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Discipliana Vol-59-Nos-1-4-1999

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DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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D. Duane Cummins

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Lester G. McAllister



Volume 59 • Number 1 • Spring, 1999

Published by	DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)	
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DISCIPLIANA (USPS 995-060) is published quarterly for \$20.00 per year by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society which was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups." Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$30, Regular - \$20, Students - \$10.00, Non-U.S. - \$25. Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

Contributors to *DISCIPLIANA* should submit manuscripts on 3.5 floppy disk in Wordperfect 5.1 or "text" format. Electronic manuscript submission via "text only" formatted e-mail or attached file accepted at dishistsoc@aol.com. Postal mail should be addressed to: *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 Nineteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196.

Phone: (615) 327-1444. Fax: (615) 327-1445. E-mail: dishistsoc@aol.com.
The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Home Page: <http://users.aol.com/dishistsoc>
Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN.

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Indexed by Restoration Serials Index
ISSN 0732-9881

Indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals, the Index to Book Reviews in Religion, Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM, and the ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201-5613. atla@atla.com <http://atla.library.vanderbilt.edu/atla/home.html>

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 - 19th Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196. Please give both old and new addresses and attach a mailing label from an old issue. USA: Please provide nine-digit code (ZIP+4).

—From the Editor's Desk

Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott were all teachers. Hence, it is little wonder that the Stone-Campbell Movement has been founding schools and other educational institutions since its beginnings in the nineteenth century. This issue examines Stone-Campbell contributions to education and contexts in which those contributions have been made.

D. Duane Cummins' "Educational Philosophy of Alexander Campbell" places Campbell's educational philosophy in the context of the history of western education. Cummins begins with Socrates, Plato and Aristotle! Special attention is given to the educational traditions of nineteenth-century America, the particular educational philosophers endorsed by Campbell, and the significant changes in Campbell's thinking and practice that followed his founding of Bethany College. Cummins argues that Campbell brought together various traditions to fashion a collegiate education that "served the intellectual, moral, vocational and religious development of students."

Gerald C. Tiffin's "Disciples Higher Education: 19th Century Roots and 21st Century Concerns," notes the remarkable number and variety of educational institutions that have been fostered by the Stone-Campbell Movement and their changing relation to American culture. Tiffin raises questions regarding the future of Disciples higher education and identifies "distinctives" which he suggests will serve Stone-Campbell schools well in the twenty-first century.

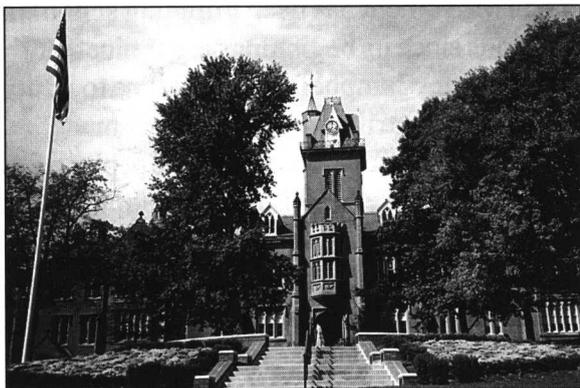
Lester G. McAllister's article is the prologue to "That There May be Ministers: Disciples Ministerial Education in California," a history commissioned by the Disciples Seminary Foundation. McAllister's prologue, directly related to his larger study, also stands on its own as a lively case study of the nineteenth-century issues and concerns that led Stone-Campbell Christians to establish educational institutions.

Though only Tiffin's study formally addresses future concerns, all three of these studies of contributions and contexts are important reading for persons concerned with the present and future calling of Stone-Campbell education.

-D. Newell Williams

1998 Kirkpatrick Lectures:

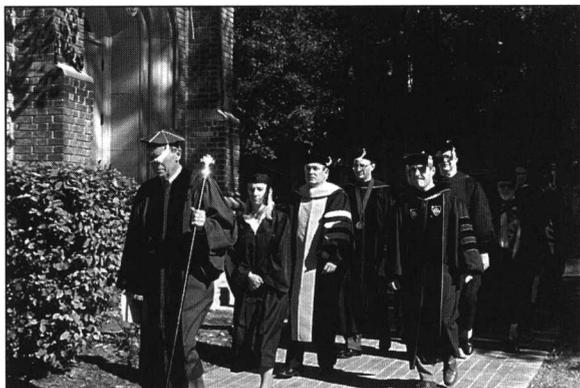
Alexander Campbell's Living Legacy in Education



Above: Bethany College on Oct. 1, 1998. The new Aleece Gresham Garden is in the foreground.

Right: Academic leaders' processional to Commencement Hall.

Below: Governor Cecil Underwood of West Virginia, long time member of the Society, brings greetings to the assembly from the people of West Virginia.

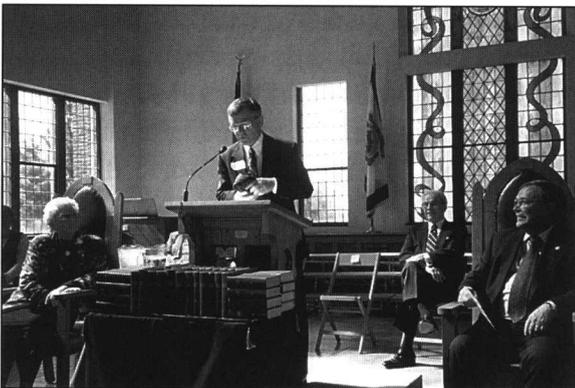
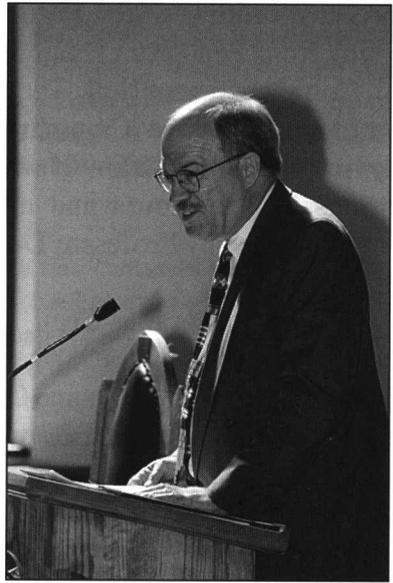




Above: Lecturer, D. Duane Cummins.

Right: Lecturer, Gerald C. Tiffin.

Below: Dr. and Mrs. Cummins look with appreciation as Peter M. Morgan, president of the Historical Society, presents them with a set of the *Millennial Harbinger*, a gift from the Historical Society to mark Dr. Cummins' 10th anniversary as President of Bethany College.



— From the President's Desk

Discipliana, in this edition, reports on the substantial academic material from a glorious day in the fifty-year history of our Historical Society. This page will highlight the ceremonial and ecumenical context in which the lectures recorded in this issue were presented.

The seventh annual Forrest H. Kirkpatrick lectures were held on October 1, 1998 at Bethany College. Educators representing thirty institutions visited historic sites then processed in academic regalia from Pendleton Heights on down in front of Old Main and into Commencement Hall. They were treated to lectures by Bethany President D. Duane Cummins and Northwest Christian College Provost Gerald C. Tiffin. It was a day of dialogue both in informal settings such as tours and at lunch tables and, later, a formal symposium led by Professor Douglas A. Foster of Abilene Christian University.

The Honorable Cecil H. Underwood, Governor of West Virginia, welcomed the 180 guests of the lectures and brought tribute to President D. Duane Cummins and Suzi Cummins from the people of West Virginia. Representatives from the three branches of the Stone-Campbell Movement, from higher education and the Historical Society brought messages of commendation to the Bethany community for their gifts of hospitality, their stewardship of Campbell historic sites and their significant contributions to our movement's scholarship.

Forrest H. Kirkpatrick had died five months prior to these lectures. For a year we had been in discussion about the plans for the day. On the day itself, I thought often of the old scholar and his Named Fund to the Society. I am pleased to dedicate this issue of *Discipliana* to him for making possible this historic day for the Society and for teaching us all ways to let the good we do live after us.

- Peter M. Morgan

Educational Philosophy of Alexander Campbell

by D. Duane Cummins*

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle—the Athenian Trinity—were among the first in western civilization to wrestle with the question of educating the whole person. They were destined, wrote Daniel Boorstin, to be “catalysts, unconscious collaborators” for all who followed. On the final day of his trial (399 b.c.e.) in Athens, Socrates recalled the crisis of his intellectual life. He had been influenced by a reading in which Anaxagoras, a leading physicist of the day, declared “that the mind was the disposer and cause of all,” and Socrates rejoiced to find a teacher of this notion. But the more he pondered this declaration about the mind the more disappointed he became. “It was,” said Socrates, “as if when someone asked why I was in the courtroom they were told that it was because the muscles and bones of my legs brought me there. This was only the *how* and not the *why*. I was afraid that my soul might be blinded altogether if I looked at things only with my eyes or tried to apprehend them by the help of the senses. I ought to be careful that I do not lose the eye of my soul.” Although Socrates believed knowledge was virtue, he ultimately turned inward for wisdom.¹

Outside the walls of Athens, some four centuries before the birth of Christ, Plato (427-347 b.c.e.) founded a school near the grove of Academus. Plato’s Athenian Academy, which educated persons for leadership, was guided by the precept that the central question for civilization was how wisdom and virtue could be cultivated in humankind. Plato thought the core of a human being was the soul, consisting of appetite, will and reason. He believed that in the well-ordered soul reason governed will which in turn governed appetite. He concluded that *shaping the souls* of persons in a total culture through education was the way to bring order to civilization. The long tradition of western philosophy which followed is described by Alfred North Whitehead as “a series of footnotes to Plato.”

Aristotle (384-322 b.c.e.) also founded a school in a grove—the grove of Lyceus. His Lyceum, called “the house of the reader,” celebrated the primacy of intellect, the rule of logic and reason. Here Aristotle developed a library and zoological garden, a scientific combination making it one of the earliest research centers in Western Civilization. Intellectual contemplation was valued by Aristotle as the supreme human act. *Discipline of the mind* was taught in his Lyceum as the way to bring order to civilization.²

*D. Duane Cummins is the President of Bethany College.

Across the ages, leaders of Western thought have toiled endlessly to fuse the Academy and the Lyceum, to reconcile the development of both mind and soul, both reason and imagination in their quest to educate the whole person. With each epoch of human history the emphasis within educational systems has shifted alternately between the refinement of moral character and the refinement of intellect.

Seven centuries after the Greek philosophers founded their schools, Augustine (354-430 c.e.) searched, like Plato, for universal good by turning inward. Unlike Plato, he believed that *will* held primacy over *reason* and that human beings often acted against their reason. He saw in each individual a struggle between spiritual will and worldly will. Augustine, therefore, espoused a system of learning designed to influence the *will* within the soul of humanity.³

Nearly one thousand years later Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 c.e.) advanced the notion that logic and revelation, philosophy and theology, mind and soul must *coexist*. Aquinas believed that while reason and revelation were clearly separate, they did not present a “double truth” or stand in opposition to each other. He saw instead a synthesis of reason and revelation in a single body of knowledge. In one of his most quoted phrases, “Grace does not destroy nature; it perfects her,” we are able to sense his vision of the unity of faith and reason.⁴

But during the 14th century, the mind and the soul withdrew from each other into separate worlds. Intellectual balance, argued the humanist scholars, was just as important as moral coherence in the education of the whole person for effective citizenship. The utilitarian humanist view of education advocated the idea that the *good* person was the *useful* person. And so the debate took on a new complexity—do you modify the behavior of persons in community by developing their mind, by developing their heart or by developing their skills.

The church governed the educational systems from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries; and the state began its long march toward dominance of the educational systems with the Industrial Revolution and the demand for utilitarian education. Neither the humanists nor the church thought it important to educate large numbers of people. It was assumed that most people had no need for intellectual ability beyond useful work skills. Higher learning during those centuries was restricted to the gentry, the gifted and the clergy. But with the advent of democracy, industrialization and urbanization a broader base of educated people was required and the state was called upon to invest heavily in the education of its citizenry. The state believed that education was for the masses and designed its systems to train citizens for civic and social responsibilities and for productive purpose within the

economic order.

The eighteenth century enlightenment ushered in the modern era of scientific dominance and ignited again the ancient tension between reason and revelation. Leaders of Enlightenment thought—Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Kant, Locke, Newton among others—analyzed humanity, nature and institutions with cold reason. Even belief in the existence of God was approached almost solely on rational grounds. Enlightenment thought was characterized by an intense interest in science and nature; a firm belief in the worth and perfectibility of the individual; and the full expectation that human progress would occur through the refinement of individual intellect and reason. Universal reason, it was believed, offered a new foundation of authority on which a consensus of enlightened humanity could be built.⁵

Higher education generally behaves in harmony with the culture. In America, democratic ideals released by the Revolution spread a liberating influence upon education. The separation of church and state unsettled the stable, controlled pattern of colonial “state-church” college development. Colleges had represented the wholeness of the established order. But the separation created two groups of colleges: one group founded by competing religious sects, and the other group founded by the states. The enlightenment, the separation of church and state, the growth of a merchant class and the experience of Revolution combined to give American colleges a more secular tone. Before the Revolution the Colonial college curriculum was generally a fixed body of knowledge composed of classical languages (Greek, Latin and Hebrew), the philosophy of Aristotle, theology, logic and moral nurture. After the Revolution, curriculums, in addition to the basic core of philosophy, theology and the classics, displayed new components of sciences and languages including astronomy, botany, mathematics, economics, natural history, constitutional government and the French and English languages. The educational curriculum was shifting its emphasis toward an understanding of humanity as social and biological beings and away from its traditional emphasis upon the formation of character and morals. It was a time of nation building and the foremost educational priority for the state was the shaping of good citizens. Prevailing opinion favored practical scientific education allied with moral philosophy.⁶

Alexander Campbell and his generation were heirs to four distinct educational traditions; (a) the classical ideal of education designed to produce the scholar-gentleman, (b) the scientific-utilitarian ideal of education designed to master the physical world for progress, (c) the ideal of education as a function of church designed to develop moral, ethical and religious coherence, and (d) the ideal of education as a function of state designed to train citizens for civic and social responsibilities. It is against this backdrop that one finds the measure of Alexander Campbell’s moral and intellectual

framework for higher education in the 19th century.

Campbell gained a reputation as a conservative educational reformer during the 1830's while a member of the Western Literary Institute and College of professional teachers in Cincinnati. For thirty years he crowded the pages of his publications with essays, addresses and lectures on education developed out of his millennial conviction of its humanitarian importance. "Next to Christianity itself," he wrote late in life, "stands education."⁷ An essential part of Alexander Campbell's thought was respect for education – "one of the chief bulwarks," he said, "of religion, morality and representative government." Arthur Schlessinger, Jr. has noted that Campbell's insistence on "perfect freedom of opinion and of the expression of opinion" is the "true philosophy" of a liberal education.

Campbell was a thorough student of the best thought of his time, steeping himself in the vitality of eighteenth century Enlightenment ideas. He drew his concepts of economics from Adam Smith; his doctrine of humanity and trust in reason from the French Enlightenment; his political philosophy from John Locke whose *Letters on Toleration*, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Second Treatise of Government* were given to him by his father Thomas in 1804 at the Richhill Academy. His common sense philosophy was derived from the Scottish Enlightenment—specifically from Thomas Reid, author of *Enquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* and professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow with whom Campbell had studied as a student. He drew his pragmatic notions of science from Sir Isaac Newton and his commitment to intellectual freedom from the writings of John Milton.⁸

Campbell's educational philosophy was developed through the study of the more orthodox sources of his day with little attention to those who were considered the leaders of early 19th century educational reform. He studied carefully the writings of Francis Bacon who asserted that "we cannot hope to succeed if we arrogantly search the sciences in the narrow cells of human understanding and ignore the wider world." He studied too the writings of the Swiss educator De Fellenberg and especially the essays of Thomas Smith Grimke, a Carolina barrister and member of Cincinnati's College of Teachers whom Campbell often quoted as one who best reflected his own views. Most influential of all was John Locke's treatise entitled *Thoughts on Education*.⁹ From these sources Campbell developed what would have been generally considered in his time a conventional or classical view of education

Missing from his sources are the insights of Emerson; the innovative work of Francis Wayland at Brown University; the forward thinking dual track curriculum of President Nott at Union College; the work of President

Henry Tappan in building the University of Michigan; the reforms of Henry Dwight and others. It may be that Campbell did not think their work merited reading or reference but their absence is curious. Missing too is the Yale Report of 1828 considered a landmark in the history of higher education. Although Campbell nearly mirrored its content as well as the Yale curriculum in the founding of Bethany College 12 years later, there is no reference to it in any of his published works. The Yale Report is viewed today as the last defense of a fixed and fading moment in the history of American Education. But it helped the small denominational colleges in the hinterlands justify their point of view.¹⁰

Campbell's philosophy of education, initially designed to preserve old values but later evolving to confront new challenges, contained a central premise that appeared over and over again throughout his publications from 1830 until his death in 1866. That premise was "*Moral culture is the great end of all human education. This is the polar star of our whole theory.*"¹¹ For Campbell the refinement of moral character was the paramount ideal of education. In his earliest comments on the subject he quoted one of his contemporaries, M. M. Carroll who, echoing St. Augustine of old, said that will and understanding were the two essential elements constituting human nature. *Will*, Carroll explained, contains human appetites and feelings; *understanding* contains human ideas, thoughts and reason. It is the *will*, he concluded, upon which education must focus. "Our children," he added, "are treated as though they had nothing but [minds] to cultivate; the best and principal part of [them], the heart, is almost wholly neglected." In his comments of support at the end of the essay, Campbell noted that Carroll had ably sketched his own views. Campbell commented further that the schools of his day were "moving toward reason and a different class of schools was needed."¹²

Throughout the 1830s Campbell saw the development of moral character as the central responsibility of a good school and as the essence of religion as well. By mid-decade he was writing of the dangers of falling under the tyranny of Aristotelian logic and urged breaking away from the 2000 year bondage of his scholastic philosophy. The essay was ponderous but Campbell advised at the end, "My courteous reader, if you are to profit from these essays, you must read them three times before six o'clock in the morning."¹³ His advice must have been correct because my experience of reading them after six o'clock in the morning proved deadly.

Clearly, the predominant feature of Campbell's educational philosophy was the moral formation of character. He was drawn to the conviction that moral excellence was the chief end of education, that the spirit was the radiating center of the whole human system. The moral nature of persons, he argued, is superior to their intellectual and physical nature

because it is in the moral nature of persons that the virtues of benevolence, justice, compassion and generosity are developed and that human excellence is achieved. Without a moral nature, asserted Campbell, human beings are unfit for society. "Oxygen is not more essential to combustion," he wrote, "or respiration to human life than morality to the well-being of society."¹⁴

Campbell complained bitterly that moral development was almost wholly neglected in the schools, that teachers directed their instruction to the head with very little attention to the heart, that greater value was placed on genius than on benevolence and that intellect was admired more than moral worth. He argued that education in moral culture should precede intellectual culture, and that it should be the most important branch of a student's early education. "The present institutions," he argued, "should have appended to their literary and scientific character a moral regimen, which would for the first years be rather their principal than their secondary concern."¹⁵ The theme of moral excellence appeared repeatedly in Campbell's writings and invariably referred to what he believed the most important characteristic of an educated person. "The formation of moral character, the culture of the heart," he wrote in 1840 just prior to founding Bethany College, "is the supreme end of education or rather is education itself. With me education and the formation of moral character are identical expressions."¹⁶

It is instructive to compare his 1830's philosophy and the Yale Report of 1828 with the founding of Bethany College in 1840. The Yale Report prescribed a curriculum composed of ancient languages, ancient history, sciences including chemistry-physics-geology-astronomy-mineralogy, English literature-grammar and logic, natural sciences including botany, mathematics, political economy and the senior capstone of moral philosophy. The Bethany curriculum of 1840 contained ancient languages, ancient history, sciences including chemistry-physics-geology-astronomy-zoology, English literature-grammar and logic, natural sciences including botany, mathematics, political economy and the senior capstone of moral philosophy and sacred history taught by Alexander Campbell himself. This was a traditional concept of curriculum in keeping with the conventional wisdom of the time, with moral culture as its capstone.¹⁷ The Yale Report and Campbell's philosophy were in the humanist and liberal arts tradition, a call to arms by a philosophy on the edge of extinction, a classical course of study quite contrary to the buoyant, optimistic expansiveness of the Jacksonian age. Egalitarian impulses challenged the elitest pretensions of the colleges. An agricultural and commercial world was changing to a new technical and industrial order which undermined the traditional prestige of classical learning. The classics, along with Latin and Greek, did not lend themselves to this new egalitarian age. As is so often the case, college curriculums were subjected to conflicting pressures and became the battleground for resolution of social conflict. It may be helpful to reflect on how Campbell's first

curriculum would have been received in the raw frontier environment of the Trans-Missouri west—something like contemplating the puritans arriving in Dodge City.¹⁸

Campbell soon came to this realization and he further recognized the fact that to maintain an enrollment his view of education had to be modified. Within a year Campbell was pointing out to his readers that Bethany included “an academy of arts and sciences for those who do not take the liberal [arts] course but who desire a scientific education adapted to Agriculture, Commerce or Mechanical professions as well as a normal school for the preparation of teachers,”¹⁹ and by the mid-1840s he had added Charles Loos as adjunct professor of modern languages, providing a dual language elective for students. He came to regard vocational and liberal studies as part of each other but in the sense of public usefulness rather than private gain. In response to social change and market demands, Campbell offered his own creative adjustments.

One adjustment, not nearly so weighty but pleasantly amusing, was noted in the *Millennial Harbinger* in January of 1842: “The first class meets at half-past six in the morning,” he wrote, “To form and establish that most healthful and useful habit of rising early, I chose that early hour for my lectures on sacred history...My residence being just three-fourths of a mile from the college gave me a very invigorating exercise of walking that distance every morning before daylight. [Beginning] in January Professor Stuart will occupy that hour and I will take his hour from eight until nine.”²⁰

During the 1840s his writings on education evolved into a more embracing view which can be described as wholeness of person, the development and training of all human powers—physical, intellectual and moral. His writings began to rely more heavily on John Locke’s concept of the total human being—body, mind and spirit—developed through learning. Like Locke, he wrote of this threefold nature in functional terms: “...it will be universally conceded that the excellence of education will consist of three things—teaching and training man to think, to feel and to act.”²¹ He was clearly steering his course between the sharp light of reason and the warm glow of poetic conviction. Campbell continued to refine his view of educating the wholeness of person and by the end of the decade, he was telling the 1849 graduates, “They are called liberal arts and sciences, not merely because they free the human mind from vulgar prejudices, ignorance, and error which they certainly do; but because they are general in their character and application, and open to us an extensive acquaintance with literature, science, and art; and thus furnish us with the means of extending our acquaintance with nature, society and the Bible.”²² In one of his last writings on education, he elevated the theme of the liberal arts and wholeness of person to a higher level than ever before: “The analysis and synthesis of man and his relations to the past,

the present and the future of his being and well being, is the grand essential theme of all physical, intellectual, moral and religious education. These four words ought to be printed with indelible ink on the most enduring parchment, deeply engraved on pillared marble or [a] table [of] brass.”²³

Biblical studies formed a bedrock continuum in Campbell’s educational philosophy. From his first address to his last essay on education he did not waver one single centimeter from this conviction. He considered the Bible the great moral engine of civilization, the noblest of all classics, a Book that spoke to the conscience, heart and soul of humanity. Convinced that the study of the Bible was essential to a comprehensive literary education and the safeguarding of ethics, Campbell believed that a college without the Bible was “not in accordance with the wants of society, with the genius of human nature, with the interest of the state, with the progress of civilization, with the advancement of the church...or with the happiness of man.”²⁴ “A school without the Bible,” he added, “is like a universe without a center and without a sun.”²⁵ Campbell believed the Bible should be used as a textbook and that it was excluded from most colleges because of sectarian fears. He therefore suggested how it ought to be used.

I do not mean the Bible on the shelf, in the college Library, or locked up in a trunk to ward off specters or diseases or hobgoblins; but to be read, lectured upon, taught in all its facts, events, precepts, laws, ordinances and promises....
[I] do not mean that the bible is to be taught or read theologically as in the schools of divinity...It is to be read and studied historically, and with religious reference. Its whole moral power and its whole spiritual power are concentrated in its facts, precepts and promises; and not in those speculative theories called orthodoxy...These belong to denominations and not to Christians.²⁶

In the founding of his own Bethany College, Campbell took special care to honor the Bible among the classics by including a Department of Sacred History and Biblical Literature as a component of the academic design.²⁷ Bethany was unique among colleges of its day in the way it incorporated the Bible into its curriculum. The cornerstone for this National Historic Landmark building, where we meet today, was placed on May 31, 1858. Campbell noted in his dedicatory address that morning that only one thing was placed in the cornerstone—a copy of the Holy Bible, a monumental symbol of the fact that the Bible was to be the true and proper foundation for this College.²⁸

Campbell regularly feuded with Presbyterians, Baptists and

Methodists about the sectarian nature of their schools and he was determined that Bethany College would be non-sectarian. "Sectarianism with me," wrote Campbell, "is neither religion nor morality."²⁹ It was Campbell's opinion that "A college in our country and society should be free from every sectarian influence and tendency,"³⁰ and that "one of the greatest ...defects in the educational system is that they are religiously sectarian."³¹ Like Thomas Jefferson at the University of Virginia, Campbell inserted in the Bethany Charter the mandate that there would be no teaching of sectarian theology and no Professor of Divinity. Jefferson was engaged in an all-out war with Presbyterians over this issue, a war he eventually lost. Presbyterians were among Campbell's least favorite life-forms and he won his own protracted war against their sectarianism, vigorously defending Bethany against theological intrusion.³² Campbell spoke often of divesting all colleges of their sectarian character. It was an important part of his educational pantheon.

The perfectibility of individuals was also a component of his educational philosophy. Like all moral reformers of his era, Campbell drew force from millennial expectations and believed solidly in the formative nature of human character. "Develop individuals," he wrote, "and you develop society; cultivate the minds and enlarge the power of the citizens, and you...increase the influence of the Republic."³³ He saw the college as an instrument of social development, an indispensable institution in the romantic crusade to regenerate the social order. He believed schools were essential to every community because they provided avenues of economic and social mobility for individuals, thereby reducing crime, ignorance and poverty in the society. His essays and public addresses repeatedly spoke to the purpose of education as the production of "useful, honorable and happy men." He was one of the earliest advocates for a public school system and for a university in every state, funded and managed by the state. "One of the most exhilarating and promising signs of a better era in human destiny," he wrote, "is the increasing interest displayed on education."³⁴

Completing his philosophical framework for education was lifelong learning. Campbell believed learning began in infancy and spanned the whole of a lifetime. "Man is never out of his pupilage," said Campbell.

The best school does little more than present us with the necessary means of acquiring and communicating knowledge. They are always children...who regard a parchment in their pocket...as full proof of scholarship, and themselves as learned...To be learned, and wise, and good and useful members of society, we must always be learning.³⁵

Again and again in his July 4 commencement addresses Campbell

included in his remarks to the graduating class this plea: “Every student that has attained graduation...is merely licensed to become his own teacher and pupil...Let me say kindly and emphatically...that you owe to God, to Society to your Alma Mater and to yourselves to continue to be students.”³⁶

Alexander Campbell developed his educational philosophy in the crucible of Jacksonian Democracy, a time of turbulence and transformation, a time of profound structural change, a time of protest against the prevailing order. He forged his moral and intellectual framework for education amid the ancient tension between intellect and character; amid the tension between Colonial and Jacksonian models of education, amid the tension between the liberal arts tradition and the demand for market skills in an expansive new age and amid denominational tensions between Disciples and Presbyterians. In the evolution of his educational thought Alexander Campbell not only attempted to fuse the Lyceum and the Academy but to demonstrate that faith and reason were not a double truth. He attempted as well to find a compromise among the classical ideal, the scientific-utilitarian ideal, the moral character ideal and the ideal of training for civic and economic participation. What he achieved was a philosophical blend of Christian and enlightenment ideals. He fashioned a collegiate education that served the intellectual, moral, vocational and religious development of students, an education that served the wholeness of person—an education that was forever illuminated by the polar star of moral coherence.³⁷

Postscript

My courteous listeners, if you are to profit from this lecture you must read it three times before six o'clock in the morning. If a question should occur to you at that healthful and invigorating hour, please call Peter Morgan in Nashville, Tennessee.

Notes

- ¹Boorstin, Daniel J., The Seekers, Random House, 1998, pp. 21-32.
- ²Ibid, pp. 37-46.
- ³Durant, Will, The Story of Philosophy, 1926, pp. 7-106.
- ⁴Canton, Norman & Peter, Medieval Thought, 1969, pp. 14-15.
- ⁵Knowles, David, Evolution of Medieval Thought, 1962, pp. 261-262.
- ⁶May, Henry, The Enlightenment in America, 1976, pp. 3-176.
- ⁷Tewksbury, Donald, Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War, 1932, pp. 34-35, 62-64.
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Disciples Higher Education: 19th Century Roots and 21st Century Concerns

by Gerald C. Tiffin*

INTRODUCTION

From the founding of Bethany in 1841 as the first permanent Disciples college, groups affiliated with the Disciples of Christ tradition have founded over 185 institutions of higher learning. Of those 185 institutions, some 75 still exist and operate. As of the Fall of 1997, approximately 60,000 students were enrolled at these 75 institutions from junior colleges through seminaries.¹ From 1836 to 1998, Disciples have founded more than one institution per year. The Disciples tradition of higher education has been more prolific than any other religious tradition within the United States, even including the Baptists; this probably says something about Disciples' sense of autonomy, adventure, nerve and, hopefully, commitment to education. When we think of that tradition, a few introductory observations are in order.

1. We are certainly characterized by variety (if not diversity). We have founded types of colleges from informal junior colleges and church-related two-year preacher training institutes to the highest level of graduate school, with every type of institution in between, including Bible chairs, Bible colleges, women's colleges, Black colleges, Christian liberal arts colleges, vocational colleges, etc. Variety is not entirely defined by the type of institutions we have founded. There has been remarkable variety among/between the three main branches within the boundaries of the Stone-Campbell tradition. While Churches of Christ have founded primarily Christian liberal arts institutions along with a number of informal preacher training institutions sponsored by congregations, Disciples have sponsored a wide variety of institutions but have focused primarily on the liberal arts college and the seminary in the twentieth century. Independent Disciples have primarily sponsored and founded Bible colleges, some of which have evolved into other forms of higher education.
2. Disciples colleges emerged (as with most social institutions) in a particular historical moment of significant cultural change, transformation, and increasing secularization. Those dynamics would significantly impact the development of Disciples higher education, as those trends intensified in later decades into the twentieth century.
3. Yet, our colleges and universities have moved slowly from relative obscurity to the main playing fields of American higher education. Certainly, geographic location, social acceptability, accreditation, and normative approaches to education indicate that the Disciples tradition is

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increasingly assimilated and established within the various segments of American higher education.

OVERVIEW

Nineteenth-century Disciples colleges can be characterized by “random emergence and emerging conflict and experimentation.” Disciples colleges were initiated with regularity before the Civil War, many of them dying by the war’s end. Some sixteen were founded before the Civil War, eleven during the 1860s, and close to one hundred between 1870 and the beginning of World War I. After the Civil War, they were founded at a slower rate and yet with as many failures as before the war. In addition to founding significant numbers of colleges, the Disciples founded some of the earliest coeducational institutions, provided education for women, and developed Bible chairs and educational ventures attached to major state universities. Some also developed into regional and state universities.

Our twentieth-century history can be characterized by “estrangement, assimilation and adaptation.” The estrangement was illustrated in the early conflict at College of the Bible, at Transylvania, where issues of theology, church polity, and what today might even be termed “cultural wars,” resulted in the early public conflict between Disciples and Independent Disciples. Estrangement had appeared as early as the middle of the nineteenth century over missionary societies, and again in the Sand Creek Declaration (1889), forecasting the early twentieth century split between what would eventually be called Churches of Christ and the Disciples. It appeared again at the Pittsburgh Centennial (1909) Celebration of the Declaration and Address as “conservative” and “progressive” Disciples clashed over a range of theological issues. Those issues eventually led to the first permanent institution of higher education founded by Independent Disciples per se, Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary (1924), and the beginning of the North American Christian Convention (1927), which would eventually become a major symbol of the second schism in Disciples history.

Assimilation and adaptation accompanied (in a correlative sense) growing estrangement. As we review the passing decades of the twentieth century, Churches of Christ and Disciples colleges grew, gathered resources and increasingly became part of the mainstream of American higher education.

Issues of assimilation and adaptation also accompanied the emerging Independent Disciples, who founded some 45 colleges from 1924 through the 1960s. At the end of the twentieth century, the strongest and most apparently successful of these independent Disciples colleges are the earliest founded, regionally accredited, and have also generally adapted to many of the canons and norms of American higher education.

NINETEENTH CENTURY ROOTS

1. Even before 1900, Disciples differed over whether a college should focus primarily upon preacher training (the differentiated model) as developed

at College of the Bible, or whether it could serve a broader constituency with a broader curriculum (the undifferentiated model) as seen at Bethany.² There was disagreement over whether education for ministry should occur in separate institutions or as part of multipurpose institutions. These disagreements would recur into the twentieth century in new contexts. At stake was the nature and purpose of Disciples higher education as well as the educational process itself.

2. College and church were deeply connected in the nineteenth century. In fact, for the first fifty years of Disciples higher education, the earliest colleges did not have to choose between a Christian heritage frame of reference and the larger cultural frame of reference. They coincided. The colleges we now sponsor have moved from an assumed position of cultural hegemony in the nineteenth century to a certain kind of minority status, given the numbers we represent and in terms of how most of us fit on the scale of “current” political correctness. This does not contradict the remarkable range of theological/cultural views that exist within the supporting constituencies of Disciples-related colleges. Nevertheless, the relationship between church and college has “widened”—leaving a broad range of church-connectedness within existing Disciples-related colleges.
3. As American higher education, led by emerging secular universities, began to separate itself from the church, Disciples institutions faced new challenges and issues. Would Disciples higher education embrace faith and science together or reject the new science entirely? What role would scripture play in the increasingly sophisticated epistemological landscape of American higher education? How much would our institutions conform to and reflect emerging American middle class industrial culture? The danger of not adapting to and connecting with American culture was to ignore the need to contextualize the gospel lest we would isolate ourselves from the larger culture, and find no one with whom we could speak. The danger of conforming was to give up the task of decontextualizing on the basis of some core value, thus identifying with culture so deeply we would lose our prophetic role. We have experienced both ends of that continuum.
4. Cultural optimism characterized many nineteenth-century colleges, based upon growing agricultural, industrial, and urban developments. Swayed by the progress of Christianity across the continent and around the world, even then an unidentified “civil religion” appeared to be operating. Our colleges enjoyed the cultural reinforcement of the dominant Protestant culture. As the twentieth century dawned, it promised to become the Christian century—and our colleges were poised to take advantage and lead the way.
5. There exists a deep strain within the Stone-Campbell heritage which believes that special revelation and natural revelation complement each other, originating from a common source. That began here at Bethany. That stance has continued in many of our institutions. Others trusted only

special revelation. That was particularly true of some early Independent Disciples colleges. Still, others came to redefine special revelation as contained within an immanent natural revelation. Therefore, conformity to culture became a significant issue by the turn of the century, especially when optimistic post-millennial expectations of the Protestant nation based upon new immigration, new science, and the growth of new religious groups in America ushered in the new century. In that sense, Disciples colleges carried an optimistic view of American culture into the twentieth century. At the same time, a more pessimistic view of culture had begun to characterize the other two component groups of the movement as they began to found higher education institutions.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CONCERNS

The twenty-first century will likely be characterized by “engagement and alliance.” In that context, a number of concerns emerge.

1. The very issue of survival is a concern for the twenty-first century. Survival rates have varied between our three branches of the movement.³ Our total number of colleges continues to decline.
2. Engagement likely is the key word for the twenty-first century. Several words—absorption, diffusion, realignment, and extinction—now develop as concerns for the twenty-first century. Survival itself is at stake for many institutions. Individual institutions are likely to reflect the development/progress/fate of their branches. Disciples have moved toward a normative and adapting stance. Churches of Christ have increasingly mainstreamed but with some definite parochial overtones. Independent Disciples have approached the edges of conventional higher education (regional accreditation, etc.) but linger at marginality, often in order to preserve loyalty and doctrinal orthodoxy.
3. The issue of uniqueness: How unique are Disciples institutions of higher education? How unique should we be? What do we have to say to American higher education? What should be the distinctives of Disciples Christian higher education, both as Christian institutions and as institutions of higher education? Each institution will have to struggle for its soul as pressures from governmental regulation, continuing secularization, and the waning of denominational loyalty takes their toll upon the religious culture of American denominations and colleges themselves.
4. The issue of affiliation will continue to vex. The data are very clear that most Disciples institutions now carry a less-than-50% affiliation of their students and faculty, with many falling below 25%. The highest concentration of affiliation probably lies in Independent Disciples Bible colleges, the lowest affiliation within universities and graduate schools. This can be lamented or viewed as a moment of opportunity for “practicing the plea” as we interact with and link to other Christian traditions.

5. Purpose remains a key, if not the key, concern for the twenty-first century. It is now clear that organizations that survive and flourish are driven by a very specific, well-articulated and commonly held purpose. Any review of purpose and mission statements of our institutions yields some concern regarding purpose. Mission and purpose are seen as key linchpins of all accreditation criteria and must be reviewed constantly by our institutions in order to survive with any distinctiveness. Issue: How does an institution of higher education maintain its heart and soul, or “raison d’être,” its central mission and core and yet relate to the changing culture, avoiding rigidity, fundamentalism, a fortress mentality, or atavism, at the same time avoiding capitulation and the downside of adaptation and assimilation? It seems obvious that unless a targeted institutional mission and purpose is clearly identified, each branch of colleges faces not only key cultural issues but key survival issues as well. Those issues may include: Do our colleges change or die? Are our institutions in the campus business or the educational business? Does curriculum move from content orientation to process orientation or find an appropriate combination? How much can our heritage institutions differ from each other, survive, and still cooperate?
6. The issue of religiosity: How religious are our institutions? How religious should they be? I was assigned a fascinating topic by the American Jewish Committee of Orange County three years ago. More thoughtful members of that group with whom I was acquainted had grown weary of listening to speaker after speaker beat upon the religious right. It was too easy! While I was not identified with the religious right, I was viewed as close enough to offer some perspective. So they invited me to speak on the topic, “What’s Wrong with the Religious Left?” My answer was snappy and likely startling: “The religious left is not very religious and it is not very left.” The same might be said of the religious right. If my thesis is accurate, it points to the ever changing subtleties of the historic definition of religiosity. The nature/issue of religiosity, whether defined in the most conservative fundamental terms or in terms of the great liberal traditions of comparative religious studies, remains a defining characteristic of Christianity. Each institution will need to address this question. While most existing Disciples institutions have found room under the umbrella of Campbell’s thinking and those who followed him, it will be necessary to wrestle continuously with the nature of religious and spiritual life and how that relates to curriculum, faculty qualifications, and faculty roles.
7. The word “parochial” will become a most fascinating word as we enter the twenty-first century. Usually a pejorative word, it has come to be seen as part of “niche theory.” A parochial institution is driven by mission, a particular role, a connection, a specified function to play. While a parochial attitude is not desirable, a parochial role might be. Will we need to remain parochial in order to survive, or will our parochialism kill us? Will we be guilty of “boutiquing” higher education?⁴ Or, to use another phrase, will our institutions be guilty of “home schooling” students?

8. Finally, the nature of the church and of ministry needs revisiting. The early and deep connections to congregations and Christian union have already been noted. As the church has changed, as loss of denominational loyalty has become an increasing reality, and as the nature of ministry changes, both for the professional clergy and those in volunteer ministry, it will become very important to wrestle with how our colleges serve both the church and students. We must address how important the success of congregations and thus the church is to the future of our institutions.

Key questions for the future include the following:

What is unique and distinctive about Disciples higher education? Does anything bind us together beyond each claiming Campbell as educational progenitor? Did Campbell set an agenda or provide a forum? Each institution claims, of course, a derivative power from the sage of Bethany. Who is served by our institutions? Is it the students, society, churches, the mission of Christ, or local communities? Is it acceptable that our colleges and universities reflect the growing ambiguities and dilemmas at the turn of the Millennium?

Disciples institutions live between the tension of accommodation and prophetic vision, between the tension of being everything to everyone, nothing to anyone, or something to someone; between engagement and estrangement; between education as means and education as end; between context and pretext; between parochial and established and in the categories of Richard Niebuhr, between “Christians of culture” and “Christians against culture” and (I’ll add) “Christians above culture.”

Over our 157 years of higher educational history, the nature of societal and cultural change has shifted from a biological-generational base to a social-generational base. We must reconsider the very nature of all processes in historical context. Our world is so different and new we must determine what should be continued and what ought to be left behind, and what should be restored. Given the outline of change already reviewed, we must now ask ourselves whether we operate today in our institutions more out of a sense of atavism and academic conservatism more than mission. To put it another way: Are we allowing rapid change to define our struggle to survive or are we engaging our times to ensure the continuation of the heart of our heritage and unique contribution to American higher education?

Here is what an engaged proactive future will look like: Alliances, mergers, confederations within and outside higher education will yield new resources, strength and variety within and between our institutions. Structures and categories will change as we process information rather than “learn” it. Mastery without application, relevance and consequence will not likely be tolerated.

We need to remain decidedly Christian or will simply fade into the panoply of sameness in American higher education, chasing the latest trends, fads, and techno-tricks. Or, on the other hand, we could become the Luddites

of twenty-first century higher education.

We must break down the walls between the university and the marketplace, yet remain a place of considered contemplation and reflection driven by the undeterred desire to “redeem the time” even as we anticipate eternal time. We might learn from what we know about the Benedictine monastic system of the High Middle Ages. In its ideal operation, words like routine, Rule, tradition, purpose, discipline, engagement, teaching, oath, self-denial, agricultural production, scholastic achievement, and missions constituted a remarkable confluence of activity, energy, and impact.

In that tradition, we must commit to the recovery of the integrity and wholeness of knowledge, reaffirming that (1) this is God’s world, (2) all of it is appropriate for study and research, and (3) ours is the task of helping it reflect, achieve, and fulfill God’s purposes.

We would do well to recall the difference between Career and Calling, recognizing that we each share the generic call to minister for and serve Christ while we differ in the place and position of career. Therefore, general education is so very important, not something to “get out of the way”; majors serve more than just economic function, but a means of contribution and service to church and society; and research should serve mission.

We must recover a world perspective in the sense that God loved the Kosmos. This will take us from the worst of our splendid isolation and parochial marginalism, or conventionality into an engaged world keyed to mission and purpose. Therefore, the “inner” world of spirit and psychology will include the reflection and integrity of careful consideration. The “near” world of the political, the sociological, and technology will be deeply impacted by our institutions; and the “far” world of the geo-political, global village, and mass communication will become the stage for ecclesia and Christian mission.

Our heritage from Campbell includes the key elements needed to thrive in the twenty-first century, based upon focus, clear goals, and an anchor from which we can venture into the world of learning, moving in multiple domains - in the tradition of Augustine who stated, “Love God and do as you please.” Our tradition in Campbell must be updated and reaffirmed in every generation. Here is my understanding of our distinctives which will serve us well, even in the face of serious challenges and opportunities already outlined.

1. A dogged belief in the unity of knowledge, recognizing Scripture as the key to that knowledge. Scripture must be maintained as authoritative enough to anchor all knowledge or we will lose a significant distinctive. Our willingness and ability to link scripture to all learning is foundational to our tradition and essential to our future.
2. Insistence upon the dignity of all humanity, coupled with an optimism about humanity - which leads to service, opportunity, and enterprises

which expect the best of people, whereby the disenfranchised are served and the mighty are challenged. This distinguishes us from many other Christian traditions which theologically presume the worst of humans anticipating some supernatural transformation apart from human participation, which tends to undercut education.

3. An engaged academy, involved in the whole range of human concern, always in touch with the partnership with congregations as God's main means of influencing our world, yet recognizing that contributions in every discipline yield concern, witness, and contribution as testimony to the care and blessing of God.
4. The ability to distinguish between core values and, as we have termed them, unessential beliefs - allowing a basis for spirited dialogue, based upon the belief in the symmetry and sense of our world, available to the rational and reflective mind.
5. The belief that Gospel and education complement and go hand in hand, because the life of the mind and rationality place us in the middle of God's world. That is now challenged by current attacks on rationality from within the academy.

I can find no recognized institution of higher education in this country which bears the name Christian in its official title- outside the Disciples family of colleges. To discover one or two would not mitigate the reality that Disciples higher education has centered upon the generic and normative in Christianity as the basis of faith and education - something very laudable and needed in a world increasingly fractured by single-issue politics and splintered by sectarianism. Surely a "unity and restoration" movement can contribute much to our next century through our colleges and universities.

Notes

¹These data are based upon Fall 1997 reports from agencies related to the three groups and/or official publications: Christian Standard "Christian Colleges, 1997-1998" Feb. 8, 1998, pp. 23-24; The Christian Chronicle Jan. 1998, Vol. 55 No. 1, p. 26; and "1997 Statistical Data on Disciples Colleges" provided by the Disciples Division of Higher Education.

²William Richardson, "Models of Ministerial Preparation Among Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and Churches of Christ" in Discipliana Vol. 54 No. 2, Summer 1994, p. 49.

³Phillip Robinette and Gerald C. Tiffin, "Characteristics of Disciples-Related Colleges" in Discipliana, Summer 1980.

⁴Arthur Levine, "How the Academic Profession is Changing" in Daedalus, Fall 1997, p. 3.

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Dates and Times

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**Prologue to *That There May be Ministers: Disciples
Ministerial Education in California***

by Lester G. McAllister*

Prologue

With the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hildago on February 2, 1848 the Mexican War was ended and California, along with other territories, was ceded to the United States. The annexation of California just in time for the discovery of gold also made possible a rush of easterners and midwesterners to settle the land. Nineteen months later, on September 3, 1849 a gathering of leaders met in Monterey and wrote a constitution which was adopted in a general election in November, 1849. By September, 1850 California had become the 31st state.

With statehood and the gold rush bringing hundreds of new people to California, it was not long until an increasing number of ranchers and settlers, among whom were members of the Stone-Campbell Movement, began to appear. Soon Disciples congregations were organized in several of the newly created towns and communities throughout the state. Peter H. Burnett, a Catholic who earlier had been a Disciple, was elected the first governor. His brother, Glenn D. Burnett, remained a Disciple and became a pioneer preacher in northern California.¹

Within a decade there were annual meetings of the churches, actually encampments, primarily for evangelistic purposes. These meetings, developed between 1860 and 1870, were of a special character. Entire families would gather. Tents were erected in fields at the edge of a town where there was a Christian Church and an adequate supply of potable water. Food would be available for cooking (frequently a gift of farmers nearby). Preachers, especially, looked forward with keen anticipation to these gatherings for fellowship and the opportunity to exchange views, opinions and church news with fellow preachers.²

From such meetings an annual state convention of Christian Churches came into being. Rotating among the larger communities, these conventions began to be more formally structured; business was transacted along with inspirational preaching.

One matter of concern to the church was the lack of public schools for the education of the young. Disciples observed that several denominations

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were founding schools, both for children and for older students. As early as 1860 there was a movement to found a school which would be under Disciples control. Hesperian College, opened for classes at Woodland on March 1, 1861, the day Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated president and was incorporated under the laws of the state in 1869.³

Early in the year 1871 Disciples in the Santa Rosa area began planning for a college in their community. On September 23, 1872 the doors of Christian College were opened. Its most outstanding enrollee was Edwin Markham (1852-1940), a member of the Christian Church and later a well-known poet.⁴ College City, thirty-five miles north of Woodland, became the location of Pierce Christian College which opened September 14, 1874.⁵ Washington College in Irvington (in Alameda County, not far from Berkeley) while organized by others, came under the patronage of the Disciples in 1883.⁶

The leaders of these schools and colleges were men who either had graduated from or attended Disciples colleges in the east. Leaders in the development of Hesperian College had attended Hiram College and graduated from Kentucky University (now Transylvania). The leadership of Christian College had graduated from Bethany College in West Virginia and Eureka College in Illinois. Pierce Christian College had as principal a graduate of Abingdon College (later merged with Eureka) and a faculty member who graduated from Kentucky University. They brought with them to California educational principles and ideals learned from either Campbell himself or from those who had studied under him.⁷

Those who gave leadership in these California educational enterprises, originally organized because of the lack of public schools, were also seeking to be true to the educational vision of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) which he incorporated into the program of Bethany College. Their purpose was to encourage young men to prepare for the ministry and, at the same time, to prepare men and women as leaders and workers in the congregations where they lived. Disciples were experiencing rapid growth with a corresponding demand for preachers and committed lay leaders.

Little more than high schools, these institutions called "colleges" provided early California communities with at least some advanced education. Their influence was felt and appreciated not only in each community but also among Disciples throughout the state. With relatively few Disciples congregations, maintaining enrollment and financial support for four separate schools was difficult.⁸

California made practically no provision for public schools until late in the nineteenth century; only in 1887 did the state legislature provide funds for a free educational system. With the consequent loss of students (and their tuition) most of the church schools and colleges found it difficult to continue.⁹ The situation became a topic for discussion at the annual state conventions. Leaders in the state came to the conclusion that Disciples should concentrate

all their efforts in one institution of learning.¹⁰

An action was taken in the 1880 annual meeting of the Disciples of California which would affect later educational plans. The meeting became a convention of elected delegates officially representing their congregations. All resolutions voted were in the name of "The Christian Churches in California." This assured that when a resolution to their educational problems came, the convention would be in control.

The beginnings of an annual meeting in southern California, separate from that of the northern congregations, came in 1881 when a state camp meeting was held at Downey, not far from Los Angeles. Within a few years this annual gathering became a southern California convention of churches.¹¹

As early as the 1882 San Jose state convention, several interested educators and lay leaders, feeling financial pressure on the colleges, called an educational conference to meet outside the convention's regular sessions. Later, the full convention voted to form an Educational Committee and charged Lanceford B. Wilkes (1824-1901), T. D. Garvin and the Hon. William Johnson of Sacramento to consider the question of establishing "a single Bible college or a Christian University in the State of California." However, little or no action was taken for over a decade.¹²

In the decade between 1882 and 1893 the energies of leaders were dedicated to organizing congregations, a state organization, a missionary society and a regional church paper; now the Disciples churches could turn their attention to educational efforts.

At the 1893 convention, now meeting annually at Santa Cruz, a Committee on Education was appointed to consider a proper strategy to consolidate Disciples educational interests. The committee was composed of W. A. Gardner (1846-1900), state secretary-evangelist; M. J. Ferguson; W. H. Martin (1844-1913), then pastor at Fresno; J. M. Monroe, pastor at Modesto and C.P. Hodges, Gilroy.¹³

Representatives from both northern and southern California churches¹⁴ met to consider making Washington College, located not far from Berkeley, the center of Disciples efforts. The supporters of thirty-year old Hesperian College naturally were opposed. It was obvious there could be no concentration on any one of the schools then existing.¹⁵

A small and struggling school of the Congregational Church, the College of California at Berkeley, had been founded in 1855 for the same reason the Disciples organized their schools. Taken over by the state and fully funded by tax dollars, nearly everyone could see that the future of higher education in the state would be tied to this institution now named the University of California. Believing that the establishment of a strong state university would make lesser schools even weaker, the 1893 convention took action which

would affect Disciples efforts in a major way.

A young people's movement called Christian Endeavor, first organized in 1881 by a Congregational minister in New England, took the country by storm. The work of Christian Endeavor around the state of California aroused great interest among Disciples congregations. The Christian Endeavor Union of the Disciples, meeting in the 1893 convention, resolved to "take up the work in Berkeley as its special work and devote its energies to planting a church of the Disciples in that cultural center."¹⁶

Harold E. Monser was the son of J. W. Monser, a leading and nationally known Disciples minister in Kansas City. The junior Monser, a graduate of the University of Missouri, married in 1891 and decided to enter the ministry. Early in 1893 he and his young wife moved to California to serve the Willows congregation. By the time of the 1893 state convention Monser had made a decision to continue his education at the University of California at Berkeley. This was an opportunity for the Christian Endeavor committee, along with the state board, to arrange for Monser to develop the recently begun mission work in that community.¹⁷

Selected as the pastor-evangelist of the embryonic congregation, Monser and his wife moved to Berkeley after the convention and in late September began his work there. He was to be supported by gifts from congregations and with contributions from the Christian Endeavor societies of Northern California specifically designated for the Berkeley congregation.¹⁸

Later that fall, in a letter published in the state paper, Monser said, "When I came to Berkeley and entered the state university and saw the work of the students, the thought came to me that here was the true solution of the educational question of the Disciples on the Coast."¹⁹ The problem was that what Monser had in mind was not quite what older leaders of the Christian Churches were thinking when they suggested a "Bible College or a Christian University."

In their experience Disciples had known only two forms of education for ministers and lay leaders. The oldest means of ministerial preparation known in the Stone-Campbell Movement was that of Alexander Campbell as conducted at Bethany College. In Campbell's educational understanding, courses in classical languages, literature, science, mathematics, and the Bible, were to be offered as of value equally to preachers and to lay people.

A newer form of ministerial preparation came into being at Lexington, Kentucky. John W. McGarvey (1829-1911), a graduate of Bethany College, established The College of the Bible in 1865 as one of the colleges in the newly formed Kentucky University. While McGarvey believed he had received a good education at Bethany, he also believed he had not been prepared adequately for ministry. The College of the Bible was to be specifically for ministerial preparation.

By coincidence a third means of religious instruction in higher education was introduced just as Monser was beginning his work at Berkeley. Called a "Bible chair," its purpose was to sponsor and undergird the teaching of religion in the state-sponsored universities recently created in many regions. With class meetings off-campus, such "chairs" were staffed by Biblical scholars and financed by the Disciples. In many instances students were able to receive university credit toward a degree. The first Bible Chair opened at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in October 1893. The creativity of this imaginative experiment in higher education encouraged Disciples elsewhere to consider launching similar programs.²⁰

The Bible chair program attracted the attention of Harold Monser. In March, 1894 Monser laid before the "Ministerial Union of the Christian Churches Around the Bay" a proposal that there be established "a Bible Seminary in connection with the University of California" similar to the Bible chair established at Ann Arbor. It seems obvious that Monser was not quite clear as to the Bible chair concept.²¹

The proposition was favorably received by the group and a committee was appointed consisting of W.A. Gardner, Harold E. Monser, president of the Ministerial Union, and M. H. Wilson of San Francisco to look into the matter. The Committee on Education appointed at the 1893 convention declined to take action though they expressed themselves favorably inclined toward such a project. A letter was sent to every congregation in northern California seeking an indication of interest. Over sixty congregations replied giving approval to the plan.²²

The special committee of the bay area churches' Ministerial Union met regularly between April and July, 1894 to make concrete plans for an institution to be located in Berkeley. At the Santa Cruz convention, in August that year, a resolution proposing a school was presented. In the discussion which followed several important concerns were raised.

There was a concern as to the leadership of the new institution and a difference of opinion as to what kind of institution should be established. Some delegates were not entirely sold on the Bible Chair idea; they could not see spending good money on university students. Other delegates had uppermost in their minds the need for an institution designed to prepare evangelists, pastors and leaders for Disciples congregations.²³

It must be remembered that at the end of the nineteenth century the Stone-Campbell Movement had not yet divided over such issues as the use of instrumental music in worship, a paid ministry and the support of missionary societies. While these questions had become practically settled in the minds of many in Northern California, tensions were growing between those who in time would be known as "Churches of Christ" and those who took the name "Christian Churches." Those of a more conservative nature opposed the idea

of a new institution, persons such as James C. Keith, former president of Pierce Christian College; Lanceford B. Wilkes, who had served as president of Christian College at Santa Rosa; and George W. Sweeney.

Apparently a compromise was reached. An amended proposal was presented to the 1894 convention to consolidate the Disciples educational interests of Northern California in an institution adjacent to the university to have the name Berkeley Bible Seminary. The discussion for and against a seminary was lively, but when the vote was taken the resolution to establish the school carried by a slight majority.

During the debate over establishing an institution near the university, young Monser and others pictured with glowing terms the many benefits for Disciples which would be created by having a school at Berkeley. The conservative Wilkes, known for his opposition to "innovations," said on the convention floor, "Perhaps ten or fifteen years hence we will be better prepared to judge the effect of this enterprise upon our movement than we are now."²⁴

Thus the Berkeley Bible Seminary came into being with opposition in important places, with a certain uneasiness, and with lack of understanding as to the purpose and nature of the new seminary. The subsequent history of the school fully justified Wilkes' statement.

Notes

¹Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916.

²Ibid, p. 130f.

³Ibid, p. 161.

⁴Ibid, p. 168f.

⁵Ibid, pp. 164-166.

⁶Ibid, p. 218f.

⁷Ibid see Ware, Chapter IX.

⁸Raab, Idalene M., unpublished manuscript, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) At Work in Berkeley: 1893-1968, p. 88.

⁹Burgh, Fredric S. and Parker, Lucy, Chapman Remembers. A History of Chapman College. Orange, CA. Chapman College, 1969, p. 3

¹⁰Raab, Idalene M., unpublished manuscript, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) At Work in Berkeley: 1893-1968, p. 88.

¹¹Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916, p. 189.

¹²Ibid, p. 235.

¹³Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916, p. 248f. Christian Standard, Cincinnati, OH., Standard Publishing Co, August 8, 1914, p. 1370.

¹⁴Cole, Clifford A., The Christian Churches of Southern California, St. Louis, MO., Christian Board of Publication, 1959, p. 70.

¹⁵Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California,

Healdsburg, CA, 1916, p. 249f.

¹⁶Ibid, p. 249f.

¹⁷Raab, Idalene M., unpublished manuscript, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) At Work in Berkeley: 1893-1968, p. 17.

¹⁸Ibid, p. 19.

¹⁹Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916, p. 251.

²⁰McAllister, Lester G. and Tucker, William E., Journey In Faith, St. Louis, MO., Bethany Press, 1975, pp. 333f.

²¹Raab, Idalene M., unpublished manuscript, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) At Work in Berkeley: 1893-1968, p. 89.

²²Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916, p. 251f.

²³Raab, Idalene M., unpublished manuscript, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) At Work in Berkeley: 1893-1968, pp. 91f.

²⁴Ware, E.B., History of the Disciples of Christ in California, Healdsburg, CA, 1916, pp. 251f.

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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has been blessed through the years with gifts from estates. Some have come unsolicited; others have been planned in advance with leadership of the Society. These gifts have measurably strengthened the ministry of the Society. Through the Order of the Stone-Campbell Fellowship the Society can recognize these intended gifts and express appreciation to those planning the gifts.

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Barton Warren Stone was the first of the major leaders to appear on the scene in 19th century America. Soon thereafter Alexander Campbell's voice was heard. From the followers of these men a church was born which continues to spread the gospel. The history of that movement housed in the Thomas W. Phillips Memorial is a legacy of their early faith and witness. Their gifts live on in the life of the church and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Volume 59 • Number 2 • Summer, 1999

Published by DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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DISCIPLIANA (USPS 995-060) is published quarterly for \$20.00 per year by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society which was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups." Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$30, Regular - \$20, Students - \$10.00, Non-U.S. - \$25. Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

Contributors to *DISCIPLIANA* should submit manuscripts on 3.5 floppy disk in Wordperfect 5.1 or "text" format. Electronic manuscript submission via "text only" formatted e-mail or attached file accepted at dishistsoc@aol.com. Postal mail should be addressed to: *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 Nineteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196.

Phone: (615) 327-1444. Fax: (615) 327-1445. E-mail: dishistsoc@aol.com.
The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Home Page: <http://users.aol.com/dishistsoc>
Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN.

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Indexed by Restoration Serials Index
ISSN 0732-9881

Indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals, the Index to Book Reviews in Religion, Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM, and the ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201-5613. atla@atla.com <http://atla.library.vanderbilt.edu/atla/home.html>

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 - 19th Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196. Please give both old and new addresses and attach a mailing label from an old issue. USA: Please provide nine-digit code (ZIP+4).

— From the Editor's Desk

Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell were both pacifists. Though the pacifism of Stone and Campbell was never embraced by the majority of any of the three major divisions of the Stone-Campbell Movement, it has had the greatest influence in Churches of Christ, where it was developed and taught by David Lipscomb from the Civil War to the beginning of World War I. In "Pacifism and Nonviolence: The Prophetic Voice of the African-American Churches of Christ," Michael W. Casey traces the history and transformation of pacifism among African-American Churches of Christ, showing its relation not only to conscientious objection to war by African-American members of Churches of Christ, but also to the participation of African-American members of Churches of Christ in twentieth-century struggles for racial and economic justice.

No aspect of the teaching of Stone and Campbell has been more widely embraced in the Stone-Campbell Movement than their advocacy of weekly observance of the Lord's Supper. Robert R. Howard has examined the influence of Campbell's philosophical suppositions on his theology of the Lord's Supper in comparison with the views of John W. Nevin. Nevin, who embraced strikingly different philosophical assumptions than did Campbell, was a professor at the German Reformed Theological School at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. The traditions of the Reformed Church continue today as one of the four streams in the United Church of Christ. In "Two Perspectives on the 'Banquet of Love': A Comparative Analysis of the Philosophical Bases of the Eucharistic Theologies of Alexander Campbell and John W. Nevin," Howard brings the views of Campbell and Nevin into conversation for the purpose of identifying insights relevant to contemporary theology and practice of the Lord's Supper.

Though the themes of Christian pacifism and the Lord's Supper might seem to have little in common, the articles in this issue remind us that they are united by the concern to form persons for God's kingdom of righteousness and peace.

-D. Newell Williams

— From the President’s Desk

Come quietly into the Society’s reading room and listen in on a moment rich and dense with meaning and learning. You’re eavesdropping on a staff meeting. The speaker is Clinton Holloway. You probably don’t know Clinton; he is our three-month intern. Clinton has already completed degrees at Milligan College and Emmanuel School of Religion. With his interest in Stone-Campbell archives and library work and with his abilities you will likely know him well in the future.

Clinton is leading staff prayers. He opens to us the richness of I Samuel 7:1-13: first, background and context; second, the reading; third, a word from God for our community; fourth, our community’s prayers. The story contains that fascinating word “Ebenezer.” You’ve sung it in “Come, Thou Fount of every Blessing.”

Clinton helps us know:

“Samuel took a stone, and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto has the Lord helped us.” Ebenezer, if I remember my Hebrew, means “stone of help.” Samuel is setting up a monument for all who will pass by in the days and years to come. Samuel is setting up a memorial to the fact that God, not Israel, defeated the Philistines: that God helped Israel in time of need. Samuel said that stone of help was to be a reminder to all people that “HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US.” Just as the Ebenezer reminded Israel, so this building and the material of this place remind us of our past. They remind us who we are and they remind us that “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

As Clinton led our staff’s prayers I added in my own silent prayer. “Thank you God for the wisdom and promise of youth who will continue to enrich the church by helping us know our history.” Firm in the knowledge of God’s help in the past (Ebenezer) we can be assured of that continual help both now and ever after.

-Peter M. Morgan

Pacifism and Nonviolence: the Prophetic Voice of the African-American Churches of Christ

by Michael W. Casey*

Most American prophetic legacies, according to Cornel West, “lay nearly dormant - often forgotten - and in the possession of a marginal few.”¹ The same is true for the African-American Churches of Christ.² The sources for the story are scarce and fragmentary, but some clues are around for its telling. While the black Churches of Christ wait for a historian to construct a useable past, as a start toward that goal I argue that African-American Christians have taken the theology of the Restoration Movement and adapted it to the concerns of black culture and essentially created a tradition separate from mainstream white Churches of Christ. Specifically the African-American Churches of Christ transformed the pacifism of the white Churches of Christ into a politically active prophetic voice that empowered African-Americans.

The story of African-American pacifism starts with David Lipscomb, white editor of the *Gospel Advocate* and the key molder of pacifist thought in the Churches of Christ.³ Lipscomb boldly broke with the post-bellum racist south and opposed segregated churches and racial prejudice.⁴ Always supportive of evangelism among blacks, Lipscomb earned the respect of blacks and influenced key African-American preachers Alexander Campbell, S.W. Womack, G.P. Bowser and Marshall Keeble (Womack’s son-in-law) to oppose instrumental music and the missionary society. Keeble reported “that the *Gospel Advocate* has been second... and the Bible first” with Campbell and Womack.⁵

Lipscomb constructed the pacifist theology of the Churches of Christ. From the Civil War through the beginning of World War I, the *Gospel Advocate* argued that Christians could not fight in war and that Christians should have nothing to do with politics. Christians were citizens of heaven and therefore could not hold political office or even vote.⁶ Most white Christians generally used pacifism to escape from the public realm. Blacks, however, took Lipscomb’s pacifism in a very different direction.

G.P. Bowser, one of two key African-American leaders of the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century, spread pacifist views. As Bowser preached, Lipscomb published the young preacher’s reports and met regularly with him.⁷ Bowser’s position on the relationship of church and state was identical to Lipscomb’s. In response to a question about the role of a Christian in civil government Bowser responded as Lipscomb had earlier: “Christians are citizens of Christ’s kingdom. (Col. 1:12) His kingdom is not of this world. Christians should not conform to the world by aspiring, or accepting political positions as governor, sheriff, police, etc. (Rom. 12:1-3)”⁸ However, Bowser created the rhetorical space for African-Americans to diverge from the white Christians on the role of Christianity in the public realm. He was converted from the African Methodist Episcopal Church which took the lead in creating the Reformer tradition of black preaching.⁹ Reformers used the language of Christianity for liberation against racism. Like the Hebrew prophets, they

*Michael W. Casey is a Professor of Communication, Pepperdine University. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, David Lipscomb University, July 1996.

called for God's justice against racism.¹⁰ The reformist impulse soon emerged in Bowser.

Bowser was convinced to go to Nashville in 1920 to be the principal of Southern Practical Institute, a new school for blacks primarily funded by whites. C.E.W. Dorris, a white evangelist and pacifist was the superintendent. When Dorris insisted that blacks enter the school through the back door in keeping with white racist custom, Bowser, enraged, refused and so the school closed. Bowser resolved never to be dependent on white support for the rest of his life. Bowser agreed with Marcus Garvey's idea about the dignity of people of African descent and the worth of African civilization.¹¹ While Bowser lived before the Civil Rights Movement and never engaged in direct political action, his proteges fused the reformist impulse and black dignity with pacifism and transformed traditional separatist theology into a prophetic voice.

Like larger American black Christianity, the African-American Churches of Christ also had a Sustainer preaching tradition. The Sustainers, who emerged from the slaves, developed a strategy of survival in the face of powerful racist forces. Recognizing that blacks could be killed by racist whites, Sustainers designed rhetorical strategies that cultivated hope but deferred liberation. Most focused on the hope of heaven and said nothing about current racial problems; however, the sermons often had a "double voice." The message would overtly say that God overcame oppressors and rewarded the oppressed in Bible times. Blacks recognized that the preacher was also saying that in God's good time the same thing would happen again with whites and blacks while whites heard only the otherworldly meaning.¹² In Churches of Christ, Marshall Keeble, Womack's son-in-law, best embodied this tradition.

Keeble agreed with Lipscomb's non-political stance. Living in Nashville for most of his preaching career, he never talked "to the church about social problems rising out of racial differences."¹³ In 1918, calling David Lipscomb a "great and noble servant," Keeble said that he studied the Gospel Advocate ever since he had "learned to read."¹⁴ In a sermon during the Korean War, Keeble made clear his pacifist sentiments:

The Church of Christ is the only hope in the world. If the people could just understand the simple plain gospel, what a world this would be. Why, the war would stop tomorrow. There wouldn't be a boy in a foxhole. People [could just obey?] the gospel it would break up the whole business. We are going on over there to see about them - not with guns. We someday will go over there in Russia with the gospel. Teach the gospel to those people. They have souls to save. God loves them. He died for them. They need teaching.... Make you love one another. All malice, all jealousy, all prejudice, was gone when we got teaching. You love your neighbor, not only love your neighbor, but love your enemy. A whole lot of us are going to miss heaven. Recently someone told me: "Brother Keeble I just can't do it." I said, "Brother you can't go to heaven. You're not going to heaven till you love your enemies. You're not even going." I hate to see people think they're going, but you know you're not going to heaven

till you go love your enemy. That's right. Now you might as well start tonight cultivating a spirit of loving everybody. Everybody! I mean everybody.¹⁵

Keeble, unlike Bowser, was supported by white patronage.¹⁶ While Bowser was ignored, Keeble was lionized by fawning white Christians who rarely noticed his use of the Sustainer double voice.¹⁷ Some of Keeble's proteges transformed his separatist pacifism into prophetic action.

In 1905 Bowser established the *Christian Echo*, and throughout his editorship of the leading journal for the African-American Churches of Christ Bowser stood opposed to Christians fighting in war. On the eve of World War II he announced: "The Echo is not just now taking a position on the war question, but has ever stood opposed to Christians taking up arms against their fellow man. The spirit of Christ forbids it."¹⁸

During World War I, when Bowser taught at Silver Point, Tennessee near Cookeville, he helped whites and blacks fill out conscientious objector applications "if they were opposed to killing in war."¹⁹ Bowser's role in any dissent during World War I is unknown.²⁰ His opposition to war was not unusual because many black Americans were apathetic or opposed the war.²¹ In geographic proximity to the Churches of Christ, one leading black religious tradition, the Church of God in Christ opposed Christians fighting in war.²²

One black, and 16 whites from the Churches of Christ, went to Ft. Leavenworth prison during World War I for their conscientious objection.²³ Robert F. Nunley was a life-long supporter of Bowser. Nunley was born March 5, 1892, at Primm Springs, Tennessee.²⁴ Nunley's family were "foot washing Baptists."²⁵ Baptized in 1916, Nunley became a member of the Churches of Christ.

January 12, 1918, Nunley filled out his questionnaire for the local draft board. Nunley personally objected to fighting in war but was unsure if the Churches of Christ took that position.²⁶ The questionnaire read, "Are you a member of a religious sect or organization whose creed forbids you to participate in war in any form? If yes, state the name of the sect and the location of its governing body or head." Nunley answered "No." Nunley passed his physical and was ordered to report for duty June 20. A few days before he was to report he wrote the Hickman county Draft Board a letter announcing his objections to war. He said: "I had come (sic) to be a Christian...and when I considered God's word to be true, I couldn't fight... [and] I wouldn't fight, not that I had any sympathy with the enemy of the United States."²⁷

Nunley failed to report and was arrested June 24 as a deserter from the Army. He was transported to Ft. Oglethorpe and court-martialed at Camp McClellan, Anniston, Alabama November 19, 1918. At the trial he announced his refusal to serve in noncombatant as well as combatant duty saying, "I realize all of this to be about the same, if a person would serve, I realize that it would be the about the same as fighting...." He was sentenced to 5 years in prison at Ft. Leavenworth for draft desertion. After receiving good reports while in prison, his sentence was commuted in April 1919 to two and a half years. With the war over and receiving further good reports the remainder of his sentence was commuted on October 3. He was dishonorably discharged October 11, 1919.²⁸ On May 23, 1920, he began preaching, at the Arrow Rock Church of Christ in Duck River, Tennessee. He continued to preach and speak about his pacifist

convictions for the remainder of his life.²⁹

The strength of black pacifism between the World Wars is unknown. Bowser and other leading black preachers apparently held to their pacifist convictions in the face of declining pacifism in the white mainstream Churches of Christ. Other dissenting groups (the one-cup and non-Sunday School who were overwhelming white) within the Churches of Christ maintained the pacifist stance of the Churches of Christ. Some in the mainstream, especially those associated with J.N. Armstrong and Harding College, were strong pacifists. Despite the minority status of pacifism, a revival of pacifism occurred in some mainstream churches. Many congregations voiced their opposition to Christians taking a combatant role in “official” statements to the War Department.³⁰ While I have not discovered any black church stating their support for the conscientious objector position with the War Department, some of the black ministers undoubtedly were aware of these trends. For example, Bowser closely followed the arguments of these dissenting groups so he could debate against their positions, so he probably knew and agreed with their arguments for conscientious objection.³¹

Bowser moved to Louisville, Kentucky in 1920, after his school closed in Nashville. He worked closely with Don Carlos Janes and E.L. Jorgenson, leaders of the premillennial Churches of Christ. While Bowser never was interested in their premillennial beliefs, he was impressed with their openness to blacks and their efforts at missions.³² Janes and Jorgenson were pacifists, as were most of the premillennial Churches of Christ, believing that Christians should take noncombatant roles in the military during war.³³ In 1939 soon after World War II started, Janes wrote the *Christian Echo* and told of the efforts of J.N. Armstrong and J.W. Shepherd to get noncombatant recognition for Churches of Christ during World War I. Janes advised that blacks submit to the War Department the request of the Valdosta Georgia congregation that during war “our young men be granted the same immunity” as the Quakers were during World War I.³⁴

As the threat of war loomed, Bowser began to make needed information available to potential African-American conscientious objectors. He publicized the white minister Leslie Thomas’ efforts to identify Church of Christ members who desired “exemption from military service during the present crisis.”³⁵ Thomas worked with the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, an organization created by the Historic Peace Churches to help conscientious objectors during World War II. Bowser advised his draft-age readers to register and to report for any physical examination. If the military wanted them, he urged them to file an exemption as a minister of the gospel or as a student for ministry or as a conscientious objector saying, “You can refer to the Echo for the position of the church of Christ in this matter.”³⁶

On the eve of America’s entry into the war James M. Butler gave theological reasons for black pacifism, citing the Sermon on the Mount: “Jesus here says to love your enemies. It is impossible to love your enemies and at the same time kill him and destroy his belongings.” Anticipating the 1960s, he added: “Yes, dear reader, when we are misused, we can not have the spirit of retaliation which is carnal but we have the Spirit of Christ by blessing them through our prayers.” He concluded praising America, “We as Americans, should be proud

that we are living in a country that will not force a man against his religious convictions.”³⁷

After Pearl Harbor, Bowser continued to advise young blacks to become conscientious objectors: “Christians cannot enter carnal warfare. The government is fair enough to [enclose] in the questionnaire an opportunity for anyone to include conscientious objections.”³⁸ Around the same time other blacks began to articulate pacifist views. Citing Isaiah 2:4, C.N. Kirksey hinted at an eschatological view of peace that the “reign of Christ in the world would be to bring about universal peace.” He thought that the “only hope for a world wide peace is in Christianity. The only way that one can enjoy peace is to follow the ‘Prince of Peace.’” He urged: There can be no war where the spirit of Christ, the prince of peace, prevails, and where people are guided by the teachings of Christ. God is a God of peace. (Phil. 4:9) Since Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of peace (Rom. 14:17) and the gospel is the gospel of peace (Acts 10:36) Christians and the church are peacemakers (Matt. 5:9) He concluded: “War is horrible, it is destructive. No Christian can participate in such devastation of life and property....”³⁹

R.N. Hogan, Bowser's protege said, “Every self-denying student of the Bible knows that carnal warfare is sinful.” Anyone who “engage[s] in carnal warfare... ignore[s] God's plain orders.”⁴⁰ O. Winston argued that Christians should not buy government bonds or stamps to support the war effort: “If you have a mind to kill and I make the bullet you fire to kill Mr. Smith, then I become [an] accessory to the crime.... We are buying stamps and bonds that the government might carry on, for what? [To] Kill!”⁴¹

Like pacifists in the mainstream Churches of Christ, African-American pacifists did not all take the same view.⁴² T.G. Marbury took a noncombatant position believing that “it is not a sin to be in the service, but it is a sin to carry arms and fight (2 Tim. 3:12).” He apparently had a difficult time when he first entered the navy saying: “I told them I was a conscientious objector against carnal weapons. So they tried me for sometime and when they saw I meant it, they just gave me some very hard work to do but I don't mind it for I know I must suffer for Christ in order to keep his commandments.”⁴³ Kermit Nixon was a medic in the Army on the European front. He said that Christians must love their enemies so he would “give first aid when soldiers are sick or wounded and need treatment. It is my duty to help all soldiers that need help.”⁴⁴

Robert F. Nunley's son, Stafford Nunley, became the only African-American in the Churches of Christ to enter the Civilian Public Service (CPS), the alternative service option for conscientious objectors in World War II. CPS was created as a compromise between the Historic Peace Churches and the United States government. The peace churches paid the bills and ran the individual camps, while Selective Service administered the entire system. Around 215 members of the Churches of Christ participated in CPS. The men received no pay for their work which created hardships for the men and their families. If a man's family could not support him then the person's denomination was supposed to sponsor him. Usually the non-peace churches did not adequately support their men in the camps and the Historic Peace Churches made up the difference.⁴⁵

Nunley entered CPS September 13, 1942, and worked at the soil conservation

camp in Big Flats, New York, and then transferred and worked at the training school at Cheltenham, Maryland. The American Friends Service Committee discharged Nunley on March 28, 1946.⁴⁶ Nunley wrote Bowser: "I am here because I refused combat and noncombatant services. I am trying to follow the teachings of Christ. The Bible plainly teaches against war. (James 2:11) 'Don't Kill.' (Exodus 20:13) The Bible teaches us to love our enemies [and] render to no man evil for evil.... Pray for me, that I will not faint by the wayside."⁴⁷

The *Christian Echo* printed letters from several blacks who were serving in the military.⁴⁸ It is impossible to determine whether they were combatants or noncombatants. The noncombatant Marbury had met black Christians who were combatants. He complained, "Although the government has made provision for the Christian to object to the fighting part of the army if they want but the trouble is our Christians love the big money that is paid for officers salaries and the worldly honor of stripes that they can wear on their arms and the praise of the world."⁴⁹ Nunley was shocked that a Christian would be in the military at all: "In reading the Echo I was shocked to learn that we had Christians . . . in the armed services. Do we, as the Church of Christ, take the teachings of Jesus Christ as our guide? If we take the teachings of Christ, wouldn't all the members be pacifists or C.O. (conscientious objectors) when it comes to war." He continued: "We as Christians should wake up and try to save souls from the lake. Are their [sic] any pacifists in the church? Are the pacifists afraid to be known? Do we as a religious body fear man or God? Are we Christians going to comply with the teachings of the Bible?"⁵⁰

At the close of World War II it is difficult to know how strong pacifist sentiment was in the African-American Churches of Christ. The major journal of the black Churches of Christ took the pacifist stance and apparently some men took noncombatant roles in the military following their leaders. In contrast to the largely nonpacifist white Churches of Christ which produced numerous chaplains in the armed forces during World War II, there was only one chaplain from the African-American Churches of Christ.⁵¹

Douglas Greer announced his chaplaincy after the war was over, indicating that Bowser and other black leaders disagreed with his position.⁵² Bowser died in 1950 and the leadership role of black Churches of Christ was assumed by Bowser's protegee, R.N. Hogan, who agreed with his pacifism.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Hogan and other black leaders were to transform black pacifism in creative ways, mirroring the influence of World War II pacifism on the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Presumably the black church maintained its pacifism during the 1950s. The lack of documentation during the Korean War makes it difficult to know the extent of pacifism among draft-age blacks in Churches of Christ.⁵³ Two of Robert Nunley's sons were noncombatants in the Korean conflict.⁵⁴

In 1954, the United States Supreme Court handed down the landmark decision *Brown vs. Board of Education* that launched the Civil Rights Movement. One of Marshall Keeble's preacher boys, a graduate of Nashville Christian Institute (N.C.I.), played a major role in the start of the Civil Rights Movement. Fred Gray, one of the first African-American lawyers in Alabama, had just opened a legal practice in Montgomery, Alabama. Gray was born 1930 in a shotgun house in the ghetto of Montgomery, the youngest of 5 children. His

parents were members of the Holt Street Church of Christ.

After his father died when Gray was two, his mother was determined to provide the best education possible for Gray. At age twelve Gray went to N.C.I. where Keeble became his mentor. After N.C.I., Gray completed a B.A. degree from Alabama State College for Negroes and a J.D. from Western Reserve University Law School. He returned to Montgomery to use the law to “destroy everything segregated that I could find.”⁵⁵

When Rosa Parks was arrested December 1955 Gray, one of the two African-American lawyers in Montgomery and a friend of Parks, represented her. As Martin Luther King, Ralph Abernathy and E.D. Nixon organized the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Gray became the lawyer for King and other boycott leaders. Gray filed and won the case that desegregated the Montgomery Bus system. The Supreme Court upheld the ruling and the Montgomery Bus Boycott disbanded, but it launched the Civil Rights Movement under King’s leadership. While King lived in Montgomery, Gray was his lawyer.⁵⁶

While the story of the bus boycott was one of the highlights of Gray’s life, his career was just starting. A few years later the city of Tuskegee, despite being eighty percent African-American, decided to gerrymander the city boundaries to exclude most black voters and keep the white politicians in control. The African-American leaders persuaded Gray to take the case which went all the way to the Supreme Court where for the first time Gray argued a case before the justices. Gray remembered:

I entered the courtroom as another case was being argued, I felt weak with apprehension. I remembered my childhood in Montgomery. How could I, a black man, born in an Alabama ghetto, whose father died when I was two years old and whose mother had only a second grade education, argue a case before the United States Supreme Court?⁵⁷

Gray argued eloquently, winning a landmark civil rights case that established the precedent of “one man, one vote” and prevented disingenuous ways to discriminate against minority voting rights. Thousands of African-Americans and other minorities are now elected officials in local, state and national elected bodies because of this case.⁵⁸

Gray, part of Keeble’s tradition, had caught the vision of building reconciliation and breaking down barriers between the races. Gray said, “Jesus Christ is and always has been the center of my life.”⁵⁹ However, he creatively transformed Keeble’s separatism by rejecting the non-political aspects of Keeble’s theology. Gray was a controversial figure among his people, many of whom “had reservations” about his ability to be a lawyer and a preacher. Keeble responded to some who asked him about Gray: “He’s too smart.”⁶⁰ Gray, though, was a leader in transforming the prophetic voice of the African-American Churches of Christ as he agreed with King’s philosophy of nonviolence.

White mainstream Churches of Christ and affiliated educational institutions were slow to respond to integration. R. N. Hogan continued Bowser’s independence from white power centers. Starting in 1956 and continuing through the 1960s, Hogan heavily criticized white congregations and colleges for their failure to integrate. For Hogan, “any church or school where all men

cannot go in or attend, is not the Lord's...."⁶¹

As racial tensions built in the 1960s Hogan cautioned African-Americans from hating whites: "According to reports, not a congregation of the [white] Church of Christ has admitted a single Negro. To all Negro members of the Church of Christ; I admonish you to love all white people, for you will go to hell if you hate them, like some of them are going to hell for hating you. We are told to love our enemies. Hear Jesus, Matt. 5:44. 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.'"⁶²

In the context of the 1960s the nonpolitical African-American tradition that stood in the legacy of David Lipscomb began to change. Blacks began to embrace Martin Luther King's nonviolent philosophy of change to win the right to vote. Many blacks saw the 1964 election as a referendum over Civil Rights and the choice for President was clear. One writer in the *Christian Echo* recalled the 1960 election when many white preachers raised a "loud clamor" over Kennedy's Catholicism. These preachers received "the rapt and singular attention of almost all of us." However, it was "now a matter of historical record that he won and became an outstanding president." As he reflected on the "events of the past four years," he noted "that many of our advisors on matters such as this in times past have been motivated by some motives other than the love of the church." With the pressing issue of Civil Rights he said, "The time is long overdue for Christians to refuse to allow unscrupulous politicians to use race hatred as a platform to elective office." If the preachers "with the most glowing reputation in the church choose to allow themselves to be used in this fashion we can only pray for them and advise them otherwise." He did not want to "make the church a political entity" but he felt that "Christian principles and ethics are not something" left "outside of the voter's booth." He did not want to tell the *Christian Echo* readers for whom to vote because they "could easily decide for" themselves.⁶³

As the events of the 1960s unfolded, the African-American Churches of Christ became more outspoken in favor of the Civil Rights Movement. On March 7, 1965, a group of Civil Rights marchers was brutally attacked by Alabama State troopers and sheriff's deputies as they tried to cross a bridge near Selma. J.R. Davis, Sr. wrote: "this was one of the ... bloodiest and brutal attacks upon unarmed people one has ever heard of. It was ... morally wrong and sinful. All of this comes about because white people are not willing to give the Negro the right to vote."⁶⁴ Fred Gray immediately filed a suit in Montgomery federal court to protect the marchers. Judge Frank M. Johnson granted the suit that allowed the marchers to proceed and forced Alabama to provide police protection. Gray also argued the appeal in New Orleans that upheld Johnson's ruling. The march was completed without incident. Martin Luther King, Andrew Young, Ralph Abernathy, and others came to Gray's house in Montgomery to plan the last part of the march. Gray joined the marchers for the final leg in Montgomery. The publicity from the Selma March led to the passage of the 1965 Voter Rights Act that gave thousands of African-Americans the right to vote.⁶⁵

Norman Adamson, an African-American preacher and *Christian Echo* writer, walked in the Selma March and reflected on the event: Realizing our

Christian responsibility...we...identified ourselves with the Non-violent Civil Rights Movement, with our number one objective: the salvation of white men who have bigoted hearts, and our second objective - making this world a better place in which to live for all mankind, black and white.⁶⁶

Adamson, like Bowser and Lipscomb, believed that Christians “owe allegiance to higher governments than Alabama and Mississippi.” Christians were “subjects to a more powerful and absolute Lord than George Wallace or Paul Johnson....” He concluded:

We believe the non-violent way is the expedient way, for this cause we went to Alabama to MARCH. We believe the march and the whole Civil Rights Movement is a success for many pseudo Christian Colleges are now truly Christian Colleges for all Christians can attend.... In the name of Him who died for all, with hearts overflowing with godly love and burning with righteous indignation. Let us take up the blood stained banner of the cross and do something about the unchristian, ungodly social problem that is not only in the world affairs of man but is also rampant in the holy confines of God’s kingdom.⁶⁷

With the focus on Civil Rights, the *Christian Echo* did not address the Vietnam War and the role of the Christian. Unsurprisingly African-American men from the Churches of Christ served in the military. One African-American missionary went to Vietnam and he encountered prejudice from the white missionaries.⁶⁸ With more young African-American Christians entering the military, black leaders became concerned about their spiritual welfare. Paralleling the white churches’ situation for World War II and the Korean War, some black leaders wanted chaplains for the young black soldiers. Andrew Hairston did not want to argue over conscientious objection because he believed it was a matter of individual conscience. Instead, he pointed out the value and challenge of ministering to the Christian who was a soldier. He said, “If we would save man we must go where he is and work at his salvation as best we can....” He added, “Beyond question, the men in uniform, by choice or draft, need the spiritual advice that a minister, by his calling should be able to give.” Hairston pointed out the general rules, advantages and needs for chaplains from the Churches of Christ.⁶⁹

As the momentum of King’s nonviolent philosophy stalled and the turmoil over the Vietnam War grew, many blacks became increasingly militant and radical. Franklin Florence, a graduate of N.C.I., one of Keeble’s preacher boys, and a friend of Billy Sol Estes, was minister for the Reynolds Street Church of Christ in Rochester, New York. Florence emerged as the leader of Rochester’s radical organization FIGHT, designed to win power for powerless and unemployed blacks.⁷⁰

Rochester in July 1964 suffered one of the worst race riots in the nation. The city had not been able to assimilate the thousands of blacks who had poured into the city in the 1950s and early 1960s. At the suggestion of leaders from King’s Southern Leadership Conference, Rochester’s African-American clergy brought in Saul Alinsky from Chicago. Alinsky was well known for his tough tactics and success at organizing powerless groups in urban slums into formidable community organizations. He borrowed tactics from the American

labor movement and while his “philosophy and tactics find few parallels in traditional formulations of Christian social responsibility” Alinsky enjoyed “enthusiastic, at times almost fanatic, support from ... activist clergymen.”⁷¹

Alinsky’s team organized FIGHT, an acronym for Freedom, Integration, God, Honor, Today. Florence was elected as temporary chair and later as president. Florence had evolved from his Keeble days. He was a close friend of Malcolm X. He would wear a hat that Malcolm gave him and a picture of Malcolm hung on the wall at FIGHT’s headquarters. Florence would play records of Malcolm’s speeches for white visitors at his home. The New York Times described Florence as “very much the New Negro. He is angry and articulate. He wears a ‘Black Power’ button, reveres the memory of Malcolm X and is studiously rude to most whites....”⁷² Under Florence’s leadership FIGHT took on the Eastman Kodak company to get jobs for blacks.

Florence brought in Stokely Carmichael, leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to help “bring Kodak to its knees.” Carmichael boasted, “Minister Florence will say ‘Jump!’ and Kodak will ask, ‘How high?’”⁷³ With pressure building eventually Kodak and FIGHT came to terms with 600 jobs being created for unemployed people.

Bill Martin saw Florence’s efforts fitting into the prophetic tradition: “For men of God to champion the cause of the poor and oppressed and to stand alongside them in their attempts to secure goals such as these is . . . nothing new in the Judeo-Christian tradition.” However, Florence had transformed that tradition. Martin stated, “Christian ministers have seldom interpreted their responsibility to the have-nots in terms of using deliberate conflict to organize them into power groups able to demand concessions from the haves.”⁷⁴ Keeble, Florence’s mentor, sought reconciliation by avoiding conflict and working within racist dominant power structures. Florence also ultimately wanted reconciliation, but in the context of the 1960s urban North he recognized that conflict was a necessary first step toward reconciliation. The 1964 riot showed that “there was little hope for reconciliation between black and white, rich and poor, until the deep grievances were made explicit and sin (on both sides) acknowledged.”⁷⁵

King was tragically assassinated April 4, 1968. Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, a member of the Whittier Church of Christ, invited R.N. Hogan who gave “an unprecedented eulogy” of King before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.⁷⁶ Many whites in the Churches of Christ objected. One man said, “I protest this type of blasphemy ... Since when can men who are supposed to uphold the truth of God’s Word eulogize a man who led men to violent death...to lawlessness...led them to looting and burning and mocking that which is holy.” Another preacher disapproved citing King’s “Communist leanings.”⁷⁷

While the white mainstream Churches of Christ turned to conservative political philosophy and anti-communism, the African-American Churches of Christ made a left-ward political turn. The two perspectives clashed when James D. Bales, professor at Harding University, and other white Christians classed King a Communist.⁷⁸ G.P. Holt, Bowser’s grandson, wrote in the *Christian Echo* that he was affronted when “Gospel preachers and Bible school professors” did this. He explained:

I do not know what you think about Martin Luther King, that's your privilege, but to a black man he is a Moses. I do not agree with all he said or did, but because of him, I do not have to eat cold food from a grocery store when traveling on the highway. I do not have to sleep in my car or on the ground because the motel owner refused me a room. That I no longer have to push my way to the back of the bus or sit in a dirty train or bus station (sic)... That I no longer have to pay taxes to support our police force to protect your cafe and cannot eat a sandwich there (sic)... That I no longer have to support state colleges and be refused admittance to them (sic).⁷⁹

At the same time when blacks rejected white racial conservatism, many African-American leaders were also uncomfortable with the militancy of Malcolm X and other blacks who offered radical alternatives to King's philosophy. As the Vietnam War wound down as well as the overall Civil Rights Movement, one *Christian Echo* writer reconnected pacifism with King's nonviolence. Eugene Lawton pointed to Gandhi and Christ to affirm that nonviolence and pacifism were not dead. He was disturbed that many young blacks thought that "the only thing the white man respects is militant power" so blacks must fight whites with guns and bombs. He appealed to Christ who "lived a strange life and taught a strange doctrine." Christ preached "a doctrine of love and forgiveness" and "repudiated revenge... [and] war." War, Lawton said, "raises more problems than it settles." He added, "Millions of people are killed, other millions are left mentally, physically, and morally incapacitated, still other millions are left without homes and without a country." He pointed to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Public Accommodation Act of 1964, the 1965 Voter Rights Act and the Open Housing Occupancy Act of 1968 as fruit of "nonviolent sit-ins, demonstration marching and non-violent congregational legislation." He concluded:

My brothers and sisters, Jesus was right and Malcolm X was wrong. Jesus is right and those black militants are wrong. Anyone who knocks non-violence knocks Jesus, and it does not matter whether his head is clean shaven or if he is wearing a blow-out Afro. A Christian cannot accept everything that is done in the name of the Black Revolution. I believe in the Black Revolution, but any and everything that conflicts with Jesus' Revolution has to be rejected today, tomorrow and forever more.⁸⁰

While starting with a pacifism that differed little with white Christians, the views of Lipscomb were gradually transformed in light of the black experience, first by Bowser and then by his followers. Eventually different forms of prophetic voice emerged: a pacifism that ranged from total political withdrawal (represented by Keeble) to a direct non-violent pacifism modeled by Martin Luther King and a radical activist faith modeled by Malcolm X that involved a radicalization of the pacifism into an active call for correcting injustice.

This prophetic voice has a message spoken with many tones and pitch levels. This voice calls into question war with its high costs, destructive nature and cultivation of hatred. This voice calls for the rights of individual conscience

as well as oppressed communities. This voice calls for reconciliation between alienated people. This voice calls for a radical lifestyle of Christ as articulated in the Sermon on the Mount. This voice calls for the disciples of Jesus to take seriously the plight of oppressed people. This voice calls with one tone for this with patient reconciliation working with the system while with another tone it calls for creative conflict and tension to set the stage for reconciliation. The prophetic voice of the African-American Churches of Christ fits Cornel West's words:

Prophetic thought and action is preservative in that it tries to keep alive certain elements of a tradition bequeathed to us from the past and revolutionary in that it attempts to project a vision and inspire a praxis which fundamentally transforms the prevailing status quo in light of the best of the tradition and the flawed yet significant achievements of the present order.⁸¹

In a world filled with violence and war, the story of the pacifism of the African-American Churches of Christ with its preservative and revolutionary aspects has something to offer to the entire Stone-Campbell tradition.

Notes

¹ Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments: Illuminations of the Crisis in American Religion and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) ix.

² While no history has been written the following sources do have invaluable perspectives on the African-American Churches of Christ: Michael W. Casey, "Say Amen Brother! The African-American Tradition," in *Saddlebags, City Streets and Cyberspace: A History of Preaching in the Churches of Christ* (Abilene: Abilene Christian University Press, 1995) pp. 137-155; Robert E. Hooper, "Out of Bondage: Black Churches of Christ in America," in *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the 20th Century* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 1993) and Annie C. Tuggle, *Another World Wonder* (n.p., n.d.); Richard T. Hughes, "Blacks and Whites: The Struggle for Social Justice in the 1960s," in *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Co., 1996), pp. 270-306 and Dewayne Winrow, "Multiculturalism in Churches of Christ, *Disciplinana* 57 (Fall 1997), pp. 67-79.

³ David Edwin Harrell, Jr. "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 21 (September 1962), pp. 263-74 and Michael W. Casey, "From Patriotism to Pacifism: The Emergence of Civil Religion in the Churches of Christ in World War One," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 66 (July 1992), pp. 376-390.

⁴ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900: A Social History of the Disciples of Christ Volume II* (Atlanta: Publishing Systems, Inc., 1973), pp. 198.

⁵ Marshall Keeble as cited by J.E. Choate, *Roll Jordan Roll: A Biography of Marshall Keeble* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1974), p. 38.

⁶ Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving*, p. 127.

⁷ R. Vernon Boyd, *Undying Dedication: The Story of G.P. Bowser* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1985), pp. 26, 28, 31, 40.

⁸ "Questions," CE (April 10, 1947), p. 6. While Bowser is not identified as the author of the column, most likely he answered the questions. If Bowser was not the author, one of his associate editors answered it with Bowser's editorial approval

⁹ Boyd, pp. 18-22.

¹⁰ Richard Lischer, *The Preacher King: Martin Luther King and the Word that Moved America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 32-35.

¹¹ Boyd, pp. 66, 69.

¹² Lischer, *Preacher King*, pp. 28-32.

¹³ Choate, p. 96.

¹⁴ As cited by Choate, p. 38.

¹⁵ Marshall Keeble, tape-recorded sermon, 1951. Guy N. Woods Collection, Freed-Hardeman University Library. I have transcribed this passage and made no effort to smooth out the original idiom of Keeble.

¹⁶ On Keeble's life see Paul D. Phillips, "The Interracial Impact of Marshall Keeble Black Evangelist, 1878-1968," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 36 (Spring 1977), pp. 62-74; Forrest Neil Rhoades, "A Study of the Sources of Marshall Keeble's Effectiveness as a Preacher." Ph.D. Dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1970) and Arthur L. Smith [Molefi Assante], "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Speaking of Marshall Keeble," (M.A. Thesis, Pepperdine College, 1965).

¹⁷ For an example of this see Casey, *Saddlebags*, pp. 150-1.

¹⁸ G.P. Bowser, "Shall Christians Go to War?" *Christian Echo* (October 5, 1940), p. 5. No issues of the *Christian Echo* are extant before 1935 and only scattered issues are available before 1968. Hereafter CE.

¹⁹ Boyd, p. 38.

²⁰ White dissent is more readily known. See Michael W. Casey and Michael Jordan. "Government Surveillance of the Churches of Christ in World War I: An Episode of Free Speech Suppression," *Free Speech Yearbook* 34 (1996), pp. 102-11 and Casey, "The Closing of Cordell Christian College: A Microcosm of American Intolerance during World War I," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, forthcoming.

²¹ Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Apathy and Dissent: Black America's Negative Responses to World War I," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 80 (Summer 1981), pp. 322-38.

²² Theodore Kornweibel, Jr., "Bishop C.H. Mason and the Church of God in Christ During World War I: The Perils of Conscientious Objection," *Southern Studies* 26 (Winter 1987), pp. 261-81. This article is revised and expanded in Theron Schlabach and Richard T. Hughes, eds. *Proclaim Peace: Voices of Christian Pacifism in Unexpected Places* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), pp. 58-81.

²³ See Michael Casey, "New Information on Conscientious Objectors of World War I and the Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly* (1992), pp. 83-96. Hereafter RQ.

²⁴ J.S. Winston, "A Pioneer Minister," CE (September 1990), p. 6.

²⁵ Robert F. Nunley, tape-recorded speech at the 1981 Freed-Hardeman lectureship.

²⁶ The following story is based on Nunley's Court-martial record that can be found at the National Archives, Suitland, Maryland. See Court-Martial No. 123965, National Archives (Hereafter NA).

²⁷ CM 123965, NA.

²⁸ CM 123965, NA and Annie C. Tuggle, *Our Ministers and Song Leaders of the Church of Christ* (Detroit: n.p., 1945), p. 118.

²⁹ Winston, "Pioneer," 6. Fred Bailey, professor of history at Abilene Christian University recalled hearing Nunley speak about his World War I experience at a chapel service at Freed-Hardeman University in the late 1970s. The University was not recording their chapel services nor did the student paper *The Bell Tower* report his speech.

³⁰ For the one-cup and non-Sunday School churches see Michael W. Casey, "A Family Quarrel Within the Churches of Christ: the Pacifist Tradition of the Non-Sunday School/One-Cup Churches of Christ," Christian Scholars Conference, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX., July 1997. For statements of congregations see A.B. Lipscomb, "In Times of Peace Prepare For War," *Christian Leader* 47 (June 13, 1933), pp. 5-6.

³¹ G.P. Bowser, As the Editor Sees It, *CE* (July 5, 1947): 4. and Bowser, Friendly Criticism, *CE* (July 5, 1948), p. 6.

³² Boyd, pp. 66-74.

³³ Michael Casey, "Neither Militant Nor Pacifist: Robert H. Boll and the Premillennial Churches of Christ on War and Peace," A paper presented at the Christian Scholars Conference, Pepperdine University, Malibu, July 1998.

³⁴ Don Carlos Janes, "Christians and Carnal Warfare," *CE* (November 5, 1939), p. 6.

³⁵ "To Conscientious Objectors," *CE* (July 20, 1941), p. 2.

³⁶ "The Present Draft Law," *CE* (October 5, 1940), p. 8.

³⁷ James M. Butler, "Perilous Times," *CE* (July 20, 1940), p. 8.

³⁸ G.P. Bowser, "As the Editor Sees It," *CE* (September 20, 1942), p. 3.

³⁹ C.N. Kirksey, "A Vision of World Peace," *CE* (February 5, 1942), p. 6.

⁴⁰ R.N. Hogan, "My Personal Observation," *CE* (November 5, 1942), p. 2.

⁴¹ O. Winston, "Think on These Things," *CE* (January 5, 1943), p. 5.

⁴² See Michael Casey, "Warriors Against War: The Pacifists of the Churches of Christ in World War II," *RQ* 35 (1993), pp. 159-74.

⁴³ T.G. Marbury, "The Christian's Fight," *CE* (January 20, 1944), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁴ Cpl. Kermit Nixon, "Love," *CE* (June 5, 1944), p. 3. Also see Nixon, "Jesus Uses His Power to Help," *CE* (March 20, 1945), p. 2 and Nixon, "From a Soldier in the U.S. Army and a Soldier in the Christian Army," *CE* (December 5, 1943), p. 2.

⁴⁵ On the Churches of Christ and CPS see Michael Casey, "Churches of Christ and World War II Civilian Public Service: A Pacifist Remnant," in Schlabach and Hughes, eds. *Proclaim Peace*, pp. 97-114.

⁴⁶ *Directory of Civilian Public Service* (Washington: National Service Board for Religious Objectors, [1947]), pp. 109.

⁴⁷ A.C.O. [Stafford Nunley,] "Civilian Public Camp," *CE* (July 5, 1945), p. 3.

⁴⁸ *CE* (July 5, 1943), p. 6, (October 20, 1943), p. 6, (November 5, 1943), p. 4, (March 5, 1944), p. 5, (March 20, 1944), p. 4, (June 5, 1944), p. 3, (May 6, 1945), p. 4. The men named were Geo. Wayne Mellens, Elbert Hudson, Frank White, Tom Gray, Chester C. Vaughan, Lawrence Anderson, and S.N. Davis. Davis had attended Marshall Keeble's school, Nashville Christian Institute.

⁴⁹ Marbury, p. 2.

⁵⁰ C.O.[Nunley], p. 3.

⁵¹ For chaplains in the white churches see Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement 1919-1950* (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1987), pp. 328-337.

⁵² S. Douglas Greer, "The Outlook," *CE* (August 5, 1948), pp. 7-8.

⁵³ Copies of the *Christian Echo* published in the early 1950s are not currently available to researchers.

⁵⁴ Interview with A.V. Nunley, Martin, Tennessee, 16 August 1994.

⁵⁵ Fred Gray, *Bus Ride to Justice: Changing the System By the System* (Montgomery: The Black Belt Press, 1995), pp. 6-19.

⁵⁶ Gray, pp. 50-97.

⁵⁷ Gray, p. 4.

⁵⁸ Gray, pp. 115-24.

⁵⁹ Gray, p. 254.

⁶⁰ Gray, p. 257.

⁶¹ Hogan, "Should We Refuse to Support our Christian Schools Because of the Integration Effort?" *CE* (September 1956), p. 2.

⁶² Hogan, "My Personal Observations," *CE* (June 1963), p. 3.

⁶³ Humphrey Foutz, "When Rendering Unto Caesar," *CE* (November 1964), p. 5.

⁶⁴ J.R. Davis, Sr., "Let's Face It!" *CE* (May 1965), p. 3.

- ⁶⁵ Fred Gray, pp. 221-5.
- ⁶⁶ Norman Adamson, "Reflections . . . On Selma and Montgomery," *CE* (June 1965), p. 1.
- ⁶⁷ Adamson, p. 2.
- ⁶⁸ James Maxwell, "A Soldier in the Army of the Lord," *CE* (October 1966), pp. 1, 5.
- ⁶⁹ Andrew Hairston, "The Church and Military Ministry," *CE* (December 1967), pp. 1, 2, 3 and (January 1968), pp. 3, 8.
- ⁷⁰ The account that follows is based on two sources: William C. Martin, "Shepherds Vs. Flocks: Ministers and Negro Militancy," *Atlantic* (December 1967), pp. 53-9 and Thomas J. McNichols, "Eastman Kodak and FIGHT," in Raymond Simon, *Public Relations Management: Cases and Simulations* (Columbus; Grid, Inc., 1973), pp. 67-84.
- ⁷¹ Martin, p. 54.
- ⁷² As cited by McNichols, p. 70.
- ⁷³ McNichols, p. 77.
- ⁷⁴ Martin, p. 58.
- ⁷⁵ William C. Martin, "Shepherds vs. Flocks—a Response," *Mission* (November 1968), p. 23.
- ⁷⁶ *Christian Chronicle* (April 26, 1968), p. 1.
- ⁷⁷ *Christian Chronicle* (May 17, 1968), p. 3.
- ⁷⁸ James D. Bales, *The Martin Luther King Story* (Tulsa Christian Crusade Publications, 1967).
- ⁷⁹ G.P. Holt, "Tension Between the Black and White Church," *CE* (June 1969), p. 9.
- ⁸⁰ Eugene Lawton, "Is Non-Violence Practical in Today's Violent World?" *CE* (May 1972), p. 1, 2.
- ⁸¹ West, *Prophetic*, xi.

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Topic: Mission 1849: American Christian Missionary Society and the Barclays.

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Blowers, Professor of Church History at Emmanuel School of Religion.

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Two Perspectives on the “Banquet of Love”: A Comparative Analysis of the Philosophical Bases of the Eucharistic Theologies of Alexander Campbell and John W. Nevin

by Robert R. Howard*

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Christianity in the United States was beginning to take a distinctive shape. This shape was influenced in no small measure by the various philosophical, theological, and pietistic forces which traversed the Atlantic ocean from Europe. Two Christian movements so affected, both born of the rich religious milieu of Pennsylvania¹ in the first half of that century, were Alexander Campbell’s “Disciples of Christ” and the Mercersburg Theology² of Frederick Augustus Rauch, John Williamson Nevin, and Philip Schaff. Both groups saw as their mission the continuing or completing of the Reformation of Christianity begun in the sixteenth century. Both also considered the Lord’s Supper as central - indeed absolutely vital - to that task, as is plainly evident in the writings of Nevin, who has been called the theologian of the Mercersburg Theology,³ and Campbell. However, the approaches of each thinker were grounded, as will be seen, on fundamentally distinct philosophical assumptions. The present investigation will explore each man’s philosophical roots, and attempt to demonstrate how they reveal themselves in, and indeed form, his distinct eucharistic theology.⁴ A concluding section will set the two in analytical contrast, in search of insights relevant to contemporary eucharistic theology and its issue in Christian practice.

I. Alexander Campbell:

A. Campbell’s Philosophical Roots:

Alexander Campbell claimed not to be eclectic in his use of philosophical and theological sources, “but to have begun with the Scriptures and adopted the systems of others in so far as they were consistent with the Scriptures.”⁵ Despite his insistence to call “Bible things by Bible names,”⁶ implying independence from all human philosophies, Campbell sought to demonstrate his theological claims “from rational principles”⁷ - principles which just happened to owe their substance not to scripture, but rather to current Enlightenment systems of thought. If the chief formative influence upon Campbell was “the religious heritage of Calvinism mediated through [his father] Thomas Campbell,”⁸ it will be seen that his theological interpretation of that heritage nonetheless arranged itself on a framework of Lockean and Realist philosophy.

Campbell freely acknowledged his affinity with British empiricist John Locke;⁹ indeed his theological system reflects a “piecemeal [and]... uncritical absorption of various influences which had originated with Locke...”¹⁰ Royal Humbert comments, “When Alexander Campbell rode on horseback he often either carried the essays of his favorite philosopher, John Locke, in his saddle bags, or read from these works as he rode.”¹¹ Campbell’s empirical epistemology closely paralleled Locke’s:

all our ideas of the sensible universe are the result of sensation and reflection. All knowledge we have of material nature,

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has been acquired by the exercise of our senses and of our reason upon those discoveries.¹²

For this “reflection,” Campbell appropriated Francis Bacon’s method of induction, as filtered through the Scottish “Common Sense” Realist philosophers,¹³ in which the “facts” of external reality are carefully observed, accumulated, classified, compared, and then generalizations made based upon this inductive analysis: “The principles of investigation on which the inductive philosophy of Lord Bacon is founded...are those which should govern [the Church]...”¹⁴ By means of this method, Campbell was seeking “the principles underlying surface phenomena.”¹⁵ By “fact,” he meant, with Locke, “something said or done,” which he understood to possess “a power which logical truth has not.” Facts, he asserted, were the basis of all revealed religion.¹⁶ Thus Christian belief might be explored inductively: “To obtain the biblical doctrine on a topic (baptism, for example), one would inductively glean all the scripture references on baptism and then generalize a conclusion from the particular scriptures.”¹⁷ Faith, then, resulted from belief in the testimony, gathered by the five senses or revealed by God,¹⁸ of a witness (in the above case, the witness of scripture) to a fact or number of facts. In short, Campbell pithily insisted, “[w]here testimony begins, faith begins; and where testimony ends, faith ends.”¹⁹ He abhorred speculative philosophy, applying reason strictly to sensible facts which may be observed, and the testimony of others.²⁰ Following Locke,²¹ he based his theological insights for faith and practice on the “positive commands” found in scripture, i.e., “the plain sayings of the Lord and his Apostles” and the practice of the early Christians, which he took to be “equivalent to an apostolic command.”²² Although he may not fairly be accused of a wooden literalism, Campbell’s philosophical presuppositions did predetermine his use of scripture as a sourcebook to be studied in order to replicate apostolic practice in contemporary Christianity. Campbell’s restorationist program came into existence not for its own sake, but rather served a fervently-held teleology. Using current political philosophy, he saw both testaments of the Bible as “perfect constitutions,” divinely given to order the government of the Church, in order to restore a pristine apostolic unity now splintered by “the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages.”²³ Although as the years passed, the extreme Lockean positions of Campbell’s young adulthood relaxed back toward orthodoxy,²⁴ we may nevertheless identify these philosophical underpinnings in the formative theology of his earlier years: a sensible, empirical Lockeanism melded with Baconian induction, filtered through a Scottish “Common Sense” Realism. Now we shall see how these positions worked themselves out in his understanding of the life and practice of the church, especially in the heart of its worship, the Lord’s Supper.

B. Campbell on Life in the Church:

Campbell extended Locke’s concept of a primeval, harmonious “state of nature” to the apostolic church:

Christianity was as perfect as it could be in all of its parts, -
in doctrine, ordinances, precepts, promises, institutions, offices
and officers, when the Apostles finished their personal labors,
and incapable of emendation or improvement.²⁵

Early Christianity as discovered in the New Testament was thus the peerless, unimpeachable, and supremely reliable model for Christianity in his day.

As noted previously, in his view the New Testament served as a constitution for the church, the faithful following of which would restore purity, vitality, and unity to a tarnished and divided church. Thus we may understand the motivation for his insistence on calling “Bible things by Bible names.”²⁶ Telling is the running title for a series of early articles on church practice in the Christian Baptist: “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.”²⁷ Only by eliminating the accumulated clutter of innovation,²⁸ the source of contention, returning to its “constitutional” roots, and, in obedience to the explicit or implicit commands contained therein, resolutely applying them to every part of its life and practice, could the church hope to thrive. Thus, his goal was to reform the church by recovering its apostolic unity “in essentials.”²⁹ Playing a major part in this program was Campbell’s notion of “ordinances,” and the two chief ordinances, baptism and the “breaking of the loaf.”

C. “Ordinances”:

Operating out of a “command” model, Campbell found several practices ordained under the authority of apostolic practices. These he called “ordinances,” which he understood to be the sole conveyance and means of enjoyment of “the wisdom, power, love, mercy, compassion, or grace of God...”³⁰ He explicitly opposed use of the word “sacrament,” as being of human origin and not a “Bible name” (as if the word “ordinance” were!).³¹ He advocated a varying number of ordinances, including the preaching of the gospel, reading and teaching the “Living Oracles,” fasting, prayer, confession of sins, praise, “all statutes and commandments,”³² the church and its ministry, faith, repentance,³³ and marriage;³⁴ but seemed to speak most consistently of three: baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the Lord’s day.³⁵ He saw these ordinances as the means, along with the scriptures, by which the Holy Spirit “works upon the understanding and affections of saints and sinners...”³⁶ They were, in fact, a means of grace, “the means of our individual enjoyment of the present salvation of God,”³⁷ sacraments in all but name. Campbell, however, explicitly denied any ex opere operato efficacy of the ordinances, asserting that the validity of all Christian ordinances, so far as spiritual or evangelical benefit is concerned, must always depend on the faith of the subject, and neither on the faith or the piety of the administrator.³⁸ However, against the rising antisacramental revivalism of Finney, Campbell nonetheless maintained Christianity’s need for “clear, overt acts,” rather than mere “faith and penitence, or any other mental operation...” Thus, in their capacity as means of grace, these concrete ordinances were seen by him to contribute toward the “perfecting of our faith in the promises of God.”³⁹

D. The Lord’s Supper: “The Banquet of Love”

Of the ordinances, the Lord’s Supper was for Campbell the one of nurture and growth, being the especial time when “God commune[s] with his sons and daughters, and they with him. This, to the living Christian, is a banquet of love.”⁴⁰ True to both his Reformed heritage and his philosophical framework, Campbell rejected any sacrificial notion in his concept of the Lord’s Supper. The “breaking of the loaf,” as he was wont to call it early in his career,⁴¹ was “emblematic of the Messiah’s sacrifice, and commemorative of his death....” It was not an occasion of new blessing, but “for commemorating those already received.”⁴² Despite the fact that Campbell seems never to have directly addressed the meaning of the Lord’s Supper,⁴³ a number of aspects of the meal

in his thought may be noted and implications drawn.

Consistent with his avoidance of speculative philosophy, we find no discussion of the issue of “presence” in the Supper. However, concerning that topic, a number of observations may be noted. As just indicated, the Supper was for him a commemoration of Christ’s death, emblematic of his sacrifice. Campbell called it a “weekly memento.”⁴⁴

Thus is the meal representative; The loaf is...constituted a representation of his body - first whole, then wounded for our sins. The cup is... instituted a representation of his blood - once his life but now poured out to cleanse us from our sins.⁴⁵

Campbell’s memorial notion of the Lord’s Supper does not appear to be strictly Zwinglian - note the aspect of the power of God’s grace present in the ordinances as described previously - but neither can it support the weight of Odo Casel’s anamnesis theory, in which the salvific efficacy of Christ’s act is brought forward - re-presented - in the present moment by active recalling to mind on the part of the participants.⁴⁶ As Josef A. Jungmann explicates,

The central point in Casel’s theory is that in the cult action - hence certainly in the sacraments and in the Mass - it is Christ’s saving act itself that becomes present and not merely the effect and fruit of this saving act. Accordingly we must say that Christ’s passion and death and resurrection are made present, and not merely the grace that these acts won for us.⁴⁷

Campbell would certainly agree that the effects and fruit of Christ’s sacrifice are present in the ordinance; more than that probably cannot be eked out of his words.⁴⁸ The closest Campbell comes to any kind of positive statement on the notion of presence in any part of worship is to say that “every one that speaks or acts must feel himself specially in the presence of the Lord, not as on other days or in other places....”⁴⁹ At best this is a subjective view of spiritual presence without objective evidence.

The Supper for Campbell is a social event, embracing both vertical and horizontal dimensions; it is never individualistic. Participants commune “with the Lord and with one other.”⁵⁰ Indeed, in his view, frequent communion “excites...feelings” of the “philanthropy of God” toward one another between those who share the loaf and cup, and “draw[s] closer the tie of fraternal [and, one might presume, sororal] love.”⁵¹ In an oft-quoted lyrical passage, he adds:

Each Disciple, in handing the symbols to his fellow-disciple, says, in effect, “You, my brother, once an alien, are now a citizen of heaven; once a stranger, are now brought home to the family of God. You have owned my Lord as your Lord, my people as your people. Under Jesus the Messiah we are one. Mutually embraced in the Everlasting arms, I embrace you in mine: thy sorrows shall be my sorrows, and thy joys my joys. Joint debtors to the favor of God and the love of Jesus, we shall jointly suffer with him, that we may jointly reign with him. Let us, then, renew our strength, remember our King, and hold fast our boasted hope unshaken to the end.”⁵²

In order to encourage such mutual love, Campbell steadfastly maintained that

the Lord's Supper was an "essential part" of regular worship.⁵³ Weekly practice was to be the norm,⁵⁴ for the continued spiritual health of all members of the congregation.⁵⁵ Campbell advocated the use of a single unbroken loaf, as symbolic of the fundamental unity of the "body."⁵⁶ He particularly emphasized the Fraction, or breaking of the loaf (thus the special aptness of his designation for the entire meal): "In eating it we then remember that the Lord's body was by his own consent broken or wounded for us."⁵⁷ The mood of the meal, though, was not to be sorrowful or gloomy, but rather joyful and hopeful, celebrating the past event wrought by God, its present appropriation, and the future hope of a "glorious transformation to the likeness of the Son of God."⁵⁸ With regard to other matters concerning the manner of celebrating the Supper, Campbell left them "to the prudence and good sense of the Christian communities...."⁵⁹

In Campbell's theological explanation of the Supper, we see tight adherence to his empiricism and inductive method. He refuses, for example, to speculate about the mechanics of grace in the meal. Although, for him, the ordinance yields many blessed effects, its basis is still found in a divine command model. Any other reason for participating is suspect.

II. John W. Nevin, on the other hand...:

A. Nevin's Philosophical Roots:

The theologians of the Reformed Seminary at Mercersburg consciously sought "to transfer to some extent into the literature of this country the life and power of German thinking generally, under its most recent forms."⁶⁰ Consequently, Nevin attempted not simply to parrot contemporary German scholarship, but reproduce the best of it in forms adapted to the unique religious context of the United States. He intended a restoration and completion of what the Reformers had begun; indeed, the entire Mercersburg project aimed to advance beyond their positions, in hopes of an eventual reconciliation of even Catholicism and Protestantism to each other.⁶¹ The first influence upon Nevin which we may identify was Romanticism's sense of the organic vitality of all of creation, and the intimate relation of God to the universe. Intuition was recognized as equally as valid an organ of knowledge as reason - in sharp contrast to the Enlightenment's strict emphasis on rationality ("evidence") alone. "The natural world was viewed not as a lifeless mechanism, but as an organism pulsating with mysterious powers, inaccessible to sober reason, and yet making their presence known by signs and symbols."⁶² Second, the thoughts of several German speculative philosophers impressed themselves upon Nevin, and found their way into his theology. I. Kant perceived the source of moral order, God, to be discovered not outside of the world, but in it. God was seen by Kant as immanent as well as transcendent. From F. W. J. Schelling Nevin derived the notion of whole of nature being a realm of vital forces united by inward connections, "a spiritual whole united by a single life and in constant process of becoming." G. W. F. Hegel showed him

that the history of [hu]mankind is not an aggregate of arbitrary forces nor a chaos of selfish passions, but [men's and women's] progressive realization of the idea of freedom and of [their] eternal relation to God.

The theologian F. D. E. Schleiermacher introduced to Nevin the notions that authority lay not in external creeds or dogmatic statements, but rather in the

religious experience of the believer; and of Christianity defined as a life lived, rather than acceptance of a set of doctrines and observance of a body of moral precepts.⁶³ The thought of church historian F. C. Baur reached Nevin through the influence of Schaff, contributing the notion of historical development, “a constant, progressive flow of thought in the successive ages of the church.”⁶⁴ K. Ullmann’s short treatise, “Das Wesen des Christenthums,” had a profound impact upon Nevin, indeed, so much so that he included his translation of the piece as an introduction to his Mystical Presence. Ullmann defined Christianity as the unity of the divine and human as contained in the Person of Christ..., [and the Church as] divine in essence and human in form, gradually developing until it perfectly reflects the divine-human life of its Lord.⁶⁵ This sense of historical development was further underscored by Nevin’s acquaintance with the writings of J. A. W. Neander. S. T. Coleridge opened to him a “less mechanical view of biblical inspiration,”⁶⁶ which fit hand-in-glove with Nevin’s developmental understanding of history and the Church. We may in sum adopt George Warren Richard’s label of the philosophic basis of Nevin’s system as “a form of idealistic realism,” which differs “at every point from the empiricism of Locke...”⁶⁷ Life itself was organically connected with its own history and the continuing, developing action of God through that history.

B. The Church:

The structure of Nevin’s theology was consistent with the aforementioned notion of the hidden organic connections in the world. In his view, all of theology was organically - indeed, necessarily - interconnected. And the whole of theology flowed from Jesus Christ:

Starting in Christ, it follows the order in which the facts of religion unfold themselves with necessary connection from His Person. The order is for it not optional simply, but is felt to be inwardly bound to its own principle. It is the immanent logic of faith, determined by Him who is the central object of faith.⁶⁸

The keen reader will notice the appearance of certain words and phrases which reveal the philosophical underpinnings just explicated: “unfold,” “necessary connection,” “His Person,” and “inwardly bound to its own principle.” What affected one part reverberated throughout the whole theological system. His Eucharistic theology, for example, was not conceived to exist in isolation, or as a sphere separate from other theological concerns:

Our view of the Lord’s Supper must ever condition and rule in the end our view of Christ’s person and the conception we form of the Church. It must influence at the same time, very materially, our whole system of theology, as well as our ideas of ecclesiastical history.⁶⁹

Because, for Nevin, revelation was “primarily something God does”-note Nevin’s use of the present tense - it was therefore an objective supernatural manifestation, which caused God’s presence to be felt in the world, and apprehended by those “under the inspiration of” God’s Spirit. Thus, he argued, his theological system was not a patchwork of “subjective notions, a metaphysical theory of God and religion born only of the human mind,” but rather a perception of divine activity by faith “under the form of an actual Divine

manifestation in and through Christ,” which was at the same time “joined...to the natural history of the world onward through all time.”⁷⁰ Through the eyes of faith, in other words, the objective reality of God’s continuing action was plainly evident in every corner of reality, “not just as the memory of a past wonder [against contemporary semi-Zwinglian revivalism], but as the continued working of the power it carried with it in the beginning.”⁷¹ This continuation he called Christianity, the corporate “carrying out of this mystery of godliness among men to the end of time,” that was a “new order of existence which was constituted for the world by the great fact of the Incarnation.”⁷² Thus the idea⁷³ of Christianity necessarily found its historical manifestation in the Church, which “must be visible, or in other words, not merely ideal, but actual...” and visible not simply as an assemblage of individual Christians, but corporately, “as an organic body, in whose presence alone all individual Christianity becomes real.”⁷⁴ In its outward form, the Church was “the necessary form of the new creation in Christ Jesus, in its very nature;” indeed it was for Nevin “the necessary consequence of Christ...”⁷⁵ Thus, the Church was - not despite, but in all of its concrete particularity - “the real, objective, historical working of Christ’s Mediatorial Life in the world,” and as such, “serve[d] to reveal Christ” to that world.⁷⁶

C. The Sacraments:

Consonant with his theme of organic connection, Nevin’s theology was (in analytical order of succession) Christocentric, objective, historical, and churchly; and so in his view could “never be otherwise than sacramental.” Because the Church was conceived by him as a “conjunction of the supernatural and the natural continuously in one and the same abiding economy of grace,” its sacraments were far more than mere outward signs, but rather “seals of the actual realities themselves, which they exhibit.”⁷⁷ Thus, to put it in more recent terminology, for Nevin they participated in that reality toward which they pointed. Sacraments were, to adapt a classic definition, visible exhibitions of an invisible grace, in which “the visible and invisible are brought together, not simply in man’s thought, but in God’s power, by a bond holding beyond nature altogether in the supernatural order of grace.”⁷⁸ Thus, in every sacramental act of worship, something really happens: “Christ is present and acts redemptively....”⁷⁹ Again we may note the consistency which unifies his theological system: the sacraments were the concrete expression of the living power of Christ, present in and through his church. The ultimate sacrament for the living of the church, of course, was the Lord’s Supper, in which the church found its beating heart:

The last ground of all true Christian worship is the mystical presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist; all the parts of public worship are inwardly bound together by their having a common relation to the idea of a Christian altar.⁸⁰

D. The Lord’s Supper:

Just as the Eucharist for Nevin was the very heart of Christian worship, so it fundamentally affected one’s Christology and ecclesiology: any modification of the one necessarily influenced the other.⁸¹ He was convinced that he was simply attempting faithfully to recover Calvin’s eucharistic theology for a contemporary church which had lost its bearings.⁸² Thus did he concentrate on exploring the meaning of the meal, for in this “most graphic picture” of Christ’s salvific act he saw the entire “mystery of Christianity” concentrated.⁸³

As previously mentioned, Nevin viewed the outward, visible sign of the sacraments as indissolubly bound to its concomitant inward, invisible grace, “so that the undying power of Christ’s life and sacrifice are there for all who take part in it with faith.”⁸⁴ Thus, he saw that the Lord’s Supper actually produced a “real life-union with Christ, powerfully wrought in our souls by the Holy Ghost,” inserting believers, as it were, into his dynamic life now being lived out in (or “under,” as Nevin might prefer to put it) the form of the Church.⁸⁵ Only from this union with Christ in the Church through the Lord’s Supper did individual Christians exist - not the reverse.⁸⁶

Because of this schema of the Christian life, and directly resulting from its implications in Nevin’s philosophical “idealistic realism,” he was virtually obligated to explore the nature of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist thoroughly. First of all, he remained unyielding in his belief in the actual presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper:

The fact that the Christian life holds an actual communication with the humanity of Christ, and that this, in particular, forms the soul of the Lord’s Supper, may never be relinquished.⁸⁷

He differed, however, from many in his careful delineation of what transpired in faithful reception of the sacrament. The presence of Christ was no mere mental creation.⁸⁸ Nor was it simply a fond commemoration of events long past, “calling to mind the fact of His death.”⁸⁹ Nor was Christ to be considered, contrary to Lutheran understanding, as “in or under the bread, locally considered.”⁹⁰ Rather, Nevin posited a presence activated in the very use of the elements, what he called “the sacramental transaction.”⁹¹ According to his understanding (and revealing his philosophical legacy), Christ is present to believers “as the supernatural bond of a true life connection, by which his very flesh is joined to ours....”⁹² This is understood in not a physical, but a spiritual way, conveying the “full virtue and effect” of his sacrificial death, “through the wonder-working power of the Holy Ghost.”⁹³ Thus Nevin conceived the Eucharist to communicate not “the benefits of the new covenant only; but Christ himself also, in a real way....”⁹⁴ In his estimation, the two could in no way be split apart. If the Church derives organically from the very life of Christ, and the power of that life continues into the present, then necessarily not only the benefits of Christ’s act but Christ’s very life itself is now present in the sacrament. Nevin also conceived of the recipient of that life holistically:

It is the soul or spirit of the believer that is immediately fed with the grace, which is conveyed to it mystically in the holy ordinance. But this is in fact a fruition that belongs to the entire man; for the life made over to him under such central form, becomes at once, in virtue both of its own human character, and of the human character of the believer himself, a renovating force that reaches out into his person on all sides, and fills with its presence the undivided totality of his nature.⁹⁵

It was the whole human being that received Christ’s presence at the Table. And what exactly was acquired, according to Nevin? Nothing less than the dynamic “inward power of [Christ’s] life,”⁹⁶ a dynamism metaphorically understood in terms of that new physical force just beginning to be explored, electricity. This dynamic presence of Christ was “apprehended only by faith.”⁹⁷ Nevin took pains

to distinguish this “organ” of perception from fancy. Faith, he maintained, in no way created or extracted the presence of Christ, but was rather “the condition of its efficacy for the communicant.”⁹⁸ Nevin depicted his understanding of the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper by an analogy from nature:

The presence of the root in the branches of the oak, is not properly speaking either a local or material presence. It is the power of a common life. And why then should it be held impossible, for Christ’s life to reach over into the persons of his people, whole and entire...?⁹⁹

Recapturing for his own time Calvin’s neglected theology of presence, Nevin thus asserted that it was

a real presence, in opposition to the notion that Christ’s flesh and blood are not made present to the communicant in any way. A spiritual real presence, in opposition to the idea that Christ’s body is in the elements in a local or corporal manner. Not real simply, and not spiritual simply; but real, and yet spiritual at the same time. The body of Christ is in heaven, the believer on earth; but by the power of the Holy Ghost, nevertheless, the obstacle of such vast local distance is fully overcome, so that in the sacramental act, while the very body and blood of Christ are at the same time inwardly and supernaturally communicated to the worthy receiver, for the real nourishment of his new life ...the living energy, the vivific virtue, as Calvin styles it, of Christ’s flesh, is made to flow over into the communicant, making him more and more one with Christ himself...¹⁰⁰

In this one summary quote, we may easily see revealed Nevin’s philosophical roots: the organic connection of Christ’s life to that of the believers, the presence of Christ as a force sweeping into them, and the interconnectedness of theological elements, finding their ultimate source in the life of Christ. For Nevin, the heart of Christianity, as the present continuation of the life of Christ, beat most forcefully and beneficially in the Lord’s Supper.

III. Campbell and Nevin Compared

A. Agreements:

Each saw as his task to complete what had begun with the Reformation of the sixteenth century, an effort which would result in the reunion of the Church.¹⁰¹ Both opposed the revivalism which gained strength throughout the century, Nevin calling those who verbally goaded their listeners toward new birth, “miserable obstetricians.”¹⁰² Both also saw the church as no mere collection of individuals, but rather the corporate body of Christ, in which members are responsible to and for each other.¹⁰³ Both, again, felt a need for visible, outward sacramental actions.¹⁰⁴ Each emphasized the centrality of the Lord’s Supper to the Christian life, the notion that some kind of spiritual benefit was thereby conveyed,¹⁰⁵ its eschatological nature,¹⁰⁶ and the need for its celebration to be weekly.¹⁰⁷

B. Disagreements:

Not every point, however, found them in agreement. Nevin had stern words to speak about aspects of Campbell’s enterprise, acknowledging “many traces of a sound and right feeling... , ” while at the same time judging it

"overwhelmed...by the power of the unhistorical sect-mind..."¹⁰⁸ Campbell seems either to have been unacquainted with Nevin, or to have passed him over in silence. Their chief areas of difference may be analytically distinguished for the purposes of this study into philosophical, theological, and eucharistic, although in practice these areas were by no means pristinely immiscible.

Philosophically Campbell and Nevin embraced fundamentally distinct positions. Campbell acknowledged his debt to British empiricist traditions, emphasizing a sensate, empirical Lockeanism melded with Baconian induction, filtered through a Scottish "Common Sense" Realism. He abhorred "speculative" philosophy, preferring to stay his efforts at the boundaries of analysis of "material objects" alone, and doubtless would have accused Nevin of this very sin.¹⁰⁹ Due to his rationalistic empiricism, he also disdained any sense of continuous historical development of ideas: "what is true, is true; what is not, is false," previously, presently, and forever.¹¹⁰ Thus, Nevin's sense of the organic development and inward connection of reality would to him have seemed the sheerest nonsense. For Nevin, on the other hand, Campbell's system was entirely too rationalistic, based not on the testimony of the Holy Spirit throughout the developing stream of Christian tradition, but rather on proofs drawn from reasoned analysis of historical evidence. In this view, empirical reason would be the sole arbiter of truth, automatically removing any supernatural influence, and so being "notoriously unfriendly...to everything like reverence."¹¹¹

As regards theology, each man's philosophical underpinnings both affected and revealed themselves, particularly, in their ecclesiology. Campbell's model of the church was governmental,¹¹² its fount being Locke's understanding of society. The apostolic church was Campbell's analogue to Locke's "state of nature," a pristine society, composed of like-minded individuals who have chosen to throw their lot together, wherein all were in agreement.¹¹³ According to this ecclesial model, it is the individual who initiates any community, not God (who was totally absent in some extreme Deist forms of rationalism) or the Holy Spirit. It must be acknowledged, however, that Campbell's was a moderated Lockean ecclesiology: "he did not emphasize the church as a voluntary society of individuals so much as he emphasized the monarchical rule of the Lord of the church."¹¹⁴ "[W]hereas Alexander Campbell directed his appeal for the church to individuals, Nevin saw validity in the historic traditions," and opposed the divisive individualistic emphasis he recognized in sectarian movements.¹¹⁵ The church for him was the product of a continuous and unfolding tradition which embodied the dynamic power of the life of Christ, and embraced individuals.¹¹⁶ Nevin may fairly be critiqued, though, for falling prey to the ecclesial version of the Idealist notion of an unbroken development sweeping up all of humanity in the mighty rush toward its utopian goal. A quick scan of history reveals numerous glitches, reverses, and rebellions, the presence of which will give lie to any idea of inevitable progress.¹¹⁷

Regarding the Lord's Supper, the argument between the two would have been fierce. Campbell would have objected to application of the appellation, "sacrament," to the meal,¹¹⁸ to which Nevin would have replied that it is most precisely a sacrament.¹¹⁹ Campbell based its efficacy on the faith of the recipient;¹²⁰ but maintained the objective value of "clear, overt acts" for the believer's "enjoyment" of the Supper, over against the subjectivism of

revivalism.¹²¹ Nevin agreed on the necessity of faith in the believer, over against any ex opere notion,¹²² but rather argued that it was the real, spiritual presence of Christ which insured the objective “value” of the sacrament.¹²³ For Campbell, partakers of the meal enjoyed the blessings, favor, and love of God - as revealed by biblical facts; such was his understanding of the grace it contained.¹²⁴ Nevin, however, considered the grace provided by the meal to be the dynamic power of the life of Christ in the church, entering into the believers.¹²⁵ Finally, Campbell seems more inclined to treat the external action of the Supper; Nevin the inner meaning of it. Here again we may observe their two distinct philosophical groundings in sharp contrast, the one more sensate, the other more speculative, as they informed and shaped their eucharistic theologies.

IV. Conclusion:

Arising out of two variations of the Reformed tradition, the two men and their theological systems reveal frequent parallels: both share the goal of a reunited Christianity, both view the Lord’s Supper as vital to a sturdy Christianity. However, profound differences flow from their distinct philosophical roots.

Campbell displays an eclectic appropriation of British empiric rationalism, pragmatic in inclination, which resulted in his attempt to reunite Christianity by seeking to leap the centuries and replicate in contemporary life a pristine apostolic church, centered around a weekly community meal, the Lord’s Supper. This very move though, served to exclude any developments subsequent to the first century - such as most ecclesial and liturgical traditions. Further, his emphasis on the externals of the meal permitted thoughtless repetition of the form, with no understanding of the meaning of the meal. In a word his own philosophical presuppositions frustrated the success of his design.

Nevin’s program is informed by German Idealism, which is decidedly more speculative, and reveals a connective internal and historical unity. His goal was to allow the power of the living Christ resident in the meal to reunite the splintered church. By no means as rigid in concept as Campbell’s, his vision of a reunited church did suffer from a certain fuzziness, and lay open to the critique that it unrealistically posited an irresistible and inevitable progressive force propelling the church toward his noble goal. The events of this tragic century have discredited that theory. Further, his notion of presence is open to the pragmatic empiricist’s critique: how do you know this is so? Modern liturgical scholars and historians alike may learn from both men that our eucharistic theology is in no small part a product of our often concealed philosophical presuppositions. In this day of “post-modern” paradigm-shift (with its concomitant rapid label-shift), Enlightenment, Idealistic, and Romantic frameworks are collapsing, but inevitably still inform our own theologies. Socrates’ dictum, “know thyself,” is apposite in this regard.

Notes

¹ William Warren Sweet records that by 1776, there existed in Pennsylvania 403 congregations of 11 named ecclesiastical traditions, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942), p. 163; quoted in W. Clark Gilpin, “The Doctrine of the Church in the Thought of Alexander Campbell and John W. Nevin,” Mid-Stream 19(1980), p. 417. I am indebted to Professor Gilpin’s paper for many insights regarding Campbell’s and Nevin’s ecclesiologies.

² So named because it developed and flourished at the German Reformed Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

³ Charles A. Jones III, "Mercersburg: A Reformed Alternative for the Twentieth Century," in Scholarship, Sacraments, and Service: Historical Studies in Protestant Tradition, ed. by Daniel B. Clendenin and W. David Buschart, Texts and Studies in Religion, No. 49(Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), p. 161.

⁴ Perhaps an unfortunate contemporaneously anachronistic term when applied to Campbell's thought; nevertheless here employed for sheer expedience!

⁵ George Richard Phillips, Differences in the Theological and Philosophical Backgrounds of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone and Resulting Differences of Thrust in Their Theological Formulations, Ph. D. Dissertation(Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1968), p. 125.

⁶ Alexander Campbell, The Christian System in Reference to the Union of Christians and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity as Plead in the Current Reformation, 4th ed.(Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, 1866); Reprint ed.(Salem, NH: Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 308; hereinafter designated CS.

⁷ The Christian Baptist 3(1825), p. 11; hereinafter designated CB.

⁸ Phillips, p. 126.

⁹ Cf., e.g., A Debate between Rev. A. Campbell and Rev. N. L. Rice, on the Action, Subject, Design and Administrator of Christian Baptism; Also, on the Character of Spiritual Influence in Conversion and Sanctification, and on the Expediency and Tendency of Ecclesiastical Creeds as Terms of Union and Communion(Lexington: A. T. Skillman & Son, 1844; reprint ed.(Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, n.d.), p. 795: "I ask every person of reflection in this community, whether this great philosopher and politician has not expressed our identical views in the extract read." Hereinafter designated "Campbell-Rice Debate."

¹⁰ Phillips, p. 101; cf. also Winfred Ernest Garrison, Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting (St. Louis, Christian Publishing Company, 1900), pp. 108-14.

¹¹ Royal Humbert, ed., A Compend of Alexander Campbell's Theology (St. Louis, Bethany Press, 1961), p. 31, n.10.

¹² Campbell-Rice Debate, p. 618.

¹³ Michael Casey, "The Origins of the Hermeneutics of the Churches of Christ: Part Two: The Philosophical Background," Restoration Quarterly 31(1989):199;

¹⁴ Campbell, in Humbert, p. 32.

¹⁵ Phillips, p. 30.

¹⁶ CS, pp. 110, 117.

¹⁷ Casey, p. 200.

¹⁸ CS, pp. 112, 114, 119; Campbell-Rice Debate, pp. 835-36. Cf. also Casey, p. 205, who lists seven theses propounded by Campbell, in his "Introductory Lecture," delivered at the organization of Bethany College November 2, 1841, explicating his "scientific" epistemological position.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 113.

²⁰ Garrison, p. 111-12.

²¹ On which see Casey, pp. 196-97, who quotes from Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration: "Now nothing in worship or discipline can be necessary to the Christian communion, but what Christ our legislator, or the Apostles, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have commanded in express words" (emphasis mine).

²² CS, p. 327; CB 3(1825), pp. 29, 53.

²³ Phillips, p. 37; Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Embracing a View of the Origin, Progress and Principles of the Religious

Reformation which he Advocated, 2 vols.(Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1956), 1:259, 257.

²⁴ Phillips, p. 56.

²⁵ Millennial Harbinger, 1844:198; cf. Phillips, p. 31.

²⁶ CS, p. 308.

²⁷ CB 1825:11, pp. 29, 52, 76, etc.; emphasis mine.

²⁸ "Innovations are customs, usages, rites, doctrines that commenced one year after John wrote the word amen at the end of the Apocalypse," Campbell-Rice Debate, pp. 609-10.

²⁹ For an interpretation of the movement as a "Reformation" attempting to complete, after its own fashion, that of the sixteenth century, cf. Richardson, 1:366, 2:198; and Campbell's own view of himself standing in the reforming movement stretching even to the apostolic church, CS, p. 325-27, esp. 326.

³⁰ CS, p. 174; cf. also Millennial Harbinger 1943:9; in Humbert, p. 185.

³¹ CS, p. 174; cf. also "The Ordinances," MH 1943: 9; in Humbert, p. 185.

³² CS, p. 308.

³³ CS, p. 174.

³⁴ Millennial Harbinger 1861:250; though marriage may have been added to the list relatively late in Campbell's life, cf. Richard L. Harrison, Jr., "Early Disciples Sacramental Theology: Catholic, Reformed, and Free," in Classic Themes of Disciples Theology: Rethinking the Traditional Affirmations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), ed. by Kenneth Lawrence(Ft. Worth: Texas Christian

³⁵ Millennial Harbinger 1861:250. Harrison comments: "It seems that Campbell's longer list of ordinances is something similar to the traditional sacramentals," p. 91, n. 10.

³⁶ Millennial Harbinger 1855:258.

³⁷ CS, p. 175.

³⁸ Millennial Harbinger 1858:403, in Humbert, p. 185; hereinafter designated MH.

³⁹ CS, p. 63.

⁴⁰ MH 1864:152; in Humbert, p. 186.

⁴¹ MH 1849:152; 1861:250.

⁴² MH 1846:396.

⁴³ Harrison, p. 71.

⁴⁴ MH 1846:397.

⁴⁵ CS, p. 310.

⁴⁶ Against Harrison's (and others') position, which advocates Casel's anamnesis theory, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁷ The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great, University of Notre Dame Liturgical Studies, vol. 6, trans. by Francis A. Brunner(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), pp. 153-63; quote from p. 161. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁸ Besides, to make such a move might be a tad too speculative for his taste!

⁴⁹ MH 1835:508.

⁵⁰ CS, p. 309.

⁵¹ CB 1825:13; MH 1841:547.

⁵² CS, p. 310.

⁵³ CB 1825:11, 54; cf. also MH 1841:542, 543; CS p. 311.

⁵⁴ CB 1825:55; MH 1857:318, p. 320; CS, p. 317.

⁵⁵ CS, p. 328.

⁵⁶ CS, p. 305; MH 1834:96, in Humbert, p. 189.

⁵⁷ CS, p. 309.

⁵⁸ CB 1825, p. 12-13.

⁵⁹ CS, p. 92.

⁶⁰ Quoted in George Warren Richards, "The Mercersburg Theology Historically

Considered,” Papers of the American Society of Church History, 2nd Series, 3(1912), p. 119.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 121-22; cf. Nevin on the Reformation: “The work of the Reformation is not yet complete. . . . the vast struggle of the Reformation is to be taken up in its original spirit and carried forward . . . to its proper consummation. . . .” James Hastings Nichols, ed., The Mercersburg Theology, Library of Protestant Thought(NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 52, 54; cf. p. 185 for his notion of transcending the original aims of the sixteenth-century Reformers.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 125-26.

⁶³ Richards, pp. 127-28, 130.

⁶⁴ Binkley, Luther J., The Mercersburg Theology, Franklin and Marshall College Studies, No. 7(Manheim, PA: Sentinel Printing House, 1953), p. 33.

⁶⁵ William L. Carlough, “German Idealism and the Theology of John W. Nevin,” Reformed Review 15(1962):39; for Nevin’s translation of Ullman’s treatise, cf. John W. Nevin, The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist(Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1846), pp. 13-47; hereinafter designated MP.

⁶⁶ Nichols, p. 7. Himself influenced by the Tübingen school, Coleridge asserted: “It is my profound conviction that St. John and St. Paul were divinely inspired; but I totally disbelieve the dictation of any one word, sentence or argument throughout their writings,” H. Morley, ed., Table Talk of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, p. 147 (March 31, 1832); quoted in Robert Grant and David Tracy, A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, 2nd ed.(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), p. 114.

⁶⁷ Richards, p. 134.

⁶⁸ J. W. Nevin, “Vindication of the Revised Liturgy, Historical and Theological,” in Yrigoyen, Charles, Jr., and George H. Bricker, eds., Catholic and Reformed: Selected Theological Writings of John Williamson Nevin(Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), p. 372; hereinafter designated “Vindication.”

⁶⁹ MP, p. 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 376.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 377; cf. “Vindication,” p. 378.

⁷² Ibid.; cf. also Nichols, pp. 58-59.

⁷³ “Idea” is here used by Nevin as expression of “the very inmost substance of that which exists, as distinguished from its simply phenomenal character in time and space,” Nichols, p. 58.

⁷⁴ MP, pp. 4-5; Nichols, p. 61.

⁷⁵ MP, p. 5; “Vindication,” p. 370.

⁷⁶ “Vindication,” p. 379; Nevin, “Brownson’s Quarterly Review,” Mercersburg Review 2(1850), p. 71, quoted in Jones, “Mercersburg: A Reformed Alternative for the Twentieth Century,” p. 165; Nevin’s journal is hereinafter designated MR.

⁷⁷ “Vindication,” p. 380.

⁷⁸ “Vindication,” p. 402.

⁷⁹ Howard G. Hageman, Pulpit and Table: Some Chapters in the History of Worship in the Reformed Churches(Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 96.

⁸⁰ Nevin, The Liturgical Question(Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1862), p. 23; quoted in Hageman, p. 95; cf. also MP, p. 3.

⁸¹ MP, pp. 3, 52.

⁸² B. A. Gerrish, Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 58.

⁸³ MP, p. 247; emphasis Nevin’s.

⁸⁴ Nevin, “Theology of the New Liturgy,” MR 19(1867):66; quoted in Hageman, p. 96.

⁸⁵ MP, p. 180.

- ⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 4.
- ⁸⁷ Nevin, "The Mystical Union," The Weekly Messenger, October 8, 1845; quoted in Nichols, p. 197; emphasis mine.
- ⁸⁸ J. W. Nevin, "Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper," MR 2(1850):539; hereinafter designated "Doctrine of the Reformed Church."
- ⁸⁹ "Vindication," p. 400.
- ⁹⁰ MP, p. 179.
- ⁹¹ "Vindication," p. 401; MP, p. 179. A more recent analogue of the notion has been termed "a presence according to act, or actual presence . . .," Josef A. Jungmann, The Mass: An Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Survey(Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1976), p. 106.
- ⁹² "Doctrine of the Reformed Church," p. 539.
- ⁹³ "Vindication," p. 401.
- ⁹⁴ MP, p. 178; emphasis Nevin's.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 185.
- ⁹⁶ "Doctrine of the Reformed Church," p. 538; "Vindication," p. 401.
- ⁹⁷ MP, p. 183.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 61, 183.
- ⁹⁹ A most apposite metaphorical "field" for one whose theology was understood "organically"! Cf. Ibid., p. 173.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 61.
- ¹⁰¹ Cf. notes 29 (Campbell) and 60 (Nevin).
- ¹⁰² Gerrish, p. 53; for Campbell cf. Phillips, pp. 70-71.
- ¹⁰³ For Campbell, cf. pp. 10-11 above; for Nevin, p. 16 at n. 74.
- ¹⁰⁴ Campbell, p. 8 above; Nevin, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁵ "Grace" for Campbell, MH 1849:61; 1855:678; "life" for Nevin, MP, p. 180.
- ¹⁰⁶ Campbell: CB 3(1825):11; Nevin: Nichols, p. 28.
- ¹⁰⁷ Campbell: Phillips, p. 181; Nevin: "Doctrine of the Reformed Church," p. 542.
- ¹⁰⁸ Nichols, pp. 112-13, cf. pp. 97, 99.
- ¹⁰⁹ Garrison, pp. 111-12; Harrison, p. 51.
- ¹¹⁰ Garrison, p. 154.
- ¹¹¹ Richards, p. 123; Nichols, p. 111.
- ¹¹² Cf. pp. 6-7 above, esp. at nn. 23, 25.
- ¹¹³ Cf. on this notion Robert Bellah, et al, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life(NY: Harper & Row, 1985), p. 143: "The essence of the Lockean position is an almost ontological individualism. The individual is prior to society, which comes into existence only through the voluntary contract of individuals trying to maximize their own self-interest."
- ¹¹⁴ Phillips, p. 107.
- ¹¹⁵ Gilpin, p. 427; Richards, pp. 139-40.
- ¹¹⁶ Cf. pp. 16-17 above.
- ¹¹⁷ Had Nevin lived to see Christians fighting Christians in the "war to end all wars," he might well have reconsidered this position.
- ¹¹⁸ Cf. p. 7, above, at n. 31.
- ¹¹⁹ "Vindication," pp. 379-81, 400-01.
- ¹²⁰ MH 1858:403, quoted in Humbert, p. 185.
- ¹²¹ CS, p. 63.
- ¹²² Cf. p. 60 above, at n. 98.
- ¹²³ "Doctrine of the Reformed Church," p. 542, and cf. pp. 21-22 above, at n. 100.
- ¹²⁴ CS, p. 63; Gilpin, p. 422.
- ¹²⁵ Cf. pp. 57 above; at n. 94.



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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has been blessed through the years with gifts from estates. Some have come unsolicited; others have been planned in advance with leadership of the Society. These gifts have measurably strengthened the ministry of the Society. Through the Order of the Stone-Campbell Fellowship the Society can recognize these intended gifts and express appreciation to those planning the gifts.

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DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Niki Jorgenson



Volume 59 • Number 3 • Fall, 1999

Published by	DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)	
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DISCIPLIANA (USPS 995-060) is published quarterly for \$20.00 per year by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society which was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups." Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$30, Regular - \$20, Students - \$10.00, Non-U.S. - \$25. Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

Contributors to *DISCIPLIANA* should submit manuscripts on 3.5 floppy disk in Wordperfect 5.1 or "text" format. Electronic manuscript submission via "text only" formatted e-mail or attached file accepted at dishistsoc@aol.com. Postal mail should be addressed to: *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 Nineteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196.

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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Home Page: <http://users.aol.com/dishistsoc>
Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN.

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Indexed by Restoration Serials Index
ISSN 0732-9881

Indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals, the Index to Book Reviews in Religion, Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM, and the ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201-5613. atla@atla.com <http://atla.library.vanderbilt.edu/atla/home.html>

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 - 19th Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196. Please give both old and new addresses and attach a mailing label from an old issue. USA: Please provide nine-digit code (ZIP+4).

— From the Editor's Desk

What were Disciples of Christ thinking and doing at the turn of the *twentieth* century? Pieces of the answer to this question are provided in the articles that follow.

M. Eugene Boring, "Disciples Interpretation of Revelation at the Turn of the Century" examines the treatment given to the last book of the New Testament by Disciples layman, T.W. Phillips, Sr. and Disciples ministers and teachers, Robert Milligan, J. L. Martin and B. W. Johnson.

Boring's paper was presented to the Society's April 23-24, 1999 Kirkpatrick Historians' Seminar conducted at the library and archives of the Society in Nashville, Tennessee. The theme of the seminar was "Millennial Expectations in the Stone-Campbell Movement at the Turn of the Century." Two other papers presented to the seminar, W. Clark Gilpin's "Toward a Christian Century: Disciples of Christ in the Chicago Ethos, 1899-1909" and Hans Rollman's "Our Steadfastness and Perseverance Depends on Perpetual Expectation of Our Lord: The Development of Robert Henry Boll's Premillennialism" will be published in the winter issue.

Niki Jorgenson, "Women from 1866-1900: Their Contributions to the History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)" highlights the work of late nineteenth century Disciples women in the formation of missionary organizations, evangelism and pastoral ministry. Jorgenson's paper was winner of the 1999 Lockridge Ward Wilson prize for the best student essay on the history of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Judging from the articles in this issue, at the turn of the twentieth century Disciples believed that God was at work in the world to establish the reign of Christ and were working hard to hasten its inauguration.

— D. Newell Williams

— From the President's Desk

“Where are your students in their 20s and 30s?” Some may have heard the question as an accusation. It wasn't.

A small group was evaluating our 1999 Kirkpatrick Historians' Seminar. Jack Gibson, a lay leader of the Churches of Christ, sat across the table from Doctors Newell Williams, Clark Gilpin, Douglas Foster, Paul Blowers, Anthony Dunnavant, established historians in their 40s and 50s. “Where are our twenty-somethings?” Jack's question called to mind our mission to foster a community of historians and it clearly named some work that needs attention.

This issue of *Discipliana* publishes the first of three essays from that Kirkpatrick seminar. And, appropriately, after Jack's question, it publishes Niki Jorgenson's essay which won the Lockridge Ward Wilson prize for best student essay for 1999.

This issue also is the place of announcement of our new Carl Ketcherside Scholarship Fund to help continue to add Ph.D. students to our community of historians. You see, Jack Gibson not only raised an important question, he became a part of the solution by making a significant monetary gift to create the Ketcherside Fund. Income from the fund will provide aid to students to attend our Kirkpatrick Seminars.

We are still building the fund and would welcome your gift. If you are a Ph.D. student doing work related to Stone-Campbell history, please contact me. Let's get acquainted.

—Peter M. Morgan

Disciples Interpretation of Revelation at the Turn of the Century

M. Eugene Boring*

The building that houses the library and archives of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society is dedicated to the memory of a man who embodies much of Disciples tradition at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. T. W. Phillips, Sr., was a wealthy businessman of New Castle, PA who had been one of the founders of the *Christian Standard*. In 1900, at age 65, he published an absolutely amazing book, a 340 page summary of Disciples theology and hermeneutic as it was understood and practiced by that large segment of pastors and laypeople who had internalized Disciples tradition, but had remained essentially untouched by developments in biblical criticism and ecumenism in the liberal wing of Disciples leadership. His book, *The Church of Christ*, is as close as we have to a *summa* of what the majority of Disciples believed a century ago, expressed in their idiom and with their emphases.¹ He spoke not only to, but for, a multitude of Disciples, and his book found an immediate response that lasted more than a generation. According to the index, the book does not refer to the millennium at all, and the book of Revelation is mentioned twice. Each of the two sentences Phillips devotes to Revelation is symbolic of Disciples interpretation of Revelation at that time. The first one comes as the conclusion of his outline of the four divisions of the New Testament and the providential purpose of each: the Gospels are to generate faith in Christ, the book of Acts is to tell people how to become Christians, the Epistles give instructions for the Christian life. These explanations require three and a half pages. Then comes his one concluding sentence about Revelation: "The book of Revelation gives a prophetic history of the future of the Church, foretelling great calamities which were to come upon the earth, the sufferings and struggles of the saints of the Most High, and their final and glorious victory" (p. 88). The same outline is presented later in the book, but the reference to Revelation is even more laconic: "...the book of Revelation, the apocalyptic vision of John, close(s) the Scriptures" (p. 234).

Brief as his references to Revelation are, they summarize Disciples interpretation of Revelation at the turn of the century: (1) canonical function, (2) benevolent and respectful neglect, and (3) church-historical hermeneutic.

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1. Canonical function

If you had asked Disciples ministers and church school teachers to cite something from Revelation in the year 1900, they would have responded with Rev 2:10: “Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life.” The millennium and the mark of the beast do not leap to the mind when Revelation is mentioned. *Whatever* the book might mean, its function in the Bible was to encourage those who had become Christians to continue a faithful Christian life.

2. Benevolent and respectful neglect by the vast majority

The paucity of references to Revelation in Phillips’ book itself points to perhaps the most significant aspect of Disciples interpretation of Revelation at the turn of the century: there wasn’t much. This is easily documented, but citing all the Disciples literature of the period in which Revelation is *absent* would be a cheap way to write a paper. I limit myself to three items:

(1) The McGarvey-Willett debate was in full swing at the turn of the century, but they stood together on at least one thing: neither of them made much of Revelation. McGarvey’s works make little reference to Revelation, which he repeatedly mis-labels as “Revelations;” his collected sermons have not a one from Revelation, nor does “Revelation” occur as a topic in his “Biblical Criticism” column in the *Christian Standard*.² Likewise Willett’s 1899 survey of the message of the Bible barely refers to Revelation.³

(2) The two volumes of Isaac Errett’s *Bible Readings* present a “Topical Bible” of 671 pages of biblical text arranged under fifty-seven headings, giving an indication of what he considered important in the Bible. Eschatological texts in general, and Revelation in particular, are conspicuous by their absence. Errett’s *Our Position*, a seventeen-page summary of Disciples doctrine very popular at the turn of the century, does not include the word “revelation,” capitalized or not.

(3) The *New Testament Commentary*, commissioned near the end of the last century, never included Revelation, nor did its successor into which it modulated, the *Standard Bible Commentary*.

There are at least four overlapping reasons for the lack of interest in Revelation among Disciples of a hundred years ago.

(1) The Reformed tradition from which Disciples sprang had minimal interest in Revelation. The 1521 pages of Calvin’s *Institutes* contain 600 references to Romans, 245 to Hebrews, and 26 to Revelation; Calvin wrote commentaries on twenty-six books of the New Testament. Those coming from a Presbyterian background did not have a great momentum in the direction of the Apocalypse.

(2) By 1900, Disciples stood in a firm tradition of their own. On this issue, to stand in the tradition of Alexander Campbell was (1) to accept

Revelation as canonical Scripture, (2) to make minimal use of it, (3) to interpret it undogmatically in terms of the church-historical method. Disciples in the tradition of Alexander Campbell had affirmed eschatology in general but were very hesitant about eschatology in particular. While the masthead of the *Millennial Harbinger* had a verse from Revelation on its cover, one finds little interpretation of apocalyptic themes or texts in the journal itself. In the forty volumes of the *Millennial Harbinger*, one finds only a handful of articles dealing with Revelation. Most of those are only incidental references, the majority of which are introduced not to provide information on the events of the end time but in order to show the evils of the papacy and the Romanists.⁴ The *Christian System* has no section on Revelation, millennium, or apocalyptic, and very few incidental references to Revelation.⁵

The major function of Revelation for Campbell was to encourage him to think that the era of Roman Catholicism (“the Man of Sin,” the “Harlot,” “Babylon,”) and of Protestant “sectarianism” was about to come to an end by the restoration and unity of the church, an event which would usher in the millennial age. By this latter, Campbell meant the triumph of Christianity in this world, the Christian period of history which would last for many generations and would *precede* the return of Christ. Campbell was thus true to his general postmillennialist position, and used the church-historical interpretation of Revelation simply as a prop for his view of history, ecumenicity, and eschatology. All Disciples interpreters of Revelation at the turn of the century would follow Campbell in all these emphases.

The tradition begun by Campbell and bequeathed to Disciples thus had both a this-worldly social eschatology which expected a transformation of the social order by the spread and acceptance of Christianity, and an apocalyptic eschatology which expected the literal return of Christ from heaven at the *end* of this period, a resurrection of the dead, the judgment of all creatures, and final assignment to heaven or hell. The Campbell who believed in a social, this-worldly millennium *and* in a literal return of Christ at the end of the age would be divided up among his liberal and conservative followers of following generations. This was only beginning to become apparent in the year 1900.

(3) A third reason for the dearth of apocalyptic interest among Disciples is historical and sociological: during the nineteenth century the Millerites, Mormons, and Shakers had attracted many of those among the Stone-Campbell Movement into their own groups, leaving Disciples with members only moderately interested in eschatological matters.⁶ Reaction to the failure of the predictions made by these groups was also likely a factor. This resulted in a certain Disciples ethos or disposition that extends to this day, a kind of congenital antipathy to eschatology resident in Disciples DNA.

(4) A final factor was the reasonable, pragmatic, activist orientation of Disciples' theology that has often been documented.⁷ Disciples soteriology was oriented to the pragmatic “What must I do?”, not the speculative “What does the future hold?” Revelation was seen to be “speculative,” about which there could be plenty of tolerance.

Likewise, the literary form of Revelation, i.e. visions and imagery rather than discursive propositions, made it inappropriate for the purposes for which Disciples had come to use Scripture. Disciples claimed to adhere to the “plain meaning” of the text, and most believed this was not available for Revelation—despite the claims of Disciples interpreters discussed below. Disciples emphasis on reasoning needed the discursive, propositional language of the Epistles and the examples of Acts, and could extract little that was pragmatic from the imaginative visions of Revelation. While turn of the century Disciples followed Campbell in believing that the *general* import of Revelation was clear—the promise of the final victory of God, proclaimed for the comfort of Christians, not for their entertainment by using Revelation as a speculative puzzle—they mostly thought as Campbell had that a detailed knowledge of the meaning of the symbols of Revelation was unattainable, and was intended by the Divine Author to be so.⁸

3. A fascination with Revelation by the minority, who interpreted it as prediction of the history of the church

When T. W. Phillips declares that Revelation “gives a prophetic history of the future of the Church, foretelling great calamities which were to come upon the earth, the sufferings and struggles of the saints of the Most High, and their final and glorious victory” he is reflecting a particular hermeneutical approach to Revelation that was affirmed by Alexander Campbell and most Disciples in 1900, but elaborated by few. It is common to categorize interpretations of Revelation into four types, depending on the period of history the book is regarded as depicting: (1) the idealist or spiritual interpretation, which refers the book to no particular history—“eternal truths” and all that; (2) the church-historical interpretation, which regards chapters 6-22 to be a prediction of church history from John’s time to the end; (3) the futurist interpretation, that understands most of the book to predict only the last few years before the end, and (4) the preterist, or past-historical, that seeks the key to understanding the book in John’s own time.⁹ The church-historical interpretation, originally developed by critics of the papacy in medieval Catholicism, had been elaborated by Reformation exegetes, and was the dominant (almost exclusive) interpretation among American Protestantism from the time of the Puritans until the early twentieth century. Respected scholarly ministers such as Albert Barnes assumed and promoted it during the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Those Disciples who expounded Revelation at all assumed this approach as their hermeneutical framework. They did not argue for it

against other approaches. Their arguments were all intramural, assuming a common approach. I shall discuss three of these whose works were influential among Disciples at the turn of the century.¹¹

Robert Milligan, *The Scheme of Redemption*

Well-educated by the standards of his context, protégé and colleague of Alexander Campbell, Robert Milligan in 1868 published the *Scheme of Redemption*, a volume still considered by many Disciples at the turn of the century to set forth *the* biblical understanding of the faith. The final 42 of its 577 pages treated “The Fortunes and Destiny of the Church.”¹² In the first paragraph of this section, Milligan refers incidentally to the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet as pagan Rome, the Roman Catholic Church, and Islam, illustrating that he not only assumes the reader recognizes the allusions to Revelation, but also the interpretation presupposed. For Milligan too, the church-historical interpretation of Revelation is simply a given: on Patmos God revealed to John the future of the church leading to a glorious millennium, at the end of which Christ would return in glory. This general scheme is followed by all Disciples interpreters of Revelation at the turn of the century.

In contrast to Campbell, however, Milligan argues that “it is only by going somewhat into details that we can understand this matter aright,”¹³ and proceeds to elaborate the details based on Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*—an approach that was also firm tradition by this time. Assuming the interpretation firmly fixed in his context that Revelation predicted the Roman persecutions, the apostasy of the church, the rise of the Papacy, and the Reformation, Milligan sets forth the details of events that were soon to happen in his own time: the fall of the Turkish Empire, the Last Battle in Palestine, the restoration of Jews to their homeland, and the resurrection of Jewish saints. This was to happen about 24 years from the time Milligan is writing, i.e. about 1892. By 1922, the whole Jewish community would convert to Christianity, and by 1967 the world would be converted by them and the millennium would begin.¹⁴

While it is clear throughout the *Scheme of Redemption* that Milligan is convinced the Stone-Campbell Movement is restoring the ancient order of things, it is remarkable that in all this he does not explicate the role of the Reformation of the nineteenth century as the key element in the execution of God’s plan predicted in Revelation. The turning points are the Reformation of the sixteenth century as continuing in Protestantism, and the future conversion of the Jews who will bring about a restored and united church. He sees his own time as still in the process of bringing about the final restoration, and does not claim to have achieved it.

By 1900 these non-speculative speculations had been disconfirmed. As has consistently been the case with apocalyptic predictions within other groups, this disconfirmation had little effect on the continuing acceptance

of Milligan's theology as a whole, which continued for another generation as one of the principle statements of Disciples theology. His mistaken interpretation of Revelation did, however, further confirm most Disciples in their great lack of appreciation of apocalyptic speculation about the future.

J. L. Martin, *The Voice of the Seven Thunders*

The *Christian-Evangelist* for March 30, 1899 commended some recent publications to the "brotherhood" as "Appropriate Books for Ministers, Sunday-School Superintendents and Teachers, Christian Endeavor Workers and for General Family Reading." Along with B. W. Johnson's *Vision of the Ages* ("A scholarly exposition of the Book of Revelation, showing great research and breadth of thought" for \$1.25), there was also a volume by J. L. Martin, *The Voice of the Seven Thunders*, which was commended as "A full and satisfactory explanation of the vision of Patmos" for \$1.50.¹⁵

J. Lemuel Martin was born in 1810 in Shelby County, KY. He learned to read in a one-room schoolhouse with a dirt floor he attended until age nine, becoming an expert speller.¹⁶ He was compelled by his father to drop out of school until age fourteen, when he signed a written contract with his father that disinherited him for the privilege of attending school for four months. He had no further formal education. As an adult he worked as cabinet maker and school teacher, became a Disciple via the Baptist church, and served the Indiana churches as a district evangelist the rest of his life. Always an avid student of the Bible, in the last twenty years of his ministry he developed a series of lectures interpreting Revelation that he gave repeatedly in the rural and county-seat churches of Indiana. In 1869 these were stenographically recorded, edited by Martin and J. M. Mathes, and published in 1870. The book was popular in Disciples circles, and had gone through ten editions (printings) by 1899.

Martin is mentioned in the *Millennial Harbinger* a half dozen times, but only with reference to his reports of evangelism, never as teacher or scholar, and never with reference to his interpretation of Revelation. Though L. C. Rudolph's extensive work on the history of religion in Indiana¹⁷ devotes several pages to J. M. Mathes, there is no reference to J. L. Martin. Henry K. Shaw's *Hoosier Disciples*¹⁸ mentions him only as one of 21 Directors of the newly-formed Northwestern Christian University in Indianapolis, 1855, (later to become Butler University) and in connection with the publications of J. M. Mathes (Mathes edited *The Voice of the Seven Thunders*).

Martin assumes the church-historical interpretation of Revelation without argument. The seven seals are the whole of church history; the seven trumpets and bowls then recapitulate, as do the other scenes (pp. 100-101; 131). His exposition differs from the customary interpretation not only in

that he interprets some details differently,¹⁹ but also by deriving practical exhortation for Christian living and church life from the various seals, trumpets, and bowls, often with a Disciples “spin” not found in the interpretations of his contemporaries. A few illustrations will indicate the tenor of the whole:

I begin with a typical, but relatively minor example: In Rev 3:7, Christ is pictured as having the key of David, as the one who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens. Martin states that since the exalted Christ has this key, Roman Catholics are wrong about Matthew 16:18, that “when Peter died he gave the keys back to Jesus.” (p. 67)

His commentary on Rev 2:1ff explains in true Disciples fashion that miracles validate the apostolic faith. John’s commendation of the church at Ephesus that tested those who claimed to be apostles and proved them false, assumes that true apostles, and they only, work miracles. (p. 53) Martin assumes miracles happened in the apostolic age to prove that their teaching was correct, but ceased at the end of the apostolic age. Martin assumes John the true apostle worked miracles, and that his opponents did not, without noticing that this is the opposite of Revelation’s view. Here and elsewhere Martin reads Disciples tradition into Revelation in the sincere belief that he is finding it there.

Martin agrees with the customary interpretation of the third seal (6:5-6), the horseman on the black horse, as representing the dark ages. “A quart of wheat for a day’s pay” is not famine, however, but since “wheat” signifies the word of God (Mark 4:14) this horseman represents the “penny merchants” who sell God’s word, the Roman Catholics who took the Bible away from the people and then charged them for just a little of it. Since “barley” has three hulls and one kernel the reference to barley points to the commentary and explanations, in that they gave the people three times as much human opinion as Biblical content.

Martin understands the repeated “fire, smoke, and sulphur” to refer to the invention of gunpowder, one of the modern technological marvels (along with the steam engine and the telegraph) that will help bring in the millennium. With the fall of the Papacy, nations were now free to make war without papal permission. With this freedom and the aid of gunpowder, the world could be subjugated for righteousness. The vision in 9:16 of the 200,000,000 cavalry portrays the total fighting force of the whole world. Martin gives elaborate statistics to show this is the case (p. 149). They are modern soldiers (who ride on horses [!]) but use firearms, and thus lean forward so as not to shoot their own mount. This leaning forward makes the horses appear to have manes like lions, and fire comes from their mouths = gunpowder (pp. 150-151). His 1870 book argues there “must” be such wars for 400 years—starting at the beginning or end of the Reformation, he can’t decide which—to bring the world under the

authority of Christ and the Bible, as Christian nations conquer the earth without having to ask any pope when to make war or peace. Thus this period could be almost over, or may still last for some generations. “It is a free fight now all over the world” (p. 201). Martin sees this as a blessing, now that America is free to fight for God without asking the pope, and predicts that American Christianity will prevail and bring blessing to the world. The “hail” of 16:21 means cannonballs, the means of bringing in the millennium (p. 239).

Armageddon, however, is not a military battle, but the uniting of secular and religious forces against Christianity based on the “Bible alone,” i.e. against the version of Christianity advocated by “the current Reformation.” Revelation predicts the bad reception of Campbellite preachers in denominational county-seat churches in Indiana (p. 236). Here we see a strange combination of grand vision of the world and history and petty small provincialism. Armageddon is all the world vs. the Bible; we are in it now (p. 261).

There is something specific that Disciples can do to bring in the millennium. “I am speaking specifically of Bible-making.” The production of Bibles will change the world. Now “we can convert the nations” (p. 86). Martin has much to say about Bible translation in his time. It is not yet perfected, but when the Bible is clearly in the language of the people, it will do its work in the world. Martin mentions Wycliffe, Coverdale, Luther, King James (though not Campbell’s *Living Oracles*) but is still looking forward to *the* translation that will be the sharp sickle of 14:14-16, the tool God’s people will use to lop off extraneous branches and prune the Lord’s vineyard. Thus in his own way Martin has the same perspective as Milligan: the Reformation begun with Luther continues among Protestants but especially among Disciples—Protestantism in general has too much returned to the wilderness—but he still doesn’t think the Stone-Campbell Movement has restored the church: this process is yet to be attained (p. 260). When it is attained, it will be the key to victory. “They [the kings of the earth] are not going to die off gradually, then be decently buried; they will be taken fighting and alive. You need not fold your arms, fellow-citizens, and hope that error will die out of itself; you have to take it alive and fighting...” (p. 261). “Get up! Do not fold your arms and say, ‘Lord send the angel from heaven to bind the old adversary;’ we have to do the work ourselves!” (p. 277). Unlike most modern apocalypticists, but like the later liberals, Martin thought that the millennium depended on human effort. Having a firm eschatology is no excuse to stop working. Believing in Revelation does not cut the nerve of social action and missionary work. The language of “building the kingdom of God” is not far away.

Ezekiel’s wheel within a wheel—Martin did not hesitate to jump to

Ezekiel, Daniel, Mark or Paul to interpret Revelation—is a government within a government, a picture of the democratic republic, the form of government that all the earth will adopt under the leadership of Christian America, as a result of Christian mission and Bible distribution (p. 94). Voters elect their rulers, rulers then rule the voters. Each governs the other. “The outside wheel is the inside, any way you turn it” (p. 95). The wheels are full of eyes = individual voters (p. 95). The millennial kingdom is a millennial democracy that we bring about.

The true saints are sealed on the forehead (7:3). This indicates that the Disciples rational plan of salvation is correct doctrine and practice. “If he had said, seal them in their heart, there would have been some room for believing that he had some reference to some abstract operation of the Holy Spirit; but he said *in the forehead*;—to get them to understand it” (p. 129).

The angel who binds the devil in Rev 20:1-2 to introduce the Millennium is the church, and the chain is a *logical chain of evidence*. “What kind of a chain will bind a man’s spirit? A chain of evidence, my brother—a chain of testimony. We can have our minds, our spirits, chained down to facts in this way...”(p. 270). “Fulfilled prophecy” is the “evidence” that binds Satan (p. 274). Lectures such as his own will bring in the millennium.²⁰

Throughout his exposition, John’s opponents become transparent to his own. The Nicolaitans become immediately those Disciples who compromise with the denominations in order to win them over. It will not do to object that this was Paul’s strategy (1 Cor 9:19-23), for Paul’s becoming a Jew to the Jews meant only that he used the Jews’ own Bible to show they were wrong, not that he accommodated himself to their Jewish practices. “No; it [the Bible] was for saying they were wrong—by meeting them on their own ground and using their own arguments against them” (p. 61). Proving that Catholics and denominationalists were wrong—the idea recurs often in his exposition of Revelation—is for Martin not merely a matter of his own cantankerousness, hubris, or ignorance, but is part of the preparation for the millennium. The true light began to shine again at the Reformation, but there is much error in the religious world as a holdover from the Catholic dark ages, and this error must be refuted on the basis of a clear translation of the Bible before the millennial age will dawn.

In his final two lectures, Martin devotes an extensive section of his interpretation of Revelation to the Disciples “plan of salvation,” attached to “those who do the commandments of Jesus” of Rev 22:14, “Blessed are they that do his commandments” (p. 296ff). This exposition includes his refutation of those who object to baptism as essential to salvation. “Can a person be saved without baptism in certain cases?” He explains that it is possible, but not possible for those who have heard the command and are capable of understanding and obeying it. It is unlikely that such a

discussion would come up in an interpretation of Revelation in any other tradition. Here we have a small, unprofound mind, importing small-caliber Disciples issues into Revelation. It seems perfectly appropriate to Martin, however, who understands Revelation from chapter 13 on, as dealing solely with “the mighty conflict between the Word of the Lord and the doctrines of uninspired men” (p. 310).

There are also a number of un-Campbellian, non-Disciples elements and perspectives in Martin’s exposition. I mention only two:

(1) There is no use of Campbell’s rules of interpretation. Martin does not inquire into the historical meaning. His only study of history is in secondary works about church history that show John was predicting it. He exhibits no concern for historical picture of John’s own situation, for instance picturing the church at Laodicea as “a rich church..., numbering thousands of members” (p. 69) and typically transferring his own opponents into John’s situation.

(2) The six wings of the “beasts” are the six divisions of the Bible: history, law, prophecy of the Old Testament and the New Testament. (Ezekiel had only four because he omitted the prophecies that could not be understood yet) (p. 89). Where does he get this? This is not a Campbellite division of the canon. The pair of wings that cover the face is the vail (sic) over the face of the Jews who could not understand their own Bible; the covering of the feet (he misses the reference to genitals) is explained “from the Bible” as the “preparation of the gospel of peace” that Christian missionaries wear (Eph 6:15 KJV).

B. W. Johnson, *People’s New Testament with Notes*

More than any one person, B. W. Johnson is responsible *both* for continuing Disciples interest in Revelation, such as it was and is, *and* for the particular *way* Disciples at the turn of the century understood the book.

He was no more original than Campbell, Milligan, and Martin in understanding Revelation to be a forecast of church history about to be fulfilled in the millennium, but it was Johnson more than anyone else who popularized this view. Like Martin, Johnson too frequently gave lectures interpreting Revelation, and finally published them himself in a more scholarly version than Martin was capable of doing.²¹ Johnson’s interpretation is more in line with standard advocates of the church-historical interpretation such as Albert Barnes, whom he mentions with appreciation, and is practically devoid of the colorful exhortations and Disciples twists found in Revelation by Martin.

It was not his published lectures, however, but his widely popular *People’s New Testament with Notes*, that disseminated his interpretation among Disciples and made it the “standard” Disciples view. His interpretation of Revelation was part of the package of his notes on the New Testament as a whole, and it was only because of this that it was so

widely circulated. His commentary on Revelation in the *People's New Testament* is more extensive and detailed than for any other book of the New Testament (100 pages of comment for 48 pages of Greek text; the 87 pages of Matthew's Greek text receive 143 pages of comment; the 89 pages of Acts Greek text receive 126 pages of comment). He also provides a much more extensive introduction (10 pages for Revelation; Matthew receives one; Acts receives three).

Johnson is true to his Disciples heritage in seeing the Reformation of the sixteenth century (and not the "Restoration Movement" of the nineteenth) as predicted in Revelation.²² Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the Protestant Reformation were great leaders in the one church of God, not merely sectarian leaders. The Reformation was not merely the origin of "Protestant sects," but a great movement inspired by God and predicted in Revelation, a work of God within the church. He sees the two moments of "measuring the church" as the Reformation and the Eschaton. This means he does not see Disciples as having already achieved this, but as (1) in the heritage of the Reformation and (2) on the way to the eschatological restoration (not yet attained) (v. 2, p. 457). His apocalyptic arithmetic does focus on the year 1793 as predicted in Revelation as a special turning point in history, but he does not associate this year with the beginning of the "Restoration Movement," as did the later Ottumwa, IA group who developed Johnson's interpretation within some circles of the Christian Churches/ Churches of Christ. Rather, he interprets the key event predicted to happen in 1793 as the end of the Terror of the French Revolution, the year that began the age of toleration, the demise of the papacy (with Napoleon as God's instrument! v. 2, p. 481) and the missionary movement of the next century, which will lead to the millennial period of Christ's rule.

A continuing problem for all interpretations, Johnson's included, was that Revelation often expresses the early Christian belief that the second advent of Christ will be soon, in the New Testament author's own time (e.g. 1:1, 2:25; 22:10, 12, 20). Johnson has two ways of dealing with such texts in other parts of the New Testament: (1) the reference is to Pentecost, not to the parousia; (2) the reference is to Christ's historical coming in judgment on the Jewish people in the disastrous war with Rome in 66-70 C. E. Neither of these escape hatches work with Revelation, of course, since both Pentecost and the Jewish War already lie in the past. Johnson acknowledges this, but understands Revelation to mean that the prophecy will *begin* to be fulfilled soon, in the events of the Roman Empire, not that the second advent will occur soon. (v. 2, p. 415).²³ While Johnson believes in general that the inspired authors of the New Testament documents could not have been in error, he does not press this view in regard to their views of eschatology, and can occasionally state that Paul and his apostolic contemporaries "perhaps themselves believed in his speedy coming"

(v. 2, p. 241). This shows he is not dogmatic in his belief that Paul had no erroneous eschatological beliefs.

Concluding Reflections

Johnson popularized the church-historical approach to Revelation just as it was dying out as the main stream of scholarly interpretation.²⁴ His view was perpetuated by Henry H. Halley, especially in his *Bible Handbook*, which ceased to be identifiably Disciples. Halley studied at Transylvania and The College of the Bible with J. W. McGarvey as his primary instructor and model, graduating in 1895. His *Bible Handbook* has sold more copies of a book about the Bible than that of any other Disciple—perhaps more than that of any other author except for Hal Lindsey and Charles M. Shelton. The Disciples canonical focus is missing in all its variations, with the most extensive treatment of any biblical book being given to Revelation (58 pages), and e.g. Acts (25 pages) and Hebrews (11 pages) receiving relatively brief treatment.

When a critical view of the Bible became more common, and finally dominant, in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), this view of Revelation advocated by Milligan, Martin, Johnson, and Halley died out. An oversimplification: having rejected “human traditions” for the “Bible alone,” when the Bible itself became problematic, Disciples were left at sea not only with regard to Revelation, but with regard to the Bible generally, and were ripe for an approach that substituted grand ideals for biblical testimony to the “mighty acts of God” (what Alexander Campbell had called “facts”).

Such a view was presented in another influential book that made its appearance in 1900.²⁵ Like T. W. Phillips’ *The Church of Christ*, it too claimed to sum up the Christian faith (the German title was *Das Wesen des Christentums*, better translated as “The Essence of Christianity”). The similarity between the two books does not end there. Both volumes saw an original gospel that had been corrupted in the history of the church, with Roman Catholicism a chief culprit. Both in fact saw the Roman Church as the continuation of the great enemy of early Christianity, the Roman Empire.²⁶ Both volumes magnified the original proclamation of the kingdom of God but minimized eschatology. For Phillips the kingdom had been the church, in good Campbellite fashion. For Adolph Harnack the kingdom was “in the hearts of men.”²⁷ They agreed that the kingdom was central, and that it was non-eschatological.²⁸ Both saw the Roman Catholic Church as the perversion of the original purity of the message. But whereas Phillips harked back to the early church, with the later church the problem, Harnack claimed to return to the original message of Jesus, with the church itself as the problem. Phillips’ book was destined to have a diminishing influence among Disciples. Since Harnack made it possible to come to terms with emerging biblical criticism in a way that Phillips did

not, the next two generations of Disciples belonged to Harnack, even among those who had never heard of him and continued to quote Phillips. But that is a story for another day.

NOTES

¹ T. W. Phillips, *The Church of Christ* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1900).

² In the summer of 1893 McGarvey preached a series of 24 sermons in the Broadway church in Louisville. The sermons were stenographically recorded, then edited and published as *McGarvey's Sermons* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1894). His *Standard* articles from 1893-1904 were collected and reprinted as *Short Essays in Biblical Criticism* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1910).

³ H. L. Willett, *The Bible through the Centuries* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1899), p. 227.

⁴ The *Index* lists eighteen articles in 41 years in which Revelation “receives major commentary or interpretation,” David I. McWhirter, *An Index to the Millennial Harbinger* (Joplin: College Press, 1981). Of these, only twice does Alexander Campbell essay a systematic discussion of Revelation, “The Plan and Method of the Apocalypse, Nos. 1 & 2” (September and October, 1845). The series remained incomplete.

⁵ For details, see statistics in “The Formation of a Tradition,” *Disciples Theological Digest* 2/1, Appendix I, compiled by Raymond F. Person, Jr. and M. Eugene Boring (now also posted on Dr. Hans Rollmann’s Internet Homepage).

⁶ This point is made by David E. Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), pp. 36-38, and affirmed by Mark G. Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), p. 105.

⁷ E.g. W. B. Blakemore, “Reasonable, Empirical, Pragmatic,” in *The Renewal of the Church: The Panel of Scholars Reports*, Vol. 1, *The Reformation of Tradition*, ed. Ronald E. Osborn (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1963), pp. 161-183.

⁸ See the (1/2 page!) “Preface” to Revelation in *The Living Oracles*, p. xlvii.

⁹ This categorization has become standard, reflected for example in the works of Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (*The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. 43) and Arthur Wainwright (*Mysterious Apocalypse*, pp. 13-14).

¹⁰ Albert Barnes, *Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1872 [originally published 1851]). Barnes wrote commentaries on all the New Testament books, and

on Job, Isaiah, Daniel, and Psalms. Thomas H. Olbricht inexplicably states that Barnes did not write on Revelation (“Barnes, Albert,” in Donald K. McKim, ed. *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 1998, p. 281).

¹¹ Milligan, Martin, and Johnson are not a select three chosen from a longer list of possible candidates. They are the only three Disciples' authors of whom I am aware who published on Revelation in the latter third of the nineteenth century. They all followed the same general approach.

¹² Robert Milligan, *The Scheme of Redemption as It Is Revealed and Taught in the Holy Scriptures* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1868), pp. 536-577.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 539.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 540-547.

¹⁵ J. L. Martin, *The Voice of the Seven Thunders: Lectures on the Apocalypse* (Cincinnati and Oskaloosa: Central Book Concern, tenth edition 1879). Originally published 1870, from eighteen lectures at Unity, Indiana, 1869. Preface and Biographical Sketch by J. M. Mathes.

Among the other books listed were Peter Ainslie, *Plain Talks to Young Men on Vital Issues* (gambling, the theater, dancing, swearing); B. A. Hinsdale, *Jesus as Teacher, and The Making of the New Testament*, one of the more critical approaches to biblical study yet written by a Disciple; D. R. Dungan, *Rum, Ruin, and Remedy*; A. McLean, *Missionary Addresses*, and W. T. Hacker, *Hot for the Pastor* (“A story clearly delineating obstacles and hindrances in a preacher’s life, and also many hindrances to the progress of the church. A good book to correct the habit of criticizing by many church members”).

¹⁶ “At a spelling match on the last day of school he spelled the spelling-book through without missing a word.” J. M. Mathes’ Preface to *The Voice of the Seven Thunders*, ix.

¹⁷ L. C. Rudolph, *Hoosier Faiths* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 78-85.

¹⁸ Henry K. Shaw, *Hoosier Disciples: A Comprehensive History of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in Indiana* (St. Louis: Bethany Press for the Association of the Christian Churches in Indiana, 1966), pp. 149, 189.

¹⁹ E.g. Martin regards chapters 4-5 as a picture of the millennial age when all four “beasts” representing the four continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America will join in worshipping God through Jesus Christ, led by the “eagle” America (the USA).

²⁰ The voices of the seven thunders (10:3-4) were usually considered to be the papal bulls claiming to be divine revelation, but which the church should ignore, as in B. W. Johnson (*People’s New Testament*, 2: 454). In

Martin's exposition, however, the seven thunders are the divinely-given interpretation of Revelation (155). God did not want to explicate it, but make interested readers figure it out. It was a test of who was interested and who wasn't. "John was forbidden to write the meaning of the Vision; for it would be made plain when the seventh angel would begin to sound." Revelation predicts interpreters like himself who would explain the meaning of the visions (157).

²¹ B. W. Johnson, *Vision of the Ages or Lectures on the Apocalypse: A Complete View of the Book of Revelation* (Cincinnati: Central Book Concern, 4th ed. [1st ed. copyright, 1881]).

²² Though on p. 466 he does see the "true church" becoming "visible" about 75 years before Johnson's own writing, i.e. ca. 1809. He does not say that Revelation prophesied the Campbells or that they restored the true church. The restoration of the true church began with Luther, but it was mostly "invisible" within the sectarian world, and became "visible" about 1809. There is a largeness of vision, not sectarianism, here. He is, however, more specific about Disciples being predicted in Revelation in his earlier *Vision of the Ages*, p. 226.

²³ This is different from Martin's explanation, that "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years" (46, 303ff, 327; cf. 2 Pet 3:1-10), just as it is different from Milligan's explanation that the expectation of the "soon" coming of the Lord in Paul and elsewhere in the New Testament were not written from the perspective of the first century authors themselves, but from the perspective of the last generation in the distant future (*Scheme of Redemption* 570).

²⁴ Somewhat reminiscent of Ronald Osborn's "The Irony of the Twentieth-Century Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Making it to the Mainline Just at the Time of its Disestablishment," in *Mid-Stream*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (July 1989) 293ff.

²⁵ Adolf Harnack, *What is Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957; first English edition 1900).

²⁶ Harnack, *What is Christianity* p. 252.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56. "If anyone wants to know what the kingdom of God and the coming of it meant in Jesus' message, he must read and study his parables. He will then see what it is that is meant. The kingdom of God comes by coming to the individual, by entering into his soul and laying hold of it. True, the kingdom of God is the rule of God; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals..."

²⁸ Phillips' book had only two references to Revelation, but that is two more than Harnack's.

Women from 1866-1900: Their Contributions to the History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Niki Jorgenson*

Hillary Clinton has stated many times, “It takes a village to raise a child.” This statement could not prove to hold more truth than when it is used in an analogous way to the heritage of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The Disciples denomination is the result of many people working and struggling together. Each generation has had within it several different theologians, ministers and laity who have believed in its tradition and convictions. This is not to say that these figures have always agreed or that the road has been smoothly paved for the generations ahead. Quite the contrary. The road for this particular denomination has been rough; filled with differing opinions, breaks from various groups, instituting of organizations, restructuring of old organizations, and attempting to hold on to what was the original vision of the denomination. Each piece of the puzzle has added to the heritage of what we now know and understand to be the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

From its conception, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been shaped and molded by the people and organizations for which it serves. It began under the conviction of unity and has continued to hold tightly to the notion of the “priesthood of all believers.” This denomination is one in which all people are welcome at the table as well as into membership. It claims to hold at its heart unity with others and an inclusive spirit.

For the majority of white, middle class men who were seeking a leadership role within the denomination, the path to being recognized and accepted was not hard to follow. Education and skill training was available as were job possibilities. Men, in general, were allowed to enter the theological and academic circles. Pulpits were filled across the United States by men. This was the rule, not the exception. They preached and worked for unity within the denomination as well as between the various denominations. What is ironic is that this unity, at least in regard to leadership, was not extended to gender.

While the influence and achievements of men is recorded throughout the generations, such is not the case for women. Dating back to Alexander Campbell, the place of women within the church was largely debated. While some theologians felt that women were inferior to men, others

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believed that women were as capable as men in proclaiming the word of God to the people. The intention of this paper is to show that although the achievements of women have been greatly unrecognized, they were instrumental in the development of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Examining the years 1866-1900, this paper will examine the women pioneers of the movement and what they contributed to the Disciples heritage. It is clear that within this time period, many women, through their mission work and preaching, played a central role in the development of Disciples' life.

Since the early years of the Disciples of Christ, women have been viewed as inferior and subordinate to men. Women “did not have the vote (critical for full participation in a democracy) nor ready access to legal, financial, educational, employment, or church resources.”¹ Their inferior status was thought to be the will of God. In fact, Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated:

The chief obstacle in the way of woman's elevation today is the degrading position assigned her in the religion of all countries – an afterthought creation, the origin of sin, cursed by God, marriage for her a condition of servitude, maternity a degradation, unfit to minister at the altar and in some churches even to sing in the choir. Such is her position in the Bible and religion.²

The role of women in the church was a question which was placed before the Disciples' fathers and it is one that is still being asked today. In 1840, a gentleman by the initials J. C. A. wrote the following to Alexander Campbell:

A question has been agitated in some of the churches of a delicate nature, and seemed likely to produce much disaffection. I would be gratified and I believe the brotherhood satisfied, could you be induced to give us an essay on the subject in the *Harbinger*. The question is, Have the sisters a right to teach? If so, Who? When? Where? In other words, Have the sisters a right to deliver lectures, exhortations, and prayers in the public assembly of the church of God?³

While short, the answer given by Campbell was direct, complete and clearly showed his stance on the place of women. Campbell replied, “Paul says: ‘I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man; but to learn in silence.’ (1 Tim. ii. 12) I submit to Paul, and teach the same lesson.”⁴

His belief that women do not have the right to preach or speak before the church was further made clear by the following statement which he made in 1857. In this response to a letter written to him concerning women's

role in worship, Campbell stated:

The Lord has not commissioned women to take any precedence over men. As for singing and praying they are equal in all the public acts of devotion-so far as *communion* is concerned; but in taking the lead or precedency in any of these in the Christian assemblies is not allowed by Paul. His judgment is paramount and final.⁵

Campbell was not the only leader in the denomination to be against women speaking in public. W. K. Pendleton responded to a letter written to him by quoting I Corinthians 14: 34-35:

In all the congregations of Christ's people, the woman must keep silence; for they are not permitted to speak in public, but to show submission, as it is said also in the Book of the Law. And if they wish to ask questions, let them ask it of their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful to women to speak publicly in the congregation.⁶

Pendleton felt that this scripture passage adequately justified the position that women were not to speak in public.⁷

While some believe that letters such as the above helped begin the debate regarding the place and role of women, it was not until later that such arguments could be understood as a movement. Several writers felt that where women were once comfortable in their place of silence, several factors led to a change in this area. In Hartsfield's essay, she points to three factors which "contributed to the awakening among the women." She believed that the factors which contributed were that women entered industry, they were admitted to schools of higher learning, and the Civil War started.⁸

Early Disciples women made many contributions to Disciples history. Although they were often oppressed and not recognized within the larger community, these women still managed to make, "substantial contributions in temperance,⁹ suffrage, the abolition of slavery and education of freed blacks, better treatment for working women and children, care for immigrant families, and the early peace and ecumenical movements."¹⁰ One such woman was Caroline Neville Pearre.

Pearre has been noted as being the first to hear "the call to womens' missionary work."¹¹ When asked how she came upon this decision to enter the world of mission, she stated in a letter written on February 10, 1896:

On the 10th of April, 1874, about 10 o'clock in the morning, at the close of my private devotions, the thought came to me. I promptly conferred with Brother Munnell, who was then Corresponding Secretary of the American Missionary Convention, to know if he thought it practical. He responded at once: 'This is a flame of the Lord's

kindling, and no man can extinguish it.’ I then began to write letters to our ladies, and soon received favorable answers from all but one. She did not respond.¹²

Pearre’s interest in founding an organization that represented “the womanhood of the whole church” led her to seek out the assistance of Munnell. Isaac Errett and J. H. Garrison also responded by placing in their papers, the *Christian Standard* and *The Christian Evangelist*, a call for a meeting of women at the General Missionary Convention in Cincinnati, October, 1874.

Responding to this call, approximately 70 to 75 women gathered in the basement of Richmond Street Church in Cincinnati on October 22, 1874.¹³ “At this time, there was no woman among them, experienced in public work; they were untrained in speech, in the conduct of business, in audible, articulated prayer.”¹⁴ This did not stop them as they worked towards their goal. At this gathering, these women organized the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions, “the constitution was adopted, headquarters placed at Indianapolis, and national officers chosen from that locality.”¹⁵ This organization “was the first missionary organization in the country to be managed entirely by women.”¹⁶

Later on that same afternoon in October, the women gathered in the hall where the General Convention was meeting. At this meeting, Isaac Errett proposed the following resolution:

Resolved, That this convention extend to the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions recognition and hearty approval, assured that it opens a legitimate field of activity and usefulness in which Christian women may be active co-operants of ours in the great work of sending the gospel into all the world. We pledge ourselves to help these women who propose to labor with us in the Gospel.¹⁷

This resolution was passed and the work was inaugurated.

The first order of business was to decide where this organization would begin. After many propositions, the board decided upon the Jamaica Mission and “it was resolved to invest all the funds of the Board, amounting to four hundred and thirty dollars, until sufficient money was secured to send a missionary to the Island.”¹⁸ This organization was interested in eventually engaging in both home and foreign work under the same management. It was “not until long afterward, that the women realized that theirs was the first National Society for Home Missions in this country.”¹⁹

The exact nature of the organization found in this group was eloquently stated by Mrs. O. A. Burgess, the second President of the Board, in 1893 at the “World’s Congress of Representative Women,” in Chicago:

So far as I know, the Christian Woman’s Board of

Missions is unique, in that the business of the Society is managed entirely by women. Our Executive Committee is composed of women only, and we have our own methods of organizing the states and developing our forces, and of raising money for the extension of the work, by gathering it in mites among the women and children. We select mission fields and employ our missionaries, both men and women, and are in every way responsible for the conduct of the business of the Society. For years, we were not aware that other associations did not proceed in the same way.²⁰

In 1875, the first President, Maria Jameson, shared similar sentiments when she suggested, "One thing stands out clearly, and that is our firm purpose to do something in the mission field, and with this in our hearts, we can hardly fail of finding the way to accomplish it."²¹

In 1882, Caroline Pearre wrote a letter to the *Christian Standard* concerning women's mission work. In this letter she was encouraging more women to get involved in their churches and quite possibly, with the organization. She stated, "Now, what plea can I make that will so inflame your zeal that you will go home resolved to begin this good work in your church, or increase it if it is already begun?"²² To try to arouse an interest, she declared:

Somewhere, somewhere in this wide world are weary, sin-burdened lives, darkness and degradation and sorrow, awaiting for the cleansing and uplifting and consoling that can come only from the influence of the Gospel—waiting for you and me to send it; and life drags out its miserable length, while we go on our several ways, pursuing our favorite phantoms...²³

What is of interest to some is how many women were involved in the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. Not only by serving as officers, but the number of women who were out in the mission fields, witnessing, working, and growing with the people. On January 29, 1876, the Board sent its first missionaries into the field. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Williams set sail for Kingston, where they arrived on February 5. By 1881, through the work of several couples, this area had acquired "four county Churches and four out-stations, with about 700 members; also, several Sunday Schools and day schools."²⁴

More impressive was the mission work which was taking place in India. An example of the work which was done started in September 1882, when four women sailed to India to begin work. These women, Ada Boyd, Mary Kingsbury, and Mary Graybiel,²⁵ accompanied by two couples, worked in Bilaspur. They built "a school house and an orphanage, in 1894 a

dormitory and a hospital, in 1898 a physician's bungalow was erected, in 1899 a second school-house was purchased, and in 1900 another orphanage dormitory was built."²⁶

In 1895, a station was opened in Juarez, Mexico and in 1896, Bertha C. Mason was sent there to aid in its development. It was also in 1896 that Brother Hoblit expanded the work through his publication, *El Evangelista*. In 1897, this station was moved to Monterrey.²⁷

It must be understood that the Christian Woman's Board of Missions was just as highly involved in home missions as it was in foreign fields. "One of the glories of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions is that it is built on such broad lines that it knows no distinction between home and foreign missions-its field is the world-its labors are only limited by its opportunities."²⁸ In 1881, "The first missionary enterprise of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in the United States was undertaken for the negroes in Jackson, Miss."²⁹ Mr. and Mrs. R. Faurot were sent to Jackson to provide the residents there with the same form of aid being given to the people in Jamaica. Thirteen months later, this couple moved their work to Edwards, Mississippi and the work in Jackson was discontinued.

One name which must be mentioned when discussing the missions accomplished within the United States is Elmira Dickinson. While educational opportunities for women were very limited, Dickinson received a Masters degree in 1869 and was one of the first who "received the anointing of the missionary spirit." It has been said of Dickinson, "She was doubtless the first woman volunteer for foreign missions among the Disciples of Christ, and often spoke of her failure to go to the foreign field as the great disappointment of her life."³⁰

Knowing that this door was shut, Dickinson devoted her energies to increasing mission work at home. In July 1874, she organized a Woman's Missionary Society in her home church; in September of that same year she helped form the Illinois Woman's Missionary Society and became its first President; and in October of 1874, she helped her life long friend, Pearre, begin the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.³¹ Dickinson was never compensated for her services and from what the records show, she always paid for her own travel expenses. "Her spirit was as humble and self-effacing as it was courageous and steadfast; she claimed nothing for herself, and was ever generous in giving credit to others."³²

A particular area of interest for the Christian Woman's Board of Missions is the life of children. Harrison stated in her book, "Man may start out alone in his quest of the Celestial City, like Christian in the immortal allegory, but when woman goes the long journey... she takes the children with her."³³ This thought of bringing along the children has been at the heart of the organization since its conception. It is thought that from the beginning, these women have considered the importance of raising

children with a knowledge and work of missions. This can be seen in the work of Mrs. N. E. Atkinson.

Atkinson started the first Society of the Young People's Department of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in October 1874. She called her mission band the "Willing Workers".³⁴ What Adkinson found was that these children opened their hearts to the mission experience and began to give of their own savings. From the Minutes of the National Convention in 1876 we find the following appeal,

This Convention requests all its members to give special attention to the instruction of children under their care, at home and in the Sunday School, in missionary work; it asks them to devise means for the accomplishment of this work, teaching them to give, and through self-denial further the work of Christ.³⁵

In 1884, three women, Miss M. Lou Payne, Mrs. Joseph King, and Mrs. Easton, presented a report focusing on the formation of a Young People's Department of the Board. Mrs. King was chosen as the first Superintendent of Children's Work. Upon the death of Josephine Smith³⁶ in Japan, it was decided that "The Josephine Smith Memorial" would be built. In July 1885, when this was announced, there were twenty Mission Bands that had reported to Mrs. King. By its completion in July, 1886, there were one hundred and twenty.³⁷ In 1886, at the National Convention, this news was the cause of great celebrating. Such was evident in the statement made by the Children's Work that it was, "One of the richest and most promising features of Mission work."³⁸

The Christian Woman's Board of Missions was highly active in the lives of women, children, home missions and foreign fields. They provided school-houses, orphanages, medical attention, and evangelistic work to people all over the world. It has been said, that in the role that children played, the years 1888-1889 were incredibly important to the history of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. It was during these two years that the Young People's Department began orphanage work.³⁹

The women involved in the mission and development of the Christian Woman's Board of Mission are not the only ones who have played a central role in the development of Disciples history. As important as the women mentioned above, those who struggled and preached regardless of the opposition they encountered added to the heritage of this denomination. They were facing much controversy, as can be seen in the pages of the *Christian Standard* from 1892-1893. In this two year span, 29 different authors wrote their views on women being ordained. While some were in support of the practice, many others were strongly opposed.⁴⁰

Three women who added much flavor to the history of Disciples between the years 1866-1900 are Clara Hale Babcock, Sadie McCoy

Crank, and Sarah Lue Bostick. Clara Babcock was the first woman ordained a minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Although she began preaching in 1888⁴¹ she was not ordained until August 2, 1889 at the Erie Christian Church in Illinois.

Babcock was a remarkable woman. She served as minister at Erie for fifteen years. “She worked in Thomson for nine years; LeClaire, twelve years; organized a church at Rapid City; served at Dixon, Ia., nine years, and Ellendale, N. D., three years.”⁴² In addition to her ministries, she was married in 1865 and had six children, five boys and one girl. She also wrote several articles for the *Christian Standard*.

One such article described the ministry she was doing. The letter was written in November, 1892, four years after her ordination. This letter stated:

I never preach to empty pews or a restless congregation; our audiences have demanded enlarged buildings... The church in Thomson has more than doubled its membership... The visible results of my year’s work are 96 additions—38 heads of families, 8 from the Methodist Episcopal, 6 from the Baptists, 9 reclaimed; preached 240 sermons, 16 funerals, 12 weddings, 470 visits made, 1,500 miles traveled to and from my labor. Am in perfect health. Have not missed an appointment in over four years.⁴³

She again wrote in regards to the debate focusing on women in the ministry. To support the role of women in the church, Babcock often used her own experiences as a minister:

It has been said, women are not physically endowed with strength to meet the demands of the ministry... I have fully demonstrated woman’s power, physically, as in over three years I have baptized all candidates presenting themselves. I have stood in ice water, and baptized many at once, in and out, any time the occasion demanded, mid summer’s heat and winter’s cold, both in the baptistery and rivers... have never taken cold or been hoarse in the work; am forty-three years old, the mother of six children, and every living relative of mine has been brought to faith and obedience.⁴⁴

Another woman who showed remarkable strength was Sarah (‘Sadie’) McCoy Crank. Initially a Sunday School evangelist, her Sunday School meetings “often produced revivals and permanent congregations... McCoy organized three Bible Schools all of which grew into churches.”⁴⁵ It was said that during a Bible Institute she conducted, “95 came forward to confess their faith. Church leaders had two choices—deny their confessions

or recognize a woman's right to receive them."⁴⁶ This question was resolved when Crank was ordained on March 17, 1892 in Marceline, Illinois.⁴⁷

Crank and her husband led a very active ministry. She has been shown to have been "the leader in building churches at Minden Mines, Bronaugh, Liberal, Miller and Mt. Vernon." In 1924 she was "engaged in a building campaign at Greenfield."⁴⁸ In the end of her long career, Sadie McCoy Crank had "baptized between 5,000 and 7,000 people, officiated at 361 weddings and more than a 1,000 funerals, organized or reorganized 50 churches, and assisted in eighteen church building programs."⁴⁹ Her work contributed much to the changing image of women preachers and ministers.

Although the history records are not as clear of the exact date of her ordination, Sarah Lue Bostick is one other woman preacher who is important to recognize when looking at the history of the Disciples. Debra Hull contends that Bostick "overcame the double bind bias of race and gender by becoming a well-respected preacher and evangelist, in both black and white churches, primarily in Arkansas."⁵⁰

As stated above, the date of her ordination is unclear, although records show that her husband was ordained on April 24, 1892, the day of their wedding. What is clear is that Bostick also had an active ministry. In 1896, she organized "the first African-American Christian Woman's Board of Missions auxiliary...[and was] appointed by the 'white sisters in Little Rock' to organize other African-American CWBM auxiliaries."⁵¹ In a book written about her life and work, Bertha Mason Fuller reports that she was:

a member of the American Association of Women Ministers, an interdenominational organization. She was always an entertaining and acceptable speaker in white churches where she sought help for her people, and in State and National Conventions of both Negroes and Whites. Her wit and gracious humor were always welcome.⁵²

Although the life of each woman mentioned is quite different, what becomes apparent with reflection is that each was devoted to a life of ministry, whether in the church, or in the mission fields. The years 1866-1900 were full of controversy for Disciples for this was the time in which the work of women started to become recognized and therefore debated. Many theologians, ministers, and laity were uncomfortable with the new roles women were playing, but this opposition did not stop the rigor with which these women, and countless others, worked for the church and for God. Although they often went unrecognized and were not appreciated for their contributions, these women joined together and made a difference.

In 1893, Mrs. Virginia Hedges presented a paper to the Ministers'

Meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. This paper discussed women's work in the church, starting with Biblical images and concluding with her aspirations for the future. In the final paragraphs of her paper, Hedges proclaimed:

I hope to see the time when church work is not divided into woman's work and man's work, but each work is officered and controlled jointly by the men and women best qualified. Until women have had the development that comes from experience, this is impossible. I pray to see the day when a capable, consecrated Christian woman who desires, may enter the pulpit and preach Christ to the waiting multitudes with 'none to molest or make her afraid'...⁵³

Through the efforts of such women as Pearre, Dickinson, and Crank, as well as through the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the vision of Mrs. Hedges may slowly be coming true.⁵⁴ Due to the tireless efforts these women exhibited, people all over the world have been not only helped but have also become aware of the importance of mission. The CWBM showed us the value of children and what they can contribute if they are believed in and taught. People worldwide have been given hospitals, school-houses, and orphanages to try to improve the conditions in which they live. These women and this organization is of utmost importance when one looks at the heritage and tradition which shaped the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

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NOTES

¹ Debra B. Hull, "The Sisterhood of Disciples," *Discipliana* 56, no. 15 (Spring 1996), p. 22.

² Gary Selby, "'Your Daughters Shall Prophesy': Rhetorical Strategy in the 19th Century Debate over Women's Right to Preach," *Restoration Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1992), p. 152.

³ J. C. A., *The Millennial Harbinger* (1840), p. 521.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Alexander Campbell, *The Millennial Harbinger* (1857), p. 415.

⁶ Elizabeth Ann Hartsfield, "Shall the Sisters Speak?" in *Women in the Church* (Lexington: The College of the Bible, 1953), p. 10. One other scripture passage often used in arguments justifying keeping women silent in church is 1 Timothy 2:11-14.

⁷ For further comments regarding this topic, see M. P. Hayden. "Opinions: Of Distinguished Writers Concerning Woman's Preaching." *Christian Standard* 29 (August 19, 1893), pp. 226-227.

⁸ For a complete understanding of her argument, see *Women in the Church*, pp. 11-14.

⁹ An excellent portrayal of the temperance movement can be found in Ruth Bordin, *Women and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981).

¹⁰ Hull, "The Sisterhood of Disciples," p. 24.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Anna R. Atwater, *Historical Sketch of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions* (Indianapolis: Christian Woman's Board of Missions, 1911), p. 6.

¹³ Hull suggests that 70 women gathered on October 21, 1874. However, Atwater states that 75 women gathered on October 22, 1874.

¹⁴ Ida Withers Harrison, *History of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions* (1920), p. 28.

¹⁵ Atwater, *Historical Sketch*, 8. For more information, see also Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, 4th ed. (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1995), pp. 261-263, 314.

¹⁶ Hull, "The Sisterhood of Disciples," 25. It should be noted that the first five officers of this organization were Maria Butler Jameson, president, Nannie Ledgerwood Burgess, treasurer, Sarah Wallace, recording secretary, and Caroline Neville Pearre, corresponding secretary. For a complete listing of the key figures see Hull, "The Sisterhood of Disciples," 25 and Hartsfield, *Women in the Church*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷ Atwater, *Historical Sketch*, 8-9 and Hartsfield, *Women in the Church*, p. 17.

¹⁸ Harrison, *Christian Woman's Board of Missions*, p. 35.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

²¹ Ibid., p. 43.

²² Caroline Neville Pearre, "Woman's Mission Work," *The Christian Standard* (1882), p. 313.

²³ Ibid. In addition to this, she provides the reader with news of the progress the Christian Woman's Board has made. It briefly discusses Jamaica, Turkey, and the Orient.

²⁴ Atwater, *Historical Sketch*, pp. 9-11.

²⁵ As was previously stated, four women were sent to India. While the three mentioned went to Bilaspur, the fourth, Laura V. Kinsey, remained in Harda. After she was married, she and her husband first returned to the U. S. and then in 1893 they returned to India. Accompanied by Ida Kinsey and Mattie Burgess, they opened a station at Bina, India.

²⁶ Ibid., 19. It is interesting to note that between 1882-1907, ten missions were opened in India. All ten missions were started by women (although some missions did include married couples). Of the ten missions, six were opened by the year 1900.

²⁷ Several more stations were developed in Mexico yet their establishment occurred after 1900. For more information see Atwater, *Historical Sketch*, pp. 31-39.

²⁸ Harrison, *Christian Woman's Board of Missions*, 110. Due to the constraint of space in this paper, one important contribution made by the Christian Woman's Board of Missions will not be addressed. This was the development of Bible Chairs. For more information, see Harrison, pp. 122-132.

²⁹ Atwater, *Historical Sketch*, p. 46.

³⁰ Harrison, *Christian Woman's Board of Missions*, p. 47.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p. 48. To further support this sentence, Harrison shows that when "she was asked that the Centennial Mission at Jhansi, India, might be

named for her, she said she had done nothing to entitle her to such distinction, and refused the offered honor.”

³³ Ibid., p. 58.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that Mrs. Smith was “the first of the missionaries of the Christian Church to die in a foreign land.” Ibid., p. 61.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid. The importance of the work done by children is evident in the fact that “. . .the children became the ‘Little Builders,’ for the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions, and more than seventy-five buildings in India, Japan, Jamaica, Mexico and Porto Rico today, as well as in our homeland, testify to the earnest work of our boys and girls through the years.”

³⁹ Ibid., p. 62. Due to space constraints, all that was accomplished by the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions between 1866-1900 can not be discussed here. For a more complete review see Atwater, *Historical Sketch* and Harrison, *Christian Woman’s Board of Missions*. See also N. S. Haynes, “The Privilege of Women to Preach, or, Her Duty to Keep Silence—Which?” *Christian Standard* 29 (September 16, 1893), pp. 246-252, for reference to additional women who contributed to the mission fields.

⁴⁰ For a detailed description of the debate, see Mary Ellen Lantzer, *An Examination of the 1892-1893 Christian Standard Controversy Concerning Women’s Preaching* (Tennessee: Emmanuel School of Religion, 1990).

⁴¹ Clara Babcock was an active member of Woman’s Christian Temperance Union before her ordination. It has been noted that she actually began preaching in a WCTU context in 1888. In June, she was described as “a preacher” in the *Sterling Gazette*. Glenn M. Zuber, “The Gospel of Temperance: Early Disciple Women Preachers and the WCTU 1887-1912,” *Discipliana* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1993), p. 51.

⁴² Lantzer, *Christian Standard Controversy*, p. 21.

⁴³ Clara C. Babcock, “From the Field,” *Christian Standard* 28 (January 2, 1892), p. 21.

⁴⁴ Clara C. Babcock, “Woman in the Pulpit,” *Christian Standard* 28 (June 4, 1892), p. 482.

⁴⁵ Lantzer, *Christian Standard Controversy*, p. 22.

⁴⁶ Hull, “The Sisterhood of Disciples,” p. 27.

⁴⁷ It is thought that Sadie Crank was perhaps a member of the first ordained couple. She was married to J. R. Crank. David A. Jones, “The Ordination of Women in the Christian Church: An Examination of the Debate, 1880-1893,” *Encounter* 50 (Summer 1989), p. 201.

⁴⁸ J. H. Jones, “Dedication at Liberal, Mo.” *Christian Standard* 60 (July 12, 1924), p. 1037.

⁴⁹ Hull, “The Sisterhood of Disciples,” p. 27.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Bertha Mason Fuller, *The Life Story of Sarah Lue Bostick* (1949), p. 13.

⁵³ Mrs. Virginia Hedges, “Woman’s Work in the Church,” *Christian*

Standard 29 (May 20, 1893), p. 393.

⁵⁴ For a brief discussion of current issues regarding female preachers, see Mark G. Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), p. 179.

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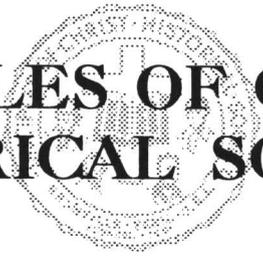
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The Disciples of Christ Historical Society has been blessed through the years with gifts from estates. Some have come unsolicited; others have been planned in advance with leadership of the Society. These gifts have measurably strengthened the ministry of the Society. Through the Order of the Stone-Campbell Fellowship the Society can recognize these intended gifts and express appreciation to those planning the gifts.

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DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Hans Rollmann



Volume 59 • Number 4 • Winter, 1999

Published by	DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)	
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DISCIPLIANA (USPS 995-060) is published quarterly for \$20.00 per year by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society which was established in 1941 "to maintain and further interest in religious heritage, backgrounds, origins, development, and general history of Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ and related groups." Members of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society receive *DISCIPLIANA* quarterly, along with other benefits. Annual membership categories are: Sustaining - \$50 to \$249, Participating - \$30, Regular - \$20, Students - \$10.00, Non-U.S. - \$25. Life Memberships are: Life - \$250, Life Link - \$500, Life Patron - \$1,000.

Contributors to *DISCIPLIANA* should submit manuscripts on 3.5 floppy disk in Wordperfect 5.1 or "text" format. Electronic manuscript submission via "text only" formatted e-mail or attached file accepted at dishistsoc@aol.com. Postal mail should be addressed to: *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 Nineteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196.

Phone: (615) 327-1444. Fax: (615) 327-1445. E-mail: dishistsoc@aol.com.
The Disciples of Christ Historical Society Home Page: <http://users.aol.com/dishistsoc>
Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN.

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Indexed by Restoration Serials Index
ISSN 0732-9881

Indexed in Religion Index One: Periodicals, the Index to Book Reviews in Religion, Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBRR 1975- on CD-ROM, and the ATLA Religion Database on CD-ROM, published by the American Theological Library Association, 820 Church Street, Evanston, IL 60201-5613. atla@atla.com <http://atla.library.vanderbilt.edu/atla/home.html>

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *DISCIPLIANA*, 1101 - 19th Avenue, South, Nashville, TN 37212-2196. Please give both old and new addresses and attach a mailing label from an old issue. USA: Please provide nine-digit code (ZIP+4).

— From the Editor's Desk

This issue demonstrates differences in religious ethos and their implications for theology and practice that had emerged in the Stone-Campbell Movement by the dawning of the twentieth century. Both were presented to the sixth annual Kirkpatrick Seminar for Stone-Campbell Historians, April 23-24, 1999. Also presented to the seminar was M. Eugene Boring's "Disciples Interpretation of Revelation at the Turn of the Century," published in the Fall 1999 issue.

W. Clark Gilpin examines the religious ethos and developing theology and practice of Disciples associated with the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago and the *Christian Century*. He argues that Winfred E. Garrison, Charles Clayton Morrison, Albertina Allen Forrest, Edward Scribner Ames, Errett Gates and Herbert Lockwood Willett developed their theology and practice out of the religious ethos they inherited from urban, midwestern Disciples leaders such as James H. Garrison, Archibald McLean and Caroline Neville Pearre. Gilpin shows that the Christian faith formed by this ethos "took courage from the conviction that the ideals toward which it worked were congruent with the heart of things and from the further conviction that these ideals could work transformatively through social institutions for the betterment of society." Hence, Disciples associated with Chicago developed institutions that presupposed "interactive relations with the wider society" such as the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago and the Bible Chairs established at public universities. They also promoted cooperation with other denominations and persistently engaged in borrowing successful ideas for missions, evangelism and education. This ethos was theologically expressed in the "Chicago School" of socio-historical study of the Bible and the history of Christianity.

Hans Rollmann describes a radically different religious ethos and developing theology and practice in his probing of Robert Henry Boll's earliest apocalyptic thinking. He argues that the formative influence on Boll was James A. Harding, with whom Boll studied at the Nashville Bible School. Harding taught that the world is engaged in an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, that human institutions and governments are extensions of satanic forces, that the church is the arm of God's presence in the world, and that Christ would soon return and establish his millennial reign. Rollman suggests that the further development of Boll's premillennialism arose from apologetic and practical considerations. He notes that Boll's world view led him to condemn "institutionalized unbelief in universities and colleges" for which he saw Bible colleges and Christian schools as an effective remedy. He also notes that Boll supported overseas missions not with the expectation of global conversion, but as a sign of the end that could lengthen or shorten the interval between prophetic predictions and their fulfillment.

Review of these articles will help twenty-first century Christians to consider the varieties of religious ethos evident in the church today and to reflect on the views of God's activity that will motivate contemporary believers to "steadfastness and perseverance" in the Christian witness.

- D. Newell Williams

—From the President's Desk

The Historical Society is not only a keeper of history but a maker of history. In November of 1999 leaders of the three branches of the Stone-Campbell Movement came together in the first in a series of three sessions to seek Christ's unity. We shared the Lord's supper. We reached out to each other in friendship as we briefly heard each others' faith journeys. We updated our information about each of the fellowships. Prayerfully and thoughtfully a representative shared how the rhetoric and the decisions from that person's group could have been different at the times around the separations. God's spirit moved among us in that history-making moment of worship, fellowship, learning and confession.

I reflected with appreciation on the ministry of the Society that brought us to that moment. I thought of forty years of informal conversations of good will that have occurred at the coffee-break table in our building. I thought of the academic discipline of 58 years of lectures, seminars and articles in this journal which have kept alive the flickering light of hope for unity among us. The image occurred to me of the candles on the monks' desks in the dark ages as they copied the manuscripts of the Bible.

During the course of the conversations the Society reached across the chasm of separation in a gesture of unity. We gave our Faithful Servant Award to Russell Blowers, distinguished pastor, retired, of the East 91st Street Christian Church of Indianapolis. Russ is the first person outside of the Disciples to be honored with that award. He was recognized as one who stood in the breach of separation and isolation.

We do not know how history will judge our conversations. We do call for your prayers of thanksgiving and support to unite with the prayer of Jesus that we may find ways to be one.

- Peter M. Morgan

**Toward a Christian Century:
Disciples of Christ in the Chicago Ethos, 1899-1909**
W. Clark Gilpin*

How did the turn of the last century affect members of the Stone-Campbell movement? How did they understand the times in which they lived? What did they perceive to be the key religious issues, the most auspicious changes and challenges? With what religious and theological resources did they enter the twentieth century? Do their experiences provide any models or analogies for present-day members of the Stone-Campbell tradition as we now look toward the advent of a new century?

Within this broad topic, I shall direct our attention to a specific cast of characters: a cluster of Disciples of Christ ministers, educators, and editors who either were living in Chicago or who, following studies at the University of Chicago, had departed this largest of the Midwestern cities to work in other cities and universities of the region. And, for reasons that will become evident, I shall direct our attention to a specific decade: the years from 1899 to 1909. With respect to this time, this place, and these people, my interpretive task is, first, to understand the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth as a religious event in the lives of Disciples of Christ intellectuals who were living and working in the urban Midwest and, second, to suggest the significance of their response for the broader history of the Disciples of Christ.

In 1899, the principal characters in my narrative were young. Winfred E. Garrison and Charles Clayton Morrison were 25; Albertina Allen Forrest was 27; Edward Scribner Ames and Errett Gates were 29. The "old timer" of the entire group was Herbert Lockwood Willett, a ripe 35. For most of them, the years of their most significant religious leadership would not come until after World War I, but, even in this opening decade of the century, the broad character and direction of their leadership was becoming quite clear. Associated especially with Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago and the Christian Century, they were innovative institution builders whose various schemes and projects would notably influence both the institutional development and the self-understanding of the Disciples of Christ throughout the twentieth century. Profoundly loyal to their religious heritage, they expressed their loyalty through scholarship and popular education that aimed to transform this heritage in ways they believed would insure its positive influence upon the new century.

The decade on which I will focus stretches from the fiftieth anniversary

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of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1899 to the Pittsburgh Centennial Convention of the Disciples of Christ in 1909. During this decade, many Disciples believed their movement had reached a milestone in its development. They were acutely conscious of the numerical, missionary, and financial successes that Disciples of Christ congregations and agencies had achieved. Many of them took pride in the fact that historic appeals for Christian unity had translated into vigorous ecumenical engagement, including membership in the Federal Council of Churches. And, all were mindful of significant controversy within their religious movement about forms of worship, the authority of scripture, organization for missions, and relations with other religious bodies, a set of controversies that signaled (in the 1906 U.S. Census as well as in local congregations) the gradual dispersal of the Stone-Campbell Movement into three distinct communions. Growth, reinterpretation, custom, and controversy raised various questions about the authority and meaning of tradition. Consequently, it was an era of notable historical writing, including The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century, edited by James H. Garrison in 1901, John T. Brown's Churches of Christ in 1904, and William T. Moore's Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ in 1909. As this essay will indicate, the new generation of Disciples coalescing in Chicago had a significant role to play in all of these matters.

In brief, my interpretive argument is that the decade from 1899 to 1909 represented an important coming-of-age for the liberal Disciples connected to Chicago, the city and the university. From the preceding generation of Midwestern Disciples leaders, such as James H. Garrison (1842-1931) in St. Louis, Archibald McLean (1850-1920) in Indianapolis, and Caroline Neville Pearre (1831-1910) in Des Moines, they had inherited a characteristic "religious ethos," an underlying sentiment that informed beliefs, customs, and practices. But, during the first decade of the twentieth century, the new generation organized this broad disposition toward church, society, and personal piety into an intellectual program, a theological position, an historical method, and a rationale for the institutional development of the Disciples of Christ as a religious body. This theological formulation, articulated by Chicago Disciples at the turn of the century, became the intellectual basis for the entrance of the Disciples of Christ into what today is called "mainstream Protestantism." Hence, an analysis of the Chicago Disciples of this era delineates one of the primary constitutive elements in the self-understanding of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) that has gradually developed in the 125 years from the founding of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions in 1874 to the present.

The Urban, Midwestern Religious Ethos

Looking back on this era, W. E. Garrison observed that the Disciples of Christ were largely a church of rural and small-town America, and "while other leading denominations had 15 to 50 per cent of their people in cities, this American movement was only 6 2/3 per cent urban."¹ Still, the cities of the Middle West, such as Chicago, Des Moines, St. Louis, and Indianapolis were centers of activity and of leadership. What religious ethos did these Chicago leaders of the Disciples inherit as they entered the new century?

In speaking of a "religious ethos," I am suggesting a complex outlook on the religious life that included some specific theological ideas, to be sure, but was also clearly stamped by cultural attitudes and values, styles of piety, assumptions about history and human nature, and an implicit diagnosis of the besetting problems, dangers or challenges that faced church and society. This ethos can be readily ascertained by skimming through the 1899 issues of the Christian Oracle, a weekly journal of religious opinion published by James H. Garrison in Chicago, which at the end of that year would change its name to the Christian Century. Garrison minced no words in his editorial policy, printed in each issue of the journal. "The Christian Oracle stands for: The Home, Church, and the State—the divine trinity of agencies in the moral order of the world. Whatever assails these, it will assail, and whatever fosters and protects these, it will seek to foster and protect." The Oracle, said its editor, was a religious journal that would "regard nothing as foreign to its scope and mission which affects human welfare. An advocate of the religious Reformation urged by the Disciples of Christ, it offers its hand to every man who is seeking to build here on earth the City of God. Owning no master but Christ, it pledges its service to bring men into the possession of his life and to make his will the Supreme Law of human society." Perhaps most striking here is the corporate and social emphasis of the language. Home, church, and state are the elemental "agencies in the moral order of the world." The journal's concern is for "human welfare," and it extends its Disciples tradition toward all who are "seeking to build here on earth the City of God." It is in Christ and the Christian life that one finds "the Supreme Law of human society."

In April, 1899, an article entitled "The Next Reformation" similarly emphasized both the social character of religion and the societal focus of religious devotion. "Of dogmatic and theologic reformations we have had enough," it announced; "ethics and spirituality must be the vital elements of the next reform." Although theology was certainly a legitimate enterprise of the church, "the great need is to exchange another world religion for a this world religion, to bring down the Kingdom of God from the clouds to the earth, to redeem and purify and elevate the lives of men

in the present state of existence. . . .Christianity must penetrate, saturate, permeate, dominate, control and inspire every phase and every sphere of human life. This is the next reform.”² As this suggests, the Christian Oracle discerned a God working in the world progressively toward a more righteous social order and called the church militant to align itself with this progressive power. Christian piety bore fruit in this world, by “purifying” individual lives and social institutions “in the present state of existence.” In the essay “Optimism as a Doctrine,” the journal translated this progressivist theology of history into the language of commercial efficiency, declaring that “it is a fundamental doctrine with the Christian Oracle that God is a success and the devil is a failure. This understood by the church means the speedy overthrow of the world power of unrighteousness and the universal reign of God in the Kingdom of his Son.”³

With regard to the Disciples of Christ, J. H. Garrison was a tireless promoter of “the reformation’s” cause, message, and plea. In 1899, his efforts consolidated around the fiftieth anniversary convention of the American Christian Missionary Society, held in Cincinnati, the host city for the founding convention in 1849. From the vantage point of publisher Garrison’s desk, the Jubilee Convention represented a marked advance, from the 136 delegates of 1849 to a predicted assembly of 10,000 in 1899. As such, the Christian Oracle took pains to note, this convention would probably be the largest missionary gathering for any single religious body in the history of the nation, clearly indicating that the missionary and educational activities of the Disciples “have taken an honored place among those of other religious bodies.” Superlatives swirled through the appeal to attend: “The greatest reports in their history will be made by all our Missionary Societies. The speeches that will be made will surpass the speeches of any former convention, and will take honorable rank with the addresses of any religious body of the world. While our first Convention was the best one that could have been held then, under all the circumstances, the Jubilee Convention will be one of the great Missionary Conventions in the history of the world.”⁴

The Christian Oracle had brought together a confederation of Disciples leaders who believed they were living in the transition to a new religious epoch, a transition symbolized by the opening of the twentieth century. The re-naming of the Christian Oracle as the Christian Century clearly enunciated their perspective on the new epoch and its challenges. “The Christian Century! This is the new name which has been selected for the Christian Oracle, and which it will wear after the close of the present year. We believe that the coming century is to witness greater triumphs in Christianity than any previous century has ever witnessed, and that it is to be more truly Christian than any of its predecessors. We wish to

signalize this faith by this change in the name of our paper. The mission of the paper will be to help change this faith into fact."⁵

Throughout, the journal exhibited the practical optimism and this-worldly piety expressed in its new name. Faith acted with high energy and high aspirations, and the rhetoric of millennial kingdoms was harnessed to pragmatic reform. It was not a faith that rested on a sense of personal righteousness. Rather, it took courage from the conviction that the ideals toward which it worked were congruent with the heart of things and from the further conviction that these ideals could work transformatively through social institutions for the betterment of society. This was the religious ethos of urban, Midwestern Disciples of Christ.

From Ethos to Institutional Innovation

From the early 1890s down to the Centennial Convention of 1909, the rising generation of Midwestern Disciples put this religious ethos into action through a series of institutional experiments that had their hub in Chicago. In every case, these institutions presupposed and built upon interactive relations with the wider society. This was vividly illustrated through the approach Chicago Disciples took toward higher education. From its founding in 1894, Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago was conceived as a center for study and comradeship among Disciples enrolled in degree programs at the University of Chicago rather than as itself a degree-granting school. Although a physical house was not constructed until the late twenties, the first three deans of Disciples House were involved in its founding and successively maintained this sense of its identity for fifty-one years: Herbert Lockwood Willett (1894-1920), Winfred E. Garrison (1920-1927), and Edward Scribner Ames (1927-1945). Each pursued his duties as dean while holding appointment on the university faculty, respectively, in the fields of Bible, the history of Christianity, and philosophy. Disciples House developed as something of an intellectual bridge between the academic departments of a research university and the religious interests of the denomination. Its founding Board of Trustees in 1894 included not only university faculty member W. D. McClintock, a professor of English, but also religious leaders such as Archibald McLean and G. W. Muckley who connected Disciples House to such denominational agencies as the Foreign Christian Missionary Society and the Board of Church Extension.⁶

The commitment to cooperative religious engagement with higher education was also evident in the Bible Chair movement, through which Disciples responded to the rapid expansion of state universities at the close of the nineteenth century by endowing chairs for education in religion on public campuses. The idea arose at the University of Michigan in the early 1890s with encouragement from the Christian Woman's

Board of Missions and Mrs. O. A. Burgess of Ann Arbor and with direct connections to H. L. Willett and others associated with the University of Chicago. In 1899, Willett reported that “the Bible Chair idea originated” with Charles Alexander Young, who had gone to Ann Arbor in 1891 after a year of study at Union Theological Seminary. In 1894, Young commenced graduate study at Chicago, and, convinced of “the opportunity in connection with the great State University for the teaching of the Bible and kindred themes,” Young became “the earnest and aggressive promoter” of Bible Chairs at Michigan, Virginia, and Georgia as well as similar plans being pursued at Missouri, California, and Oregon. As a group, the Bible Chairs were established in order to insure that students in public institutions would not be without access to courses in religion, and in 1899 Young received an instructorship in Hebrew at the University of Virginia, which, Willett observed, made him “a member of the faculty and opens the way for the introduction of biblical discipline in the University itself.”⁷

The church, so the Chicago Disciples thought, did not enter into higher education merely for the purpose of self-perpetuation but rather out of a sense of civic responsibility and out of an obligation to truth that transcended church, nation, and university alike. In this spirit, W. E. Garrison would respond negatively in 1922 to proposals that the Disciples ought to “build a university for ourselves.”

No religious body can dominate a genuine university. As an institution becomes great, it either ceases to be dominated or it never becomes a university in any true sense. The highest and holiest cause in the world cannot use a university as the agency of its propaganda. A university is not a place where boys and girls are taught to think as their teachers think. It is a place where every particular truth, or supposed truth, must take its chances in the search for truth.⁸

The concern to bring Disciples of Christ into active connection with the major universities of the Midwest was part of a broader concern to enhance the intellectual and literary interests of Disciples ministers. To achieve this end, the Campbell Institute was formed in 1896 to “keep alive a scholarly spirit” among Disciples of Christ and to encourage “contributions of permanent value to the literature and thought of the Disciples of Christ.” It had its origins among four Disciples studying at Yale in 1892-93, three of whom moved to the University of Chicago in 1895 and found there “several kindred spirits.” In 1896 they convened approximately twenty “university trained men” during the Disciples of Christ annual convention in Springfield, Illinois. Within a few years the Campbell Institute was publishing a Quarterly Bulletin (later The Scroll) edited by Edward Scribner Ames in Chicago and holding an annual

summer meeting for the discussion of scholarly papers; it had grown to more than fifty members, each of whom had pursued at least some graduate study. In January 1904 the Quarterly Bulletin published the academic and professional records of fifty-four members. The educational backgrounds of the group were thoroughly Midwestern. Thirty-eight of the fifty-four had formal educational connections to the University of Chicago, and thirty-six had taken their undergraduate degrees in the five Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa. Once again, the group is notable for its youth. Forty-five of the fifty-four members listed the dates of their bachelors' degrees. Of these forty-five college degrees, thirty-one were earned during the 1890s and only four prior to 1886.⁹

Just as they advocated strong connections to universities, so also the Chicago Disciples promoted close cooperation with other Protestant churches. They persistently engaged in borrowing successful ideas for missions, evangelism, and education from the institutional forms and practices of other denominations. Such interdenominational borrowing did not, of course, originate with Chicago Disciples. Between 1869 and 1874, for example, the Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches all founded women's missionary societies, with local, district, state, and national units for program and finance. In 1874, Disciples women founded the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, with a constitution borrowed from the Congregationalists; in the ensuing forty years CWBM not only dramatically reoriented the denomination's home and foreign missions but also laid the foundations for women's religious leadership in the twentieth century. Similarly, in 1881 the Congregationalist minister Francis E. Clark established the Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor, and it soon had an interdenominational following, including many Disciples congregations and involving many young Disciples who had their first experience of interdenominational leadership in its state and national gatherings.¹⁰

But, although the Chicago Disciples did not invent such institutional borrowing, they were notable for the extent to which they actively promoted it as an ecumenical virtue. The Christian Century followed these borrowed institutions closely and, for example, made Christian Endeavor the subject of a regular column in its pages. Similarly, the Christian Century commented favorably on the Presbyterian men's "brotherhood" and lobbied tirelessly in the first decade of the twentieth century for a Disciples of Christ "brotherhood" that would organize men's religious service throughout the "brotherhood," in behalf of universal human "brotherhood." Within the city of Chicago itself, the Christian Century reported on Disciples of Christ involvement in cooperative city missions and the creation of union congregations of Baptists and Disciples,

throughout the United States and Canada. The conversations about union with the Northern Baptists were a favorite subject of news and editorial comment throughout the years from 1903 to 1910.

Perhaps the most characteristic of these borrowed denominational forms was the Congress of Disciples of Christ. An American Congress of Churches had convened an interdenominational group of individuals as early as 1885, in order to discuss issues of moment for American Protestantism. The Northern Baptists soon followed suit with their own Baptist Congress, and in April, 1899, the Disciples held their first Congress at First Christian Church, St. Louis, with Chicago Disciples prominent in this and subsequent gatherings. Like the Baptist Congress, the Disciples Congress had as its purpose neither legislative activity nor the formation of religious and social agencies. Rather it focused on what we would call continuing education and the establishment of an annual "open forum" on "questions of the hour," questions that most often revolved around matters of Christian union, the advance of biblical scholarship, and "city missions" and the Social Gospel. Members of the Campbell Institute as well as persons affiliated with Disciples Divinity House were very prominent in the creation and perpetuation of the Disciples Congresses as well as in reporting their deliberations in the Christian Century. In 1907, Errett Gates and others connected to Disciples House and the Campbell Institute led the way in a joint meeting of the Baptist and Disciples Congresses

The Christian Century, throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, promoted these various institutional experiments. Errett Gates, Frank G. Tyrell, and Perry J. Rice wrote regular columns on Christian union and on religion and the city, for instance. With the purchase of the paper by Charles Clayton Morrison, it extended this model of discussion and popular education beyond the Disciples of Christ to ecumenical Protestantism, while still orienting its voice back toward the religious community that it understood to be its religious matrix. In 1935, Winfred E. Garrison ironically recalled Morrison's purchase of the journal in 1908: "Originally an organ of the Disciples of Christ, of minor importance even within its own communion, it came into the hands of Charles Clayton Morrison, who promptly alienated most of the support which the paper had by championing causes unpopular in the denomination and gradually found a vastly larger constituency in the more progressive elements of all denominations."¹¹

The opportunity to consolidate and symbolically celebrate these various educational, social, and religious initiatives came with the 1909 Centennial Convention in Pittsburgh. The convention was the brainchild of the younger generation's grand patron, James H. Garrison. He had begun planning for it in 1902, and the Christian Century ardently promoted the

event, even scheduling a special Christian Century Train that would take Chicago-area Disciples to Pittsburgh and back for the excellent price of \$14.25. Meanwhile, Errett Gates took the occasion to write a series of "Centennial Studies," that appeared in the Christian Century in advance of the convention and that closely identified the meaning of Disciples history with the ideal of Christian union. Indeed, the selection of 1809 itself as the "centennial" of the Disciples had precisely the same purpose. None of the Midwestern "institution builders" had given any thought to the 1901 centennial of Cane Ridge or the seventy-fifth anniversary in 1907 of the 1832 Lexington, Kentucky, union of Disciples and Christians. No, instead, the publication of the Declaration and Address by Thomas Campbell, with its appeal for Christian union, was fastened upon as the natal event of "the brotherhood," and, in the centennial program book, Disciples House trustee Archibald McLean proclaimed the Declaration to be "one of the greatest, if not the very greatest, document ever written on American soil."¹²

From Ethos to Theological Rationale

All the while that they experimented with these various ventures in higher education, popular education, and ecumenical cooperation, the Chicago Disciples were also actively pursuing a theological rationale that would interpret their contemporary enterprise in relation to the broad nature of religion as a human phenomenon, the social and theological history of Christianity, and the specific history and teachings of the Disciples of Christ. This "Chicago School" of socio-historical study of the Bible and the history of Christianity has often been assessed as part of the history of the academic study of religion and theology in America. But, a full appreciation of its purposes and methods also requires attention to its role as the rationale for a distinctive liberal piety and, to use an outdated term, "churchmanship." The socio-historical method was not simply an academic method but the intellectual expression of a religious sensibility.

This aspect of the socio-historical method is evident in the conceptions of "religion" and "theology" that characterized the Chicago outlook. In his 1929 study Religion, Edward Scribner Ames defined these two terms in ways that will illuminate what I have characterized as the Midwestern and Chicago ethos. "Religion," Ames declared, "arises as a phase or quality of the complex life of the human spirit in its idealistic outreach and is continually subject to restatement under the influence of the flowing stream of that life." Note here not only the theme of religious change brought about by hopeful idealism but also the very permeable boundaries between religion and others "phases" of human culture. "Theology," in turn, "may be regarded as the systematic rationalization of customs and

of the fragmentary, uncriticized ideas carried along in the practice of religion.” The primary “stream of life,” Ames believed, flowed through the relationships of family and community, the rituals that inspired membership in these associations, and the institutions that sustained these connections over time and generations. He would not have disagreed with the earlier declaration of the Christian Oracle that home, church, and state were “the divine trinity of agencies in the moral order of the world.” Theology existed as a secondary reflection on this life stream of religious practice.

Throughout, the accent fell on the environmental adaptation of religion to the ideals and issues of the age. So, for example, Ames published an essay in 1906 entitled “Theology from the Standpoint of Functional Psychology,” in which he laid out the central argument of his first major book, The Psychology of Religious Experience (1910). In the essay, Ames explained that the features of human “mental life” are best understood “with reference to the concrete life-conditions which call them forth.” The idea of God, he continued, was not innate but, instead, “arises with the power of generalizing and unifying experience and under the practical demand for such generalization, in the maintenance and furtherance of practical interests.” For this reason, the idea of God changes with the changing social conditions in which it functions, and the concept “is now undergoing perhaps the profoundest transformation in history. The forces accomplishing it are not vagaries of speculative philosophy, but the tremendous influences of modern civilization. The change is from the transcendence to the immanence of God. It is due to the rise of democratic institutions and the birth of an intense social consciousness.”¹³

This evolving character of the relation between theological ideas, religious practices, and the wider social environment, meant that the past could be a powerfully instructive set of illustrations or examples of the relation between Christianity and culture, but it could provide no authoritative norm for achieving such a relationship in the present. Restorationism was antipathetic to the elemental nature of religious experience. In the first decade of the twentieth century, this position was explicated with particular acuity by Albertina Allen Forrest in an address to the Campbell Institute entitled “The Cry ‘Back to Christ’: Its Implication.” Forrest decisively announced that the historical method “conceives nothing absolutely, nothing apart from its relations,” and it was therefore in conflict with “the idea of inviolable perfection in the past.” “It is,” she wrote, “impossible to return to the Christian standards of the first century, because these very standards have been growing all the time...To understand the development of the horse, we go back to Eohippus; but we do not breed to that type. So we go back to Christ to

understand the direction of the highest moral development; but his truest teaching is but formal: modern man must develop the content.”¹⁴

Finally, we may find the same understanding of religion as progressive social adaptation in the historical writings of Winfred E. Garrison. As early as his doctoral dissertation on the theology of Alexander Campbell, Garrison was already employing the socio-historical method to understand the religious and ethical implications of Disciples history for the religious life in his own time. Published in 1900, the dissertation interpreted Campbell’s theology as a response to the great social issue of modernity, namely, the tension between individualism and social unity. “The most important problem which confronted the religious world at the beginning of the nineteenth century was this: How is it possible to reconcile the individual’s liberty of conscience and intellect, with that degree of unity of the church in spirit and organization which is demanded by the will of Christ and by the practical requirement for efficiency in his service.”¹⁵ As with Ames and Forrest, Garrison found religion to be a constant process of historical adaptation to changing social conditions: “The hope of the future lies in a type of religion, of theology, and of Christian ethics which is perfectly open-minded toward facts—the facts of history and nature and of the moral and spiritual experience of men—and is willing to weigh and accept new evidence.”¹⁶

Conclusion: Toward a Christian Century?

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as the Disciples slowly and somewhat haphazardly consolidated, they developed the sense of tradition, albeit an “anti-traditional tradition.” The Disciples were a “movement” with a “message” or “plea” but not a denomination. The period from the founding of the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions in 1874 through the 1920s was a battleground over the meaning of the movement and the direction it should take. To understand the importance of the Chicago Disciples in this period requires that we recognize two “theses” by which they interpreted their religious and social situation. First thesis: The culture’s principal religious question had changed from “internal” debates within and among the denominations to “external” questions posed by evolutionary science, the new higher education, the changing economic order, and the international influence and ecumenical responsibility of the United States and of American Protestantism. Second thesis: The Disciples “message” of reform was inadequate to serve as a coherent doctrine of the church in this new cultural context. The reform movement had initially focused on the order and discipline of the local congregation. Other aspects of the church were given insufficient attention: the responsibility in and for the social order; relationships of accountability, support, and discipline among the congregations; the pursuit of the

church's mission beyond the local congregation; and the relationship of the Disciples to other religious groups. Their analysis of the dynamism of the social process required Chicago Disciples to amplify systematic theological and institutional attention to the nature and mission of the church, understood especially in terms of its function as one of the key social institutions of the modern world, an institution charged with giving moral and spiritual direction to society amidst unprecedented changes.

This understanding of American Protestant Christianity, as custodian of the cultural core of American society, has been designated by current scholars of American religion by such terms as mainstream, mainline, old-line, or the Protestant establishment. These are all retrospective terms of scholarly interpretation, which came into use sometime in the 1960s as a means of identifying a collection of churches with a historic position of leadership in American society. None of the terms was used by the groups themselves, including the Chicago Disciples, during the long epoch of their custodial leadership. The scholarly "recognition" of the mainstream in the 1960s depended on the simultaneous emergence in this same decade of Catholicism as a full participant in American public life, the leadership of the black churches in the extension of civil rights, and the expansion of evangelical Protestantism with revived interest in politics and social issues. The voices of these newly influential participants in the American religious conversation required a reconsideration of the general patterns of religious involvement in the culture. The mainstream, it might be said, became visible to observers of American religion by virtue of a decentering of American religion that displaced the mainstream from its accustomed role.

As terms, mainstream and mainline imply that the unity and the continuity of this denominational cluster are "givens" of American society, the inevitable result of early arrival, a common moral code, and political and economic influence. The "mainstream" may have had different sources in the high mountains of the distant past, but in America it has flowed down a single channel with well-defined banks. It has an origin, an identity, and a fate.

This image presents a false degree of homogeneity and permanence. In particular, it fails to explain the decision on the part of Chicago Disciples to enter the mainstream. The experience of the Disciples of Christ in the opening decade of the twentieth century suggests that the denominations now identified with the mainstream achieved their present identities not only by genetic maturation from their origins but also by complex decisions to interact with one another, to commit themselves to common strategies of social action, to borrow institutional forms and devotional practices from one another. Bluntly stated, the denominations that comprise the mainstream in no small measure chose to do so. As the

Chicago Disciples saw, practiced, and advocated, denominational identities are largely relational and contextual, rather than simply unfolding genetically from founding figures such as Alexander Campbell or charter documents such as The Declaration and Address. The points of interaction shift over time in relation to the changing social environment of the churches. This leads to a new configuration of mainstream churches and, as in the case of the Disciples, to the division of denominations as parts choose to participate in mainstream relationships and other parts do not. The interactive mainstream represents a collective self-understanding that alters the identity of each participant.

A similarly interactive conception of the mainstream churches derived from the Chicago Disciples' understanding of responsibility to the wider civic society. As in their relations with one another, so in their relations with civic institutions, the churches that participated in the mainstream reshaped themselves by virtue of their particular commitments to one another and to the public order. It was this understanding of religion in its functional relation to society that the Chicago Disciples contributed to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and that provided the intellectual rationale for the denomination's decision to participate in "mainstream Protestantism." With the current reconfiguration of American religious life, the Chicago Disciples would, no doubt, advise us to practice "affirmative religion," by inventing new institutions and proposing new theological interpretations that would bring creative hope to the society in which we live. The turn-of-the-century history of the Chicago Disciples leads me to propose that there is a theological affirmation latent in the development of mainstream Protestantism that deserves critical reconstruction, even if we wish to dissociate this theological affirmation from the connotation of "institutionalized cultural custodianship" that is typically attached to the notion of the mainstream.

NOTES

¹ Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1958), pp. 360-61.

² "The Next Reformation," Christian Oracle 16 (April 13, 1899), p. 4.

³ "Optimism as a Doctrine," Christian Oracle 16 (May 25, 1899), p. 4.

⁴ "The Jubilee Convention: Cincinnati, October 13-20," Christian Oracle 16 (July 20, 1899), p. 11.

⁵ Christian Oracle 16 (November 23, 1899), p. 4.

⁶ William Barnett Blakemore, Quest for Intelligence in Ministry: The Story of the First Seventy-Five Years of the Disciples Divinity House

of the University of Chicago (Chicago: Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, 1970), pp. 29-51, 138-41.

⁷ Herbert Lockwood Willett, "Charles A. Young," Christian Oracle 16 (August 24, 1899): 7. See also, Thomas R. McCormick, Campus Ministry in the Coming Age (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1987), pp. 1-12.

⁸ Winfred E. Garrison, "A University for Ourselves," Christian-Evangelist 59 (February 16, 1922), p. 208.

⁹ The Quarterly Bulletin of the Campbell Institute 1, #1 (October 1, 1903) and #2 (January 1, 1904); see also Samuel C. Pearson, Jr., "The Campbell Institute: Herald of the Transformation of an American Religious Tradition," The Scroll 62 (Spring 1978), pp. 1-63.

¹⁰ Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (St. Louis: Bethany, 1975), pp. 259-63, 279.

¹¹ Winfred E. Garrison, "Print and Propaganda," in The Church at Work in the Modern World, ed. William Clayton Bower (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), pp. 254-55.

¹² Program of the International Centennial Celebration and Conventions of the Disciples of Christ (Pittsburgh: American Christian Missionary Society, 1909), p. 20.

¹³ Edward Scribner Ames, "Theology from the Standpoint of Functional Psychology," American Journal of Theology 10 (1906), pp. 219-32.

¹⁴ Albertina Allen Forrest, "The Cry 'Back to Christ': Its Implication," American Journal of Theology 11 (1907), pp. 56-73.

¹⁵ Winfred E. Garrison, Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1900), p. 25.

¹⁶ Winfred E. Garrison, Affirmative Religion (New York: Harper, 1928), p. 27.

The image shows a page of a document with a complex layout. It features a header section with the title "Statement of Diversity, Management, and Christian..." followed by several columns of text. The text is dense and appears to be a formal report or a detailed manuscript. The layout includes various headings, sub-sections, and what looks like a list or index of items. The text is small and difficult to read, but it is organized into a structured format with multiple columns and rows.

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“Our Steadfastness and Perseverance Depends on Perpetual Expectation of Our Lord”: The Development of Robert Henry Boll’s Premillennialism (1895-1915) by Hans Rollmann*

Introduction

Robert Henry Boll’s (1875-1956) place and significance among Churches of Christ has recently received renewed attention in connection with a rethinking of theology that attends especially to the counter-cultural experience of Churches of Christ. Notably Richard Hughes sees Boll as part of a wider apocalyptic trajectory of religious thought and feeling, which has its roots in the southern Christian churches and reaches back via David Lipscomb, James A. Harding and Tolbert Fanning to the revivalistic and ecumenical efforts of Barton W. Stone.¹ Yet despite an increased interest in Boll, whose pivotal role in shaping the fellowship of premillennial Churches of Christ is unquestioned, little work has been done in studying the development of his eschatological thought and that of his friends as well as the points of contact and divergence from the millennial thought prevalent among these churches during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.² Boll is usually treated at the point of his conflict with contemporaries in 1915 and later, but in order to understand his apocalypticism, we need to determine its roots, continuities with, and divergences from previous eschatology. What follows will not address all of these needs but represents instead a preliminary probing of Boll’s earliest apocalyptic thinking.

R. H. Boll’s Life and Work

Boll, a Roman Catholic from the Black Forest, experienced as a youth much change and upheaval.³ On the death of his father the mother remarried, and young Robert was able to flee a troubled relationship with his stepfather by immigrating at the age of 14 with relatives to Ohio. After sojourning in Zanesville, Columbus, and Cincinnati, he found employment as a farmhand in Tennessee; after his conversion from Roman Catholicism to the Churches of Christ he entered in 1895 the Nashville Bible School. Here he completed a three-year course of studies and continued with the institution afterwards as professor of French and German. From 1901 to 1903 he was an itinerant preacher who worked especially in Texas. In 1904 he began preaching for the Portland Avenue Church of Christ in Louisville and—except for a short period as a teacher in a private

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Christian High School in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee,—he remained at Portland Avenue until his death in 1956.

Beyond his local church work, Boll was involved in various educational endeavors, but his most distinctive public activity was his religious journalism. He published prolifically from 1895 to 1909 in the journals *Gospel Advocate*, *The Way*, *The Gospel Review*, and *The Leader and the Way*. While working for *The Way*, Boll furnished articles on spiritual formation, biblical meditations, and exegesis. In the short-lived *Gospel Review* he was responsible for two columns of an apologetic and homiletic nature. His occasional articles in the *Gospel Advocate*, from 1895 on, led eventually to a prestigious appointment as front page editor in 1909, an activity that came to an abrupt end in April 1915 through the controversy that his eschatological articles evoked among fellow editors. In 1916 Boll took over the New Orleans-based *Word and Work* and moved it to Louisville, where it quickly became his platform and the periodical voice of premillennial churches. Boll remained editor of the journal until his death in 1956.

Religious and Theological Development

In order to understand the later Boll his religious conversion has to be taken into account. After a thorough introduction to Roman Catholic doctrine at an elite high school in Freiburg, Germany, Boll continued as a Roman Catholic in Ohio. If he were ever to change religiously, he would have to be taken totally out of this German religious and cultural milieu.

In his subsequent employment as a farmhand near Smyrna, Tennessee, where Boll came under the tutelage of his employer, a state legislator, and a professor in a nearby academy, he gradually renounced his Roman Catholic faith and was immersed by a preacher of the rural Rock Spring Church of Christ. His rejection of Roman Catholicism and its notions of mediated grace and magisterial authority sensitized him to the need for a radically free and personal faith relationship, one that would also guard with vigilance against the imposition of any quasi-magisterial authority structures in his newly adopted faith community, the Churches of Christ. What attracted him and became decisive in the end was the notion of a “simple Christianity,” oriented to the New Testament.⁴ Once he had adopted Scripture as the only religious norm and authority, his faith had as its center a religious individualism that excluded any ecclesiastical mediation or vicarious responsibility in matters of faith. The notion that the Christian “was free from all men and from every human yoke” he later also vigorously defended during his dispute over eschatology with fellow editors at the *Gospel Advocate*.⁵

Boll’s theological development at the Nashville Bible School stands particularly under the influence of James A. Harding and the theological

emphases he championed as well as the ecclesiastical separatism of David Lipscomb.⁶ The school became a seedbed for several theological distinctives that were subsequently lost by mainstream Churches of Christ as they accommodated themselves to existing culture and society and pursued a more nominalistic type of religiosity. A model student at the institution, Boll endeared himself particularly to Harding, who also arranged for his protégé to write in journals he edited. Here both men defended common theological positions, such as a belief in special providence and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after conversion. Boll, like Harding, sought to steer a course between the Scylla of a mystical and irresistible power effecting conversion and the Charybdis of a reduction of the Spirit into a retired author. Instead, both men believed in the life-changing presence and gift of the Spirit in every believer after conversion.⁷ Boll also inherited from the Nashville Bible School an emphatic doctrine of grace, which he even seems to have radicalized. He rejected any righteousness by works with words similar to those of Luther. “Our salvation,” Boll wrote, “is either wholly and only and exclusively by grace, or not by grace at all. If we compensate Him in any wise for our salvation by anything we give or do, it is no longer His free gift of grace. And God will have nothing of the sort.”⁸

Harding’s Christianity, according to one of his students, R.C. Bell, was “built upon an eschatological framework—that is, that Christ’s bodily return to earth to help wind up earthly affairs is an integral part of Christianity.”⁹ He saw this world engaged in an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, between Christ and Satan, and human institutions and governments as extensions of these satanic forces, and the church as an arm of God’s presence in this world. This earthly existence was only provisional for the believers and served as a purifying and testing ground for those who waited for the messianic age when Christ’s millennial reign would be established. Because of the satanic origins of earthly governments, Christians were only liable to cooperate in the minimal way specified in the New Testament. The millennial reign, while undatable, appeared to be near, as natural calamities and the “signs of the times” suggested. The apocalyptic events followed a classical premillennial order: the rapture of the saints, the return of Christ with his saints, the destruction of the evil forces in a final showdown, the binding of Satan, and Christ’s millennial reign. At the end of the millennial reign, Satan would once more be loosed for the deception of the nations. There followed a final judgment and a subsequent purging of the earth by fire. The righteous would then reign with God forever on the “new earth” after Christ had delivered his kingdom to the father and “new life in the everlasting kingdom of God” was to begin. Thus, the millennial scenario of Harding, which according to several witnesses, including future co-workers of Boll, he communicated

in word and by writing.¹⁰ That Boll's premillennialism received its first orientation under Harding's tutelage at the Nashville Bible School appears likely in view of the two men's often attested close relationship, but it is also substantiated by Boll's earliest eschatological writings.

The Development of R.H. Boll's Eschatology: 1895-1904

In order to determine the quality of Boll's eschatology as well as the development in his thinking, it is necessary to study his publications from the earliest period, which to my knowledge has never been attempted. Boll's total literary production prior to 1909, when he became the front page editor at the *Gospel Advocate*, consists, in my accounting, of 170 articles or columns, of which most were devoted to spiritual, pastoral, and apologetic topics. Only seven articles, or four percent of his entire literary output, dealt specifically with eschatological topics

Looking over the earliest literary production with an eschatological theme between 1895 and 1904, it seems that Boll's eschatology arises from apologetic and practical considerations. There is at once the challenge of a naturalistic and positivistic explanation of the world void of any cosmic teleology and human ethical consequences. Boll's answer is a symbolic theodicy that affirms God's rule in the universe, his clock-work plan for a cosmic end, as well as the vindication of believers and conviction of contemporary critics and scoffers.¹¹ But Boll also finds in eschatology a needed motivator for spiritual formation and action. Eschatological imminence, while motivating the believers, impresses upon them the seriousness of ethical perfection and urgency in proclamation and mission. "Our steadfastness and perseverance," Boll wrote in 1904, "depends on perpetual expectation of our Lord's return."¹²

The earliest eschatological articles from 1900 to 1904 engage the received tradition in a constructive and critical way. Alexander Campbell's dispensationalism—his division of human history into patriarchal, mosaic, and Christian ages—is assigned a world-historical pedagogical role in Boll's eschatology, where

the era of Christianity is itself but a preparation for the millennium and the eternal bliss of the New Jerusalem; for the Christian must strive and battle against principalities and powers, against the wiles of the devil and the temptations of the flesh. He must toil, he must suffer until, through much tribulation, he enters into the kingdom of God.¹³

In addition, Boll understands eschatological imminence as a constant and constitutive element of the early Christian experience and thus itself an essential element of a "restoration" plea that is in need of restoration. At the same time he is acutely aware of the critical difference between the

pastoral and spiritual need for imminent eschatology and its patent neglect in contemporary Churches of Christ. Boll argues: “Just as certainly as the Gospel teaches us faith, repentance, baptism, and purity of life, so certainly it teaches us to look for the Lord, earnestly expecting and desiring his coming.”¹⁴ That gulf between the practical need for eschatology in the present—as well as its essential role in early Christianity—and the contemporary neglect would eventually grow and widen into an impassable chasm between Boll and his critics.

In principle, nearly all emphases of Boll’s eschatology can be found in his earliest articles, published between 1900 and 1904. They comprehend a dualistic world view and summons to holiness as preparation for citizenship in another world similar to Harding’s premillennial vision, including the millennium and the new heaven and the new earth. Boll differs from Harding and his contemporaries in only two points: (1) by addressing the cosmological questions in a more explicitly Fundamentalist context, where the enemies are basically naturalists and positivists; (2) by raising the absence of eschatological imminence in contemporary Churches of Christ into a critique of the existing restoration principle. It is this second point of a deficient restoration that would eventually invite strife and opposition, especially when it was later complemented by a dispensational futurist eschatology that appeared to diminish the central significance of the church, a crucial tenet of Churches of Christ theology.

The Development of R.H. Boll’s Eschatology: 1905-1915

David Lipscomb Cooper credits Boll with having preached on premillennial topics as early as 1907 at the Nashville Bible School.¹⁵ There is a remarkable manuscript record kept by Boll of his evangelistic meetings that confirms Boll’s early use of eschatological topics in his evangelism. He recorded in this notebook not only dates and locations, but also sermon topics, responses, and remuneration.¹⁶ It appears that from 1906-1919 Boll held more than 50 revival meetings that range in duration from one or two weeks to one month. Geographically, they extended from Maine to Oklahoma and from Ohio to Texas. Of these meetings 43 had at least one sermon devoted to the Second Coming of Christ. His earliest preaching on the Second Coming in this record occurred in November 1906 in Fayette City. As early as July 1907 Boll preached on several occasions a series of three sermons on eschatology, which from April 1909 was extended to a four-part series, which he preached in no fewer than 12 different locales.

If we survey his literary work as far as eschatology is concerned, Boll expresses also in several articles and as early as 1903 the hermeneutical requirements for dealing with prophetic texts. He remains rooted in the literalist tradition of the Restoration Movement but extends it to areas

hitherto neglected: the prophetic literature. At the same time he rejects all allegorization and renounces any interpretation of symbolic language where such is not explained by the text. Multiple fulfilments of prophecies caution the exegete not to spiritualize prematurely literal meanings.¹⁷ Emanuel Swedenborg, Ellen White, Mary Baker Eddy, but also contemporaries such as Charles Taze Russell serve as warning examples of subjectivism in interpretation as well as of selectivity and isolation of texts for doctrinal consumption.¹⁸ Boll counterposes the value inherent in determining strictly a writing's authorial intent with "private interpretation." Here he shares the underlying assumption of preachers among Churches of Christ, which were ultimately rooted in the Enlightenment, that the perspicacity of Scripture and common meanings have universal validity. In Boll's words, "all men who conscientiously and carefully ascertain the actual meaning of the words used will, though sundered far in miles or time, arrive at practically the same result."¹⁹

In two programmatic essays in 1909, titled "The Study of the Prophecies," Boll asserted the didactic, paradigmatic, paraenetic, and prophetic significance of Scripture.²⁰ By declaring prophecy comprehensible and indicting existing omissions and alleging misinterpretations among the Churches of Christ, he challenged the hermeneutical status quo. The internal polemic was even heightened when contrasting the alleged incomprehensibility of prophecies with the public claim of Scripture's perspicacity and revelatory character when dealing with outsiders to the movement.

The study of prophecy recommends itself to Boll not only by a direct divine command, but also because of its revelatory, pastoral, and apologetic value. Prophecy is for Boll an insider's privilege extended by God to his friends. As motivator and inspiration for spirituality and action it is of immense pastoral value and stands in contrast to a "religion of duty." It further warns of and anticipates errors and enables one to read the "signs of the times." Unfortunately neglect and speculative systems had in his judgment disillusioned many and caused the withdrawal of preachers and writers among Churches of Christ into interpretive generalities and safe areas. But such neglect of the prophecies had serious consequences in that church members were now largely ignorant and helpless in the face of the apocalyptic eccentricities of Mormons, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses.²¹

As Boll took on the book of Revelation in a series of "Short Talks on Revelation" in the 1914 and 1915 *Gospel Advocate*, he revealed increasingly his dependence on the dispensational exegetical tradition of Darby and Scofield. Boll differentiates the futurist interpretation of Revelation from a historic premillennialism that interpreted the symbolic prophetic language of the book in terms of events in world or church history. He rejected a

historical understanding because of its uncertainty, elitism, and lack of specificity when compared with other biblical prophecies. Boll delights in irony over the ambiguity of historical identifications. “Before our wondering eyes,” he writes,

they [historical interpreters] piece out a most remarkable story of fulfilled prophecies; they lead forth out of the records of bygone days hordes of strange tribes supposed to have figured in John’s prophecy—Goths and Lombards, Saracens and Huns, Romans and Teutons; Constantine sallies forth to conquer in the sign of the cross; follow popes also with their henchmen; Luther, holding aloft the torch of the Reformation—they march before us in imposing procession; the French Revolution fills the air with smoke and cries and Napoleon sweeps along victoriously; and the commentator busily tells us the while, “This means that” and “that means this,” and just why he thinks so. To him it is clear and unanswerable, plain as daylight. Yet somehow his brother commentators also bring forth out of the historic treasure things old and new, equally strange and wonderful, equally plausible, and guaranteed to be the fulfillment of the symbolic prophecy—and yet with not too much agreement one with another. And the common reader is simply puzzled. It all looks ingenious and plausible; and the display of research and learning is imposing; and he cannot deny but it may all be so; yet there is a question in his mind which, after all, goes unsatisfied: “*Is it really so?*” and “How can I know?”²²

In his legitimation of a futurist reading of Revelation, Boll, and his associates—Olmstead, Chambers, and Neal—all follow the scheme suggested by William J. Erdman and popularized by the *Scotfield Study Bible*, that Rev. 1:19 (“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”) is the key to its structure and meaning. According to this interpretation, the three-part division of things seen, that are, and which “shall be” refers to John’s vision in chapter 1; the present-day church conditions are outlined in the seven messages to the seven churches in chapters 2 and 3; and the future related to events that will transpire after the return of Christ (Chapters 4 - 22:8). Not only is the futurist interpretation recommended by Rev. 1:19, but also the paradigmatic nature of the churches matches the pastoral needs of all times, while the prophetic bulk of Revelation, chapters 4 - 22:8, fits most parsimoniously a futurist interpretation. It has the advantage of not being contradicted in its literal understanding because

of events yet to transpire, whereas in the case of a historical interpretation much guesswork and adjustments of historical reality are needed to satisfy the symbolic correspondence between events and figures.²³

The prophetic yield of such interpretation conformed very much to the dispensational scheme in contemporary Fundamentalism, notably the *Scofield Study Bible*,²⁴ apocalyptic specifics appropriated by a wide Fundamentalist constituency. In Boll's case, the first explicit use of the Darby-Scofield type of dispensationalism occurred in an article of 22 February 1909, titled "The Challenge of Man's Universal Failure," which lists all of Scofield's dispensations and argues for a continuous history of human failure, which includes even the apostolic church and by doing so raises yet another critical barrier against the perfectionism with which his own church viewed Christian origins.²⁵ With its "offenses, divisions, heresies, enmities, strife, defections, desertions" apostolic Christianity quickly loses its innocence and rather resembles contemporary Christianity. Only to "misinformed imaginations" can it appear perfect. As the predicted coming of the world progresses, however, things grow worse, and only a minority will eventually be saved.²⁶ In other articles, Boll repeated the sixfold dispensations up to his time and the approaching crisis, which for him was predicted according to Daniel and the entire New Testament.²⁷

Boll also devoted considerable space to the alternative millennial option, Postmillennialism, which he judged as a profound "quietus" and "danger." Its predominance in the Restoration Movement is viewed as an unpurged remnant of unbiblical traditions. The long view of postmillennialism has profound consequences for spiritual formation and mission, in that according to Boll it "robs every Christian ... of the whole import and benefit of the doctrine of Christ's coming."²⁸ The optimistic involvement of humankind in constructing the millennium also clashes with the significance of grace among the premillennialists as well as with their fundamentally pessimistic diagnosis of world conditions.²⁹ In several articles, Boll also rejects Socialism and other human efforts of improving the world as a useless passion.³⁰

In fact, the world view presupposed by Boll's apocalypticism resembles greatly Harding's dualism but renders more specific the current crisis. Here the deplorable religious tendencies are twofold: religious liberalism and pluralism—that is, the entire ideological framework against which also contemporary Fundamentalism was reacting and which Boll had examined and attacked already in many of his apologetic articles, and also what he considered pernicious cults and heresies, such as the Seventh Day Adventists and Russell's Jehovah's Witnesses. Boll also indicts educational tendencies ranging from a superficial, fact-oriented thinking (as opposed to insight) to institutionalized unbelief in universities

and colleges, for which Bible colleges and Christian schools represent an effective remedy.³¹

The pessimistic evaluation of the world increases as the European nations are poised on the precipice. Boll's colleague, H.L. Olmstead, writing in 1914 in the *Christian Companion*, provides perhaps the most complete picture of global conditions in a two-part article titled "What the Present World-Crisis May Teach Us."³² All ingredients of the crisis are also found in numerous articles of Boll. The world crisis manifests itself in a secular culture and civilization that leads people astray, technology that operates without a closer walk with God, manufacturing that is intent on producing immoral apparel, commerce that increases great inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Thus the war is no surprise in "this present evil world." While all of the individual elements may have existed in the past, "the last fifty years finds the most complete fulfillment of all," especially the world-crisis produced by the current war, which represents "the most stupendous fulfillment of this prophecy."³³

In the midst of such crisis, there is, according to Boll, no room for inactivity. In fact missionary activism develops for the first time into a concerted effort among the Churches of Christ, whose opposition to missionary societies had resulted in somewhat isolated congregational initiatives. Now under the impending expectation of the end, there was a new exuberance for mission that has remained with the premillennial Churches of Christ even after their isolation from the mainstream. Much of the pioneer foreign missionary activities among Churches of Christ to Japan, China, India, and Africa were most strongly supported by premillennialists or churches close to them. Missionary motivation is once again related to the end-time in that foreign missions are themselves a sign of the end and can lengthen and shorten the interval between prophetic predictions and their fulfillment.³⁴ Boll writes already in 1910 in a column titled "Hastening the Day": "If then, it is the sign of the consummation of the age that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached to all nations for a testimony unto them, and then shall the end come—let us do all we can to speed further God's great work, and hasten the day according to his will."³⁵ Unlike the evangelistic imperative driving conversions at home, premillennialists did not conceive of the need to convert the whole world abroad but rather to witness to Christ. One distinguishing mark between postmillennialism and premillennialism was that the former expected global conversion and amelioration whereas the pessimism of world conditions suggested to premillennialists that missions should have a testimonial character and would not change the world. This effort at mission as testimony or witness in preparation of the end, is, as Timothy P. Weber has demonstrated, shared with premillennialism at large.³⁶

This almost paradoxically relaxed attitude toward conversions amidst great missionary activism seems to have called into question the soteriological orientation of Churches of Christ, which had little use for the quality of witness apart from the quantity of the conversions. And yet a major conflict between Boll and his opponents did not arise over mission, but in connection with the perceived relativizing of the church in view of the kingdom. Neither Harding nor Lipscomb had simply identified the kingdom with the church. Lipscomb spoke of different states. Boll and the Churches of Christ dispensationalists sought to modify the Darby-Scofield neglect in ecclesiology through a more emphatic doctrine of the church. The analogies offered, however, did not satisfy non-premillennialists, who saw their ecclesiocentrism challenged. The diminished importance of the church was related to the notion that the church was not directly foretold in the Old Testament prophecies because the Kingdom had been God's intended plan for humankind. Only after the rejection of Christ and his kingdom by the Jews did the church and a special dispensation, the "church age," appear as an interim solution, which in turn would be set aside with Christ's Second Coming. "Had Israel as a nation accepted Jesus as Messiah at his first coming, or even in the days of Pentecost," Boll wrote in 1910, "the history of mankind would have been vastly different; the steps of God's dealing would have immediately proceeded to the consummation foretold by the prophets, and the long church age would not have intervened."³⁷

Boll saw the Church nevertheless as the kingdom's present "aspect" in the world, but he and his associate Elmer L. Jorgenson used a somewhat unfortunate analogy as comparison, the notion of the church as the "vestibule" of the kingdom. He was roundly abused and ridiculed by his critics for such a subordinationist position of the church. Boll's opponents saw a crucial ingredient of their religious identity relativized. As one critic put it: "It makes everything connected with church, therefore, of very little importance, since the church is to be discarded anyway in favor of an earthly kingdom."³⁸

Conclusion

Boll can be understood as continuing the tradition of Harding and the Nashville Bible School. Under Harding's tutelage he interpreted the prophecies first in a historic premillennial fashion. Boll the spiritual writer developed particularly the notion that eschatological imminence was the motor and motive of the spiritual life and mission. From a largely spiritual perspective, he also rejected postmillennialism for its alleged motivational damper. As an early twentieth-century apologist he saw more clearly than his predecessors the ideological and theological competitors and alternatives. There was at once a positivist explanation

of humanity and the cosmos, void of God's providential care, which he answered with his symbolic theodicy, in which God and believers would soon be vindicated, as his plan for the universe revealed. In addition, he observed heterodox appropriations of the prophetic books among cultic competitors and sought to oppose them with a principled and universally valid literal exegesis of the prophecies. In the case of the book of Revelation, he suggested as a key to its structure and meaning a futurist interpretation, similar to that suggested by William J. Erdman and the *Scofield Study Bible*.

Unlike Harding, Boll did not hesitate to articulate the points of conflict between contemporary Churches of Christ theology and exegesis and what he perceived to be theological neglects and desiderata. By demonstrating that the early Christian religious horizon was one of imminent eschatology, he questioned the validity of the restoration principle as it was then practiced. His alternative proposal of a "simple faith" sought to reclaim imminent eschatology for the restoration agenda. In addition, he pointed out that the apologetic helplessness of his contemporaries in dealing with apocalyptic competitors, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, was rooted in a retarded hermeneutic and the selective employment of scripture that excluded the prophetic literature, notably Revelation.

Boll's own interpretive agenda was affected by the adoption of contemporary dispensationalism and posed serious questions for Churches of Christ ecclesiocentrism. In the eyes of his opponents, the dispensational scheme seemed to undermine the doctrine of the church by relegating the church to a subordinate position vis a vis the kingdom and by considering the "church age" an unexpected interim solution. The restoration of the Jews and their role in the millennial age was also viewed by Boll's opponents as a further sign of the church's diminished importance. Finally, the redefinition of mission as a witness and mechanism to usher in the end-time seemed to clash with the quantitative understanding of conversion by his critics.

Boll's success as a premillennialist and the emergence of a separate premillennial fellowship of churches cannot be understood apart from the active later opposition among amillennial churches and the presence of a dispensational subculture that emerged in Churches of Christ in the decade prior to World War I. That subculture built its eschatology upon an existing historical premillennialism, notably that of James A. Harding, but was different because of its futurist understanding of the end. Despite its separatist heritage the apocalyptic dualism created and maintained eventually a politically conservative environment among the premillennial churches. Also some features of the original sectarianism of the Lipscomb-Harding tradition experienced moderation, as the divided views

over conscientious objection demonstrate. The hermeneutical need for prophetic interpretation expressed itself in a more decisive exegetical literalism and resistance toward modern biblical criticism, which has been received more widely in the amillennial Churches of Christ and their theological institutions since the 1960s. The reception of dispensationalism reflects, however, a cultural accommodation of its own, namely to contemporary Fundamentalism. The subsequent selective ecumenical dialogue with fundamentalist churches among the premillennial fellowship reflects such a cultural adjustment. The premillennial churches would have to wait for the approach of a new millennium before lectureships and pulpits would open once more among the amillennial churches in fraternal recognition of their common values and shared religious heritage.

NOTES

¹ See especially Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids & Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

² This applies also to the recently published book by Thomas G. Bradshaw, *R. H. Boll: Controversy and Accomplishment Among Churches of Christ* (Louisville: Word and Work Publishers, 1998).

³ For his earliest developments, I am drawing on my essay "From The Black Forest to The Nashville Bible School: The Conversion of Robert Henry Boll," forthcoming together with other papers and edited by Mike Casey and Hans Rollmann.

⁴ This notion is best expressed in his pamphlet *The Freedom of Simple Christians* (Louisville: Word & Work, n.d.).

⁵ R. H. Boll, *The Church I Found and How I Found it* (Louisville: Word and Work, n.d.), 5 and R.H. Boll to A.B. Lipscomb, 2 December 1915; unpublished letter, Boll file, Center for Restoration Studies. The copying of the file by the Center is gratefully acknowledged.

⁶ See especially the following two forthcoming articles: John Mark Hicks, "Harding, Boll and Grace: The Nashville Bible School Theological Tradition" and Hans Rollmann, "Boll and Harding: Historical and Theological Continuities."

⁷ R.H. Boll, "The Spirit's Indwelling." *Christian Leader and The Way*, 16/5 (1905), p. 1.

⁸ R.H. Boll, *Grace and Obedience* ([Louisville: Word and Work, n.d.]).

⁹ Kenneth Wayne Green, "The Life and Times of James A. Harding," (Abilene: unpublished M.A. thesis, Abilene Christian College, 1960), p. 123.

¹⁰ For the preceding see the following on-line texts by Harding <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/jharding.html> as well as the paper by John Mark Hicks, mentioned in note 6.

¹¹ R.H. Boll, "What shall the End Be?" *The Way* (hereafter: *Way*), 1/4(April 1900), pp. 61-2.; "Preparation," *Gospel Advocate* (hereafter: *GA*), 12 July 1900, pp. 434-5; "Where is the Promise of His Coming?" *GA*, 30 August 1900.

¹² R.H. Boll, "Homiletic Paragraphs," *Christian Leader and the Way*, 20 Sept. 1904, p. 5.

¹³ "Preparation," *GA*, 12 July 1900, p. 435.

¹⁴ R.H. Boll, "Watchman, What of the Night." *GA*, 10 October 1901, p. 643; "Your Loins Girt," *GA*, 26 November 1903, p. 755.

¹⁵ Anniversary congratulations of David L. Cooper in *Word and Work* (hereafter: *W&W*), 48/2(February 1954), pp. 43-4.

¹⁶ The manuscript notebook is located in the R.H. Boll Memorial Library, Portland Ave Church of Christ, Louisville. I'm grateful to Alex Wilson, minister at Portland Ave. and editor of *W&W*, for permission to consult this and other archival materials.

¹⁷ R.H. Boll, "In Defense of the Truth," *Gospel Review* 1/5(July 1903), pp. 18-20 and 1/8 (October 1903), pp. 20-2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1/5(July 1903), p. 18.

¹⁹ R.H. Boll, "Private Interpretation," *GA*, 15 February 1912, p. 194.

²⁰ "The Study of The Prophecies." *Gospel Advocate*, 21 October 1909, pp. 1313-4.

²¹ See also, among many other texts, *GA*, 20 January 1910, 65-7; 7 April 1910, pp. 417-18.

²² "Short Talks on Revelation," *GA*, 24 December 1914, pp. 1345-6

²³ *Ibid.* The same division is retained in Boll's later commentary on *The Revelation* (Louisville: Word & Work, 3rd edition, 1947), pp. 152-3.

²⁴ Glenn R. Goss, "C.I. Scofield and the Scofield Bible," <http://www.scofield.org/historical/scofieldbible.htm>

²⁵ *GA*, 25 February, 1909, p. 226.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ "Whither are we Heading," *GA*, 7 December 1911, pp. 1410-11; "Ages and Dispensations," *GA*, 19 December 1912, pp. 1370-1.

²⁸ "Postmillennarian Doctrine," *GA*, 20 January 1910, p. 67.

²⁹ "The Spirit of the Times," *GA*, 5 August 1909, p. 962.

³⁰ "Socialism," *GA*, 30 September 1909, pp. 1217-18; cf also *ibid.*, p. 31 March 1910, pp. 385-6. See also "On Making the World Better," *GA*, 27 March 1913, pp. 289-90.

³¹ "Whither are we Heading," *GA*, 7 December 1911, pp. 1410-11.

³² H.L. Olmstead, "What the Present World-Crisis May Teach us," *Christian Companion*, 1 October 1914, No. 38, pp. 21-3 & 6 October 1914, No. 39, pp. 2-3.

³³ On the urgency of the present, see especially "The Present Apostasy" and "The Meaning of the Apostasy," *GA*, 23 July 1914, pp. 785-7.

³⁴ "The Final Chance," *GA*, 18 June 1914, pp. 666-7.

³⁵ *GA*, 10 November 1910, pp. 1225-6.

³⁶ Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1982* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 70.

³⁷ "Hastening the Day," *GA*, 10 November 1910, p. 1226.

³⁸ Rouchen N. Horton, *The Theory of Premillennialism as Taught to the Church of Christ by R. H. Boll, with Comments and Scripture Refutations* (Henderson, TN: by the author, 1976), [15].

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by
Lester G. McAllister

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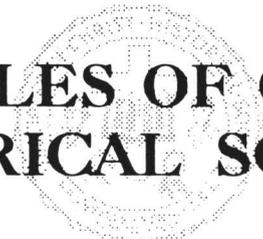
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