty-six in the second. Although Keeble was praised for his simplicity of preaching, he was often criticized for his passivity on racial issues.

One of his secrets for success was his unique ability to obtain financial support from the white brethren. Many have often compared his personal ideology to that of Booker T. Washington and the ideology of G. P. Bowser to that of W. E. B. DuBois, regarding their diverse philosophies towards the educating African Americans. Keeble once acknowledged that Booker T. Washington was his idol and frequently employed Washington's strategy to raise funds from many whites for the benefit of Nashville Christian Institute.

On December 11, 1932, Sister Minnie Womack Keeble passed away at the age of fifty-three. After her death Keeble married Laura Catherine Johnson of Corinth, Mississippi, on April 3, 1934. Laura Catherine was the sixth child of ten siblings born to Luke and Susan Johnson on August 6, 1898. At the time she married Marshall, Sister Keeble was employed by a widow who tried to encourage her against getting married. When she decided to marry Marshall Keeble regardless, her employer insisted on buying her wedding outfit. However, when the day of the wedding arrived, Keeble was nowhere to be found.

In a statement later given by Sister Keeble she said, "I didn't know if he decided to come or what." An hour or two after the ceremony was supposed to have begun a friend finally drove him up in a brand new Chevrolet. The car dealer had warned them not to drive over thirty miles per hour until the car was broken in; and that's exactly what they did all the way from Nashville, Tennessee, to Corinth, Mississippi.

In the year 1943 a new chapter opened in the life of Marshall Keeble when he became the first official president of Nashville Christian Institute. Being president of Nashville Christian Institute

elevated Keeble's influence among African American Christians and it also gave the school credibility among Blacks as well as whites. Without Keeble's name and his ability to raise funds for the school, Nashville Christian Institute would not have survived as long as it did. During his NCI days, wherever Keeble went, he always took his "preacher boys" with him to participate in the services that were well attended by both races in an era of rigid segregation. Many preachers in our brotherhood today were once students of Keeble at Nashville Christian Institute.

Although the formal education of Marshall Keeble was limited, he is credited with baptizing more than 45,000 people and establishing over 200 congregations. No other person in the history of the Restoration Movement has been known to accomplish this feat. He knew how to make incisive points by using simple illustrations from everyday life. In a ministry that spanned over fifty years, he often preached three times on Sunday and each night during the week. He made highly successful preaching trips to Nigeria, West Africa, and was involved in numerous debates where he always defended the Word of God. In several of his debates, he was able to baptize his opponent before the debate was over. Because of his convictions, Keeble's life was threatened on various occasions and threats of bodily harm were made against him.

Having become very weak in the last years of his life due to age and diabetes, Keeble would still get up and dress every morning and patiently wait for his assistant Willie Cato to come and pick him up for work. Because of his failing health and new federal legislation which allowed Blacks to attend white institutions of learning, Keeble announced in the March edition of the *Gospel Advocate* that Nashville Christian Institute would permanently close its doors on June 2, 1967.

Finally, one April evening in 1968, the 89 year old Marshall Keeble took a bath, came out and sat down on the couch, nodded his head for the last time and died. Yet, the legacy of Marshall Keeble still lives on in the lives of many whom he touched. The late Robert M. Woods who was one of Keeble's "preaching boys" said: There will not be another like him soon, who was blessed to achieve so much with so very little to work with.

### **Samuel Robert Cassius (1853-1931)**

Samuel Robert Cassius was born in Virginia to the bi-racial parentage of a slave mother named "Jane" and a white physician owner named "James W. F. Macrae." It has been articulated that his father/owner was a cousin of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee and it was General Lee who later purchased Cassius along with his mother when he was seven years of age to keep them from being sold to an outsider.

Because his mother was fundamentally literate, she taught Cassius how to read and write using a *John Comly Speller*. During the Civil War, Cassius and his mother relocated to Washington, D. C., where he enrolled in the first school for Black children in the nation's capital; subsequently becoming the first African American male to finish high school there. In this school, young Samuel encountered a white school teacher named Frances W. Perkins from Connecticut, who inspired his appetite for knowledge, steered him toward the ministry, and encouraged him to teach in his adult years.

While residing in Washington, D. C., Samuel R. Cassius personally met five presidents. They were Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes and James A. Garfield (Church of Christ/Christian Church Minister). He also met Frederick Douglass including a host of other Black and white dignitaries. Cassius was the father of 23 children with two wives in two separate marriages.

In the year 1874, Cassius married Effie Festus-Basil in Washington, D.C., and shortly thereafter the family relocated to Brazil, Indiana, where he toiled as a coal-miner; became a member of the Church of Christ (known as the Stone-Campbell Movement or Restoration Movement) and began his ministry. In 1891, Cassius, driven by a religious impulse as well as a desire for economic advancement, took up residence in the Logan County Iowa Tribal Lands of Oklahoma Territory, where he lived until 1922. It was in Logan County that he worked as a preacher, educator, farmer, entrepreneur, postmaster, and politician.

In a letter written from Tohee, Oklahoma, dated November 20, 1893, Cassius sought contributions for a “house of worship,” stating that “the logs are cut, the land is donated, but it takes money to build the house.” Cassius fathered eleven (11) children with his first wife Effie who died in 1895, and twelve with his second wife, Selina Daisy Flenoid, who he married on May 10, 1897, at the Church near Tohee.

In a document dated March 14, 1898, Cassius again solicited needed funds, but this time for the “Tohee Industrial School.” This vision took shape from his own struggle to obtain an education but finding himself without a trade. Cassius was also highly influenced by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute, where he would later send his own son, Amos Lincoln Cassius (1890-1982). “Two years ago,” Cassius wrote in 1899, “I began this work and I have now completed a good building which is free from debt. But I still need books, maps, black boards, charts, and one or two helpers before I can begin work.” That the school building was “free from debt” was probably a result of the numerous mortgages Cassius used his own land to secure, his continued fundraising, along with the sale of garden seed and other produce from his farm.

Regarding the school, Cassius wrote: “We will teach trades of as many kinds as my means will allow. We will also teach as many branches of practical education as possible. Agriculture will also play an important factor in the support of the school. And best of all, there will be a night-school system for the benefit of grown persons.” During a fundraising tour to St. Louis, Missouri, on August 20, 1900, Cassius wrote: “Three years ago I began this work (the school), feeling that such a work was needed among the thousands of colored people who have settled in Oklahoma. I received \$465.00 with which I built a building that will accommodate about 150 children.”

Not limiting his energies to the Church and school, Cassius was appointed postmaster of Tohee on July 13, 1897, and served until the post office closed on January 31, 1906. Samuel R. Cassius lost his entire personal library in a fire sometime before 1910. Yet, he continued to occupy the land in Tohee with a postal address on Route 2, Meridian, until moving to Guthrie, Oklahoma, in 1917. During this time in Oklahoma, Cassius became known by whites as a “Father of Christianity” among his people as well as being called the “Booker T. Washington” of Oklahoma and traveled throughout both Oklahoma and the United States as “The Colored Evangelist.”

In 1920 Cassius published *The Third Birth of a Nation*, a direct response and denunciation to Thomas Dixon's 1905 racist novel *The Clansman* and D. W. Griffith's 1915 inflammatory movie entitled "Birth of a Nation." It was his hope that his study and experiences would lead to the awakening of a new thought concerning the "race problem" that still troubles our country. Cassius reissued his book in 1925. From 1922 until 1925, Cassius lived and preached temporarily in Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, and California, before settling in 1926 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he died on August 10, 1931. The last line of his obituary notes that "The race has lost a leader, Christianity a friend, and the family a husband and father."

Although the "Tohee Industrial School" is now lost to time, the legacy of Samuel R. Cassius on behalf of education is currently being revisited by many scholars and Churches he helped to build. His school was not only a pioneering work towards education in the Oklahoma Territory for African Americans, but it was the initial spark which led to the establishment in 1897 of "The Colored Agricultural and Normal University" now known as Langston University in Langston, Oklahoma.

### **Alexander Campbell (1858-1930)**

The Alexander Campbell of African American descent was born on November 15, 1858, to the parents of Henry Campbell and Letha Cleveland Campbell in Bedford County, Tennessee. Alexander Campbell could read fluently and had a proficient knowledge of the Bible. His white friends kept him supplied with good reading material such as *The Gospel Advocate* along with other religious journals and pamphlets of sound doctrine. In 1883 he married Mattie Hunter also of Bedford County, Tennessee, and eight children were born to this union.

His eldest son, Robert E. Campbell, once served as a deacon in the Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, and treasurer of the operating fund for Nashville Christian Institute where his mother worked untiringly until her death. Robert E. Campbell also worked for the Fire Department in Nashville for many years receiving the rank of Captain and head of the entire Company 11.

Alexander Campbell was baptized by Marshall Keeble, the uncle of Evangelist Marshall Keeble and subsequently Campbell became a preacher as well. Campbell was of the Billy Sunday type; highly emotional but steadfast and unmovable in the "faith once delivered." At times while preaching he would jump three or four feet in the air, take his Bible, run down the aisle of the Church or tent and even strike some of his well known brethren who understood him. No one ever slept under the sound of his voice. He held his audiences at the highest point of interest at all times.

Campbell went far and near preaching the Word of God often at his own expense. J. T. Daniel who had a flourishing grocery business in Nashville would often fill his baskets with groceries and helped him to carry the gospel to the unsaved. Alexander Campbell did a wonderful work in the Middle Tennessee areas of Maury County and Hickman County, in addition to places such as Centerville, Hampshire, Fort Cooper, Duck River, Center Star, Catheys Creek, and Pleasant Union. His membership was always at the Jackson Street Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee, and he was instrumental in establishing the congregation in Blackton, Arkansas. Alexander died while in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 29, 1930.

**Richard Nathaniel (R. N.) Hogan (1902-1997)**

Richard Nathaniel Hogan was the fourth child of Willie and Emma Cathey Hogan. He was born in Blackton, Monroe County, Arkansas, on November 30, 1902 and named “Nathaniel” in honor of his maternal grandfather Nathan Cathey. After growing up, he later gave himself the name “Richard.” His father died when he was five years old and he went to live with his grandparents Nathan and Frances Cathey. They in turn sent Nathan to live with G. P. Bowser who recognized his keen ability and potential greatness for the ministry. Bowser trained and developed Hogan’s gifts for preaching by having him memorize whole chapters in the Bible.

At the age of either 13 or 14, Hogan preached his first sermon while attending Bowser’s school in Silver Point, Tennessee. His subject was entitled, “What Think Ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?” Before long, he gained the reputation as being “The Boy Preacher” as he traveled with Bowser and was frequently referred to as “The Child Evangelist” and “The Talking Bible.” By the time Hogan was 17, he had already baptized 70 people.

R. N. Hogan married Maggie Bullock of Columbia, Tennessee, on November 28, 1920. Maggie Bullock was a cousin of Annie Mae Bullock, a.k.a. Tina Turner. To this union three daughters and one son were born; namely, Alberta, Harold, Dorothy, and Margaret who died at an early age. The Hogan family lived in Tennessee, Arkansas, Kentucky, Detroit, and Chicago, during their formative years. While in Detroit, Hogan worked as a plumber, factory worker, and foreman of a paint company. After moving to Chicago and worshiping at the old Maypole congregation for a period of time, Hogan conceived the idea of establishing a Church on the South Side of the city. As a result, R. N. Hogan along with Levi Kennedy, Jr., a cousin on the Cathey side of their respective families, they began the first African American Church of Christ on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois, in 1931.

After leaving Chicago, the first full-time ministerial work of R. N. Hogan began in the year 1932 at Muskogee, Oklahoma where he organized a school for preachers. Among the students were Russell H. Moore, H. H. Gray, J. S. Winston, Walter Weathers, P. E. Walker, Claude Caperton, and Jessie Porter. In a six-year period during the 1930s, Hogan started 50 new congregations and baptized more than 1,500 people.

R. N. Hogan and George Pepperdine (founder of Pepperdine University) had much in common. They both came to California in 1938 with a mighty vision. Pepperdine wanted to build a college for the Church of Christ and Hogan wanted to establish congregations all over the state of California. God was with them both in their visions and today we see the visible results of these men who were also good friends in the Lord.

In the year 1937, Hogan conducted a gospel meeting at 110th & Wilmington Streets. The results were 44 baptisms. In 1938, he returned to Los Angeles for a gospel meeting which resulted in another 40 baptisms and the beginning of a new congregation at 48th Place and Compton Avenue. He became the Minister of this congregation which eventually became known as the Figueroa Church of Christ. With the leadership and dynamic preaching of Hogan, the new congregation grew rapidly. While preaching, Hogan quoted the scriptures prolifically and was widely known as “The Talking Bible.”

In the year 1945, the Church moved from Compton Avenue to 4361 McKinley Avenue, a more commodious building. In 1953 when the McKinley Avenue facilities were no longer adequate, the present Figueroa Church building was purchased. In the year 1966, another expansion program was initiated which included a new auditorium seating 1500 along with 15 classrooms.

Under Hogan's leadership, the Figueroa Church of Christ became instrumental in developing several congregations in the area; namely, Myrtle Street in Long Beach; Southside in Los Angeles; Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles; Alondra Avenue in Compton; and Eastside in Los Angeles. R. N. Hogan was also active in fostering other programs, such as the setting up of a Nigerian Foundation for the education of youth in Nigeria, West Africa, the Los Angeles School of Preaching, and unlimited support for Southwestern Christian College in Terrell, Texas.

In 1975 Pepperdine University conferred upon R. N. Hogan an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters and in 1980 the University honored him at the 37th Annual Bible Lectureship by establishing a ministerial scholarship in his name. In 1987 he was given the University's highest recognition the "Life Achievement Award" on the opening night of the 44th Annual Bible Lectureship while celebrating Pepperdine's 50th year. R. N. Hogan served as a member of the Board of Directors for Southwestern Christian College from its inception until his death. Before the death of his mentor G. P. Bowser on March 23, 1950, Hogan made a promise to him that he would keep the *Christian Echo* which Bowser founded in 1902 in circulation. He kept his promise to G. P. Bowser many times at great sacrifice.

For more than fifty years, R. N. Hogan worked tirelessly over the entire brotherhood for the cause of Christ. He along with his wife Maggie blazed a trail of leadership and development for the Lord's Church in California, especially at the Figueroa Church of Christ. Because of his great work on behalf of the Lord's kingdom and the furtherance of Christian education, an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters was conferred upon R. N. Hogan Southwestern Christian College and its Board of Directors. Evangelist extraordinaire Richard Nathaniel Hogan departed this life on February 22, 1997. His wife, Sister Maggie Hogan preceded him in death on September 29, 1996.

## Chattel Slavery and the Restoration Movement

Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963) the renowned sociologist and “Father of Pan-Africanism” wrote in his seminal classic entitled *Souls of Black Folk* “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line”<sup>1</sup>. However, it can be said without fear of successful contradiction that for the Church in North America, “The problem of the eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries is still the problem of the color line.” We have struggled for a long time with racism and white supremacist ideologies in the Church and the Stone/Campbell Movement was neither immune nor exempt from this xenophobic indisposition.

While Barton W. Stone called slavery a sin in his *Christian Messenger* news journal<sup>2</sup> and freed the one slave he inherited from his marriage in 1801 along with a small farm, it is unclear as to whether or not Stone had a low view of the character of African slaves. The complexity of his thoughts however, led him to the conclusion that slaves could not be successfully integrated into American society. Stone’s views on the subject were so strong he once vowed if slaves were freed to live among the general population of America he would quickly move somewhere else to be beyond their reach. This statement prompts many to think Stone’s chief fear was that freed slaves would seek vengeance on their former oppressors.

As it turned out, Stone did not move to another country or move on account of freed slaves at large in society. After some years of being frustrated that the majority of his “Christian” brothers in the South would not free their slaves, and dealing with the backlash of being considered an “abolitionist trouble maker,” he moved to Illinois to escape this tension; in other words, not to escape freed slaves, but to escape intransigent white slave owners.

Stone favored an organized Federal program called the “American Colonization Society” which was designed to free the slaves and return them to a colony in Africa. This idea was favored by Andrew Jackson, James Monroe, and later Abraham Lincoln. Liberia in West Africa was selected as a settlement for freed American slaves. Monroe helped to establish the colony with \$100,000 from funds during the illegal slave trade. Resultantly, the capital city in Liberia, West Africa, was named “Monrovia” in his honor. Monroe himself also possessed a fear of the consequences of “immediate emancipation” and the abolition of slaves in the United States. Although Liberia was useful and beneficial to the United States, it was never a United States possession. Stone used his *Christian Messenger* in 1831 appealing to all “Christians” to give their lives over to the “American Colonizing Society.”<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Campbell on the other hand was even more complex and complicated than Stone. Campbell perpetually assumed a middle ground on slavery elevating “unity” as his guiding force. Alexander Campbell never denounced slavery, always working to find neutral ground that would help promote his Restoration Movement. Yet, in the words of Doug Foster, his “white supremacist

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<sup>1</sup>W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. 1903.

<sup>2</sup>Barton W. Stone, “Slavery is a sin of which all the people of this country are more or less guilty, and ought immediately to repent and reform.” *Christian Messenger* June 9, 1835.

<sup>3</sup>Barton W. Stone, *Christian Messenger* January 5, 1831.



ideology” got the best of him<sup>4</sup> and in 1840 he began to directly attack the premise of Stone, that slavery was a sin. He rejected the view that “holding a person as a slave or in a state of servitude involuntary is always a sin.” This was a ludicrous idea for Campbell and therefore it simply could not be a sin. For Campbell to admit this [slavery] as a sin would put a barrier in the middle of his belief that the United States was a “divinely favored” country<sup>5</sup>.

Campbell was more concerned about the effects of slavery on white people and society than upon the slaves themselves.<sup>6</sup> And he pledged his support for the Fugitive Slave Law that was passed in 1850 which preserved slavery even in freed states. Even though Campbell attempted to assume a moderate position on slavery, a sort of non-position, position whereby he could toe the line politically and appease all by not supporting or condemning slavery, he therefore became “an enemy of truth and virtue.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Alexander Campbell’s Hermeneutic Regarding the Issue of Chattel Slavery**

Campbell did not see the plight of enslaved Africans as a major concern for himself nor the Restoration Movement. He assumed along with virtually all whites, the myth of white supremacy. During the crisis surrounding the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 in a long and detailed argument drawn from biblical examples that he claimed upheld the legitimacy of owning human beings for life, Campbell sarcastically accused abolitionists of creating a biblical text to justify their agenda. He asserted: “All men are born free and equal comes not from Scripture but from Saint Voltaire and baptized by Thomas Jefferson.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, the idea of the essential equality of all people came from infidel sources, not God!

Campbell’s socialization of white supremacy as a justification for slavery and the subordination of people of color cannot be truthfully denied. He came to accept slavery as biblically sanctioned, although economically and socially harmful to white citizens.

That slavery was an institution accepted by God was pointed out by Alexander Campbell on many occasions. He noted: “The idea of master and servant is as old as the Bible and has existed since the days of Cain and Abel. It was said to Cain, being the first born of mankind, that if he did well, ‘he should rule over his brother’ Abel, and unto him his brother would look up. The younger shall serve the elder, is one of the most natural and ancient oracles in the world. It was said by Noah, that Canaan should be a servant to his brethren. From this I only argue, that the idea of servitude is coeval with society, antediluvian and postdiluvian. Two thousand years before the

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<sup>4</sup>Barton W. Stone, Stone became an abolitionist and publicly denounced Christians buying and selling slaves: “Let all Christians, indignantly frown upon the practice of men buying up droves of negroes for marking, and chaining them together, and driving them like brutes, regardless of their tears, which flow at the constant recollection of being torn forever from the loving embraces of parents, or children, or wives, or husbands. Can a Christian do this? In the former days of ignorance and darkness, it is possible-but in this day of light, we must doubt.” *Christian Messenger* February 7, 1833.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* March 1830.

<sup>7</sup>Doug Allen Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell*, (2020).

<sup>8</sup>Robert Oldham Fife, *Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in the Slave Controversy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University 1960.

Christian era, the patriarchs were generally masters, and some of them great masters, over their fellow-men.”<sup>9</sup> Alexander Campbell and his father Thomas Campbell further maintained that there are many passages in the scriptures which “*regulate*” slavery, but none “*prohibiting*” it.

Campbell’s eyes were fixed upon the principle of “unity” at the expense of “truth.” For Campbell, the humanity of Black people was not an essential worth creating division over. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, as denominations split over the question of slavery, Campbell fought to maintain tenuous “unity” at the expense of African Americans; those men, women, and children who were relegated to the balcony at Cane Ridge. A place confirming their societal position, but resembling nothing of what the Bible speaks of regarding their humanity. A people endowed with the “*Imago Dei*” in their very being, but a people whose essence was repudiated because of their skin color. This was Alexander Campbell’s appropriate picture of “unity” over “truth.”

In the 1830s and 1840s “The Second Great Awakening” was burgeoning and in full swing, but then this “Great Awakening” fizzled. As the country continued to divide itself over the slavery issue and ultimately the humanity of African Americans, everyone waited for the Church to speak with a unified voice and answer the question: “What does the Bible say?”<sup>10</sup>

Deeply enmeshed in its own cultural differences, the Church read those differences into Scripture, failing to agree on what the Bible actually said about slavery and Black humanity. According to Mark Noll, because the Church couldn’t figure it out, because the Church couldn’t work out its differences, because the Church couldn’t come to the Bible and say, “Here’s the answer” the country had to go to war.<sup>11</sup>

As people looked to the Church for answers there was much equivocation and much moderation. The truth of Black humanity was sacrificed for a perceived and fleeting “unity.” The question now becomes in this postmodern “emerging” cultural moment, has anything changed? In deference to the nineteenth century issue of chattel slavery, is the truth of God’s Word still being sacrificed on the altar of “ecumenism,” new so-called “worship innovations and methodologies?” One of the bedrock principles of the New Testament Church of Christ is that “Where the scriptures speak, we speak. Where the scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

Contrariwise, this statement has become the greatest crutch for some to lean upon; abdicating biblical precepts while advocating a fraudulent and fallacious notion that “silence gives permission.” The philosophical image of Alexander Campbell and proponents of the Restoration Movement still attempts to “straddle the line” of revealed biblical theology to seek “unity” over “truth.”

As mentioned earlier, Campbell’s adaptive behavior to the aesthetical norms of white supremacy whereby justifying his pro-slavery mentality is obvious and clear. Both quantitative and qualitative historical research data indicates that Alexander Campbell was a slave holder in Brooke, Virginia, who owned between ten to fifteen slaves.

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<sup>9</sup>Robert Oldham Fife, *Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in the Slave Controversy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University 1960.

<sup>10</sup>Mark Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*. (2005).

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

**The New Testament Church of Christ Cannot “Scripturally” Merge With Any Denominational Church Established by Men**

<b>Founder</b>	<b>Denominational Churches</b>	<b>Year of Beginning</b>
Boniface III	Roman Catholic Church	606 C. E.
Martin Luther	Lutheran Church	1521
Henry VIII	Episcopalian Church	1531
John Calvin	Presbyterian Church	1536
John Smyth	Baptist Church	1607
Roger Williams	American Baptist Church	1639
Alexander Mack	Church of the Brethren	1708
John Wesley	Methodist Church	1738
Theophilus Lindsey	Unitarian Church	1774
Joseph Priestly	Unitarian Universalist Church	1796
Benjamin Randall	Freewill Baptist	1780
Jacob Albright	Evangelical Church	1803
William Miller	Seventh Day Adventist	1831
Barton Warren Stone	Christian Church	1832
Alexander Campbell	Disciples of Christ	1832
Joseph Smith, Jr.	Mormons – Latter Day Saints	1830
Andrew J. Davis	Spiritualist Church	1848
Charles T. Russell	Jehovah Witnesses	1872
Helena Blavatsky	Theosophical Society	1875
Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Science	1879
D. S. Warner	Church of God	1880
William Christian	Church of the Living God	1889
A Group of Men	Pentecostal Holiness	1898
A Group of Men	Apostolic Faith Mission	1900
C. B. Jernigan	Independent Holiness	1900
C. H. Mason	Church of God in Christ	1906
Phineas F. Bresee	Church of the Nazarene	1908
A Group of Men	Assembly of God	1914
K. H. Burrus	Church of God Holiness	1914
Dennis Bennett	Neo-Pentecostal – Full Gospel	1960

*“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all”  
(Ephesians 4:4-6 KJV)*

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