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DISCIPLIANA

*The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

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"A SPIRIT OF INQUIRY"

EVA JEAN WRATHER

AND

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

by

Clinton J. Holloway

Inventory of Personal Papers
of
Eva Jean Wrather



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Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)

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—From the Editor's Desk

Following his third year of extensive touring on behalf of "the reformation of the nineteenth century," Alexander Campbell exclaimed with obvious satisfaction in the December 1825 issue of the Christian Baptist that "there is a spirit of inquiry marching forth." Campbell rejoiced that people were awakening to a sense of their religious rights and privileges and were examining anew religious principles and practices. In the intervening decades Campbell has been both vilified and lionized.

The year 1988 marked the bicentenary of Campbell's birth and a renewal of interest in his life and work. By then Eva Jean Wrather had spent most of a lifetime in the study of Campbell. At that time she wrote "since his death, and despite the seasons of neglect and misunderstanding, a 'spirit of inquiry' concerning Campbell himself has been kept alive by various scholars who have sought to explore various aspects of his mind and thought." ¹ Among the scholars who kept alive that "spirit of inquiry" was Eva Jean Wrather. Making it her life's work, she sought for most of her public career to explore various aspects of Campbell's mind and thought with the goal of writing the definitive work on Campbell's life.

This issue of *Discipliana* looks at the life of Eva Jean Wrather, giving particular attention to her own "spirit of inquiry" and her biography of Alexander Campbell. While Eva Jean Wrather's 3200+ page Campbell manuscript remains unpublished, the staff of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society felt that one way to invite attention to her work and examination of the genesis of her manuscript was to publish the inventory to her personal papers. The inventory is both informative and enticing. Introduced by Clinton J. Holloway's fascinating account of Wrather's remarkable life and the history of her manuscript, it makes for a very good read!

May this issue of *Discipliana* serve the field of Stone-Campbell history as a continuing catalyst for "a spirit of inquiry."

—D. Newell Williams

¹ Eva Jean Wrather, "In Search of Alexander Campbell: The Making of a Biography," (lecture presented at the annual Russell Heritage Lecture of Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 15 March 1989), 36, Wrather Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.

— From the President's Desk

Presidency has its privileges. The privileges are not so much of rank and power, but of accessibility to special people. We egalitarian "Campbellites" don't get very far with rank and power. We forward our cause through relationships.

I have had the high privilege of a close relationship with two special saints, Eva Jean Wrather, featured in this issue, and Willis Jones.

Willis Jones, 1908-2003, was tall and courtly. His dignity was that of a nineteenth-century gentleman. His refined manners were of a now almost forgotten era. Each and every time he welcomed me to his home he wore a tie. Whenever we visited about sensitive relationships in our times as presidents of the Historical Society he never was lured into negative comments under the rubrics of candor and confidentiality. He was quite literally a "scholar and a gentleman" who may well have saved the Historical Society in the challenging years of his presidency, 1959-1970.

I had the privilege of knowing him and learning from him. I also had the privilege of representing you at his funeral on January 24, 2003. In celebration we sent him onto his reunion with the saints whose history he preserved. We sent him on with one of his favorite lines of poetry, "Not in forgetfulness, but trailing clouds of glory do we come."

— Peter M. Morgan

“A Spirit of Inquiry” Eva Jean Wrather and Alexander Campbell

Eva Jean Wrather came into the world at the home of her maternal grandparents in Nashville, Tennessee on September 21, 1908. Proud parents were Robinson (later Robert) Isaiah and Aubrey Hayes Wrather. Early photographs show her as a small, thin child with soft blond hair and bright eyes that bespoke of her curiosity. Her earliest education was received at home under the instruction of her mother. At the age of nine she began at Nashville's Cockrill School. One day, while she was in the sixth grade, her teacher asked the students what they wanted to do when they grew up. Eva Jean's answer was "I'm going to write books."¹ At the close of her grammar school education she was awarded the Cockrill Medal, marking the highest average of all the students in the preceding decade. Early in life she set the standard for herself in academic excellence. Three other events occurred in her life in this period which would help to shape her life for many years to come.

Scarlet fever struck the little girl in 1918; such a severe case of the fever that it left her heart weakened. Her parents were advised to not allow her to return to school that term. Any extra work or excitement was not permitted. She had to find her playmates among her beloved books and toys, her loving parents, and her own imagination.² The second event in this period was the family's choice of a home. 1918 was the same year that her family moved to a Queen Anne style home located at 4801 Park Avenue. Eva Jean moved only once after that time and then it was not to a different house but to a different location! In the late 1930s, to make way for a new school project, the Wrather House was moved about a block and a half to 4700 Elkins Avenue. She called the beloved old house her home until her death in 2001. In her lifetime the Victorian residence had come to be almost as much of an identifying feature for Wrather as her concern for Campbell. The third pivotal moment of her childhood came when she was baptized at the age of twelve. She later recorded that she made her decision under the influence of a preacher who had come to hold a protracted meeting and took his text for his entire week's sermons from 1 Corinthians 13. Whether at this same meeting or not is unclear but she also soon learned the name of Alexander Campbell and early in her teenage years began to read all she could get her hands on, and she soon determined that she must write his biography.³

Secondary education began when she moved up to the Peabody Demonstration School, adjacent to Vanderbilt University, and her academic prowess continued to develop, particularly her writing skills. She became editor of the annual and the school paper, *The Peabody Volunteer*, which under her editorship won an award as the best private school paper in the United States. Upon graduation from Peabody she made the transition across the street to Vanderbilt University. An aspiring writer could have entered Vanderbilt University at no better time. The University was just then enjoying the height of a Southern literary renaissance with the rise of the Fugitive and Agrarian Movements. "Through their essays, articles, (and) letters, this group was

lustily challenging intellectual circles over the nation,” Eva Jean later wrote. They were setting new standards of “more searching inquiry concerning the foundations of our culture – social, political, and religious.”⁴ Six Fugitives and Agrarians were her professors: Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, John Donald Wade, Walter Clyde Curry, and Frank L. Owsley. Through them she enjoyed an association with three other members of the movement, Allen Tate, Andrew Lytle, and Sidney Mtttron Hirsch.⁵ The shadow of these literary lights fell on Wrather at a propitious time. To their “searching inquiry concerning the foundations of our culture” she would add her own spirit of inquiry concerning Alexander Campbell. By 1929 she had begun to write the first of thousands of pages concerning the Sage of Bethany.

While at Vanderbilt Eva Jean was an active member of the Nu Omicron chapter of Alpha Omicron Pi and wrote for the school publications. She was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa key and graduated magna cum laude in 1932. Impressed with her work, the University proffered her a teaching fellowship, the first offered to a woman by Vanderbilt, to support her academic work. She declined the fellowship but did pursue one year of graduate work. Though these were tremendous honors, in her own opinion, her highest accolade came one day near the end of her senior year when her Creative Writing Professor, John Crowe Ransom, praised her with three simple words “You can write.”⁶

Declining the teaching fellowship offered by Vanderbilt Eva Jean made an important decision concerning the future course of her life’s work. She had the aid of supportive parents who fully shared in her ambitions and hopes for the eventual biography. And they were committed to subsidizing her work of research and writing, regardless of the years it might take to come to fruition. As a result, Eva Jean would be afforded the luxury of a career as a writer without the need for a day-to-day job to keep body and soul together.⁷

Her baptism was among the pivotal childhood moments which had far reaching effects on her life. Eva Jean grew to maturity within the *a cappella* tradition of the Restoration Movement. Nashville, Tennessee then, as now, was the epicenter of the non-instrumental Churches of Christ. Eva Jean’s father, Robert Wrather, was an active member in that tradition, serving as a deacon and elder throughout his adult life at the Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ.⁸ But by her sophomore year in college Eva Jean began to question the fundamentalism she saw in the church. She became disenchanted with religion. Perhaps it was due to her exposure to the Fugitive and Agrarian movements’ “searching inquiry concerning the foundations of our culture,” particularly as it applied to religion. Or perhaps it was because of her reading in earnest of the works of Campbell and seeing the ensuing misrepresentations, Eva Jean became disenchanted by religion. But to be fair, it was not religion in the abstract for which she held disenchantment, but with religion as made visible in the modern church. On the one hand Eva Jean despaired of the exclusivity and emotional excess of the fundamentalists, and on the other felt no inspiration in the emptiness of liberal modernism. Again, with the example set by the Agrarians, citing Ransom’s theories and that of others of the “intelligent conservatives,” Eva Jean sought the middle ground to “clarify and assert” her spiritual values, to live with inner self while making peace with God.

In 1934 Eva Jean and her mother transferred their membership to Vine Street Christian Church and from then on Eva Jean's spirit of inquiry in terms of faith appears to have found rest within that congregation and tradition. Throughout the twentieth century Eva Jean lent her considerable talents and support as the Disciples advanced toward a new structure, serving in leadership roles in local, regional, and general manifestations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).⁹

Upon Miss Wrather's death in 2001 the comment was made that her passing marked the end of an era. Eva Jean was a curious mix of the grand southern dame and a modern, independent woman.¹⁰ As the southern dame Eva Jean reveled in the traditions of southern hospitality, her Victorian home, cats, the leisure arts, fine music, good books, good company, and fine art. As the modern woman she early challenged the notion of a woman's place in the field of historical studies, not only in her writing career but also as the sole female among the founders and early trustees of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Befitting her educational attainments Eva Jean was a woman of letters. Her memberships, interests, hobbies, and choice of reading material covered a broad spectrum. She held membership in the Tennessee Historical Society, American Society of Church History, the Ladies Hermitage Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Victorian Society in America, the Nashville Humane Association, the Council on Christian Unity, the Nashville chapter of the American Association for the United Nations, Vanderbilt's Friends of the Library, and the Nashville Symphony Association, serving as the latter organization's historian for ten years, to name but only a few.¹¹

Her interests and hobbies included travel at home and abroad. By 1953 the Wrather family had together visited all 48 of the United States, much of which was done to include Campbell research trips and International Conventions, the annual meeting of North American Disciples. In 1935 and 1960 she made major European tours for Campbell research which coincided with meetings of the World Convention of Churches of Christ.

The arts and music were a source of great enjoyment for Eva Jean and she became a knowledgeable patron and collector. Among the visual arts she preferred local artists, including painters Avery Handley and Gus Baker, with whom she had an enduring friendship, and sculptor Puryear Mims. She loved classical music. Another considerable hobby was her love of anything feline. That interest extended into Egyptology because of the sacred place of cats among the ancient Egyptians. She collected literally everything which depicted cats, including several live specimens. Among her beloved feline companions was Princess, a white long-haired cat whose death at the age of 21 years was cause for an obituary on the front page of the Nashville paper.¹²

Politically she was a member of the Democratic Party and was active in a number of campaigns and various political activities. She was an influential worker in the contests which sent Tennessean Percy Priest to the U.S. House of Representatives in the 1940s. Among her correspondence is a hand-written note from Bobby Kennedy thanking her for her words of condolence on the death of his brother, John. After Lyndon Johnson assumed the presidency Wrather was part of an effort to raise funds for a life membership in the

Historical Society and was later a part of the delegation which presented the Disciple President his membership in a 1964 White House ceremony.

Reading was another of her pastimes, and she read voraciously. Her library showed the same broad spectrum as her hobbies and ran the full gamut of her interests. Besides her study of the Restoration Movement her library included countless other volumes on Tennessee history, American and European history, church history, archaeology, Egyptology, philosophy, theology, art, music, cats, and on a lighter note detective and mystery novels.

Most of all, Eva Jean enjoyed good company. She collected friends almost like she collected everything else, in abundance. Her correspondence, saved over nearly ninety years, numbered into the tens of thousands of letters received from divers friends, family and acquaintances, and sent to politicians, a duke, and fellow inquirers. Much of her correspondence necessarily dealt with her work on the Campbell biography and her work on related themes. Many wrote seeking her wisdom and advice on particular ideas and themes in the field of Campbell studies. In her last years visitors to her home would find her bedfast but still every bit the gracious southern dame propped up in an enormous Victorian walnut bed among a pile of pillows and papers, usually with a cat at her side, and ready to discuss, in depth, topics historic and current.

Against the persona of the grand southern dame there was the modern independent woman. Without the need to pursue a remunerative vocation, and without the need to follow the domestic arts, Eva Jean could, for the most of her life, devote the lion's share of her time to pursuing her research, writing and other projects.¹³ As has been mentioned, she began in about 1929, while still in college, to write about Alexander Campbell. Her first lecture came while yet a graduate student and at the request of John Donald Wade, himself a biographer of John Wesley, for his graduate seminar on American literature. It would be the first of many in her career.¹⁴

The genesis and progression to completion of any manuscript may be difficult to ascertain. That process often begins with seminal thoughts which incubate over a long period. The gestation itself may take months, years, and even decades for lengthy works. When initial writing is complete, manuscripts then often undergo longer periods of editing and revisions until they mature into the work envisioned by the author. Such is the case with Wrather's biography of Campbell.

Her initial effort, begun in 1933, was titled *The Sage of Bethany: Alexander Campbell*, and laid out the pattern she would follow. It was to be interpretive rather than doctrinal, and the work would be built upon the spine of biography.¹⁵ Spending the summer of 1935 on an exhaustive European tour visiting all of the important sites of the Campbells' early lives and retracing Alexander's steps on his 1847 tour Eva Jean plowed fertile ground left unbroken by her predecessors. Upon return to the United States she made her way to the Campbell "holy ground," Bethany, West Virginia. It was the first of many visits, perhaps most productive because she began to make contact with the living Campbell descendants, building relationships with them that would eventually bear much fruit, not the least of which was in terms of original Campbell material and artifacts.

Through the next decade she wrote in earnest to bring her magnum

opus to fruition. She recorded that she began writing the biography on December 8, 1933 and finished on Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1945.¹⁶ By Wrather's own count in between were 3,254 pages and nearly 800,000 words. Throughout the process she kept in mind eventual publication and revision, allowing critical eyes to view her work in progress. Again, it was her Vanderbilt professors who made suggestions and opened doors by introducing her work to their various publishing houses, eventually leading to a contract with Charles Scribner's Sons.¹⁷

Now began the onerous task of editing and revising. Every word was invested with so much time, thought and energy. How could any be cut? By rare good fortune Eva Jean was privileged to renew a relationship with Dr. John Greig who had been a Carnegie visiting scholar at Vanderbilt during her student days and author of the standard biography of David Hume. During the winter of 1949-50 he was again visiting at Vanderbilt and during the Christmas holidays enjoyed the hospitality of the Wrather home for two weeks. The major portion of his time was spent reading the Campbell manuscript, discussing it line by line. Greig agreed to help Eva Jean with the editorial process. Before returning abroad he paid a call on the New York offices of Scribner and worked out a plan which would allow for publication. Soon Eva Jean was sending chapters to Professor Greig in South Africa for his comment and he was returning them with almost caustic critique, all for the purpose of making a strong book stronger.¹⁸ She was making good progress toward the definitive biography. By her estimate another year and a half of constant work would bring the work to completion.¹⁹

Earlier it was noted that Eva Jean Wrather's was the sole feminine voice among the founders of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Preliminary plans for a Society had begun in 1939 with the creation of a Historical Commission at the International Convention in Richmond, Virginia with Eva Jean as Secretary. At the St. Louis Convention two years later, that Commission became the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and Eva Jean Wrather was the only woman among the twenty founders. Events would soon come into play which would bring an abrupt halt to the progress of the Campbell manuscript and focus her attention on a permanent home for the Historical Society.²⁰

The Society was originally housed at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri. Within a decade it was evident that the Society must seek an alternate location. After a long series of events, with Eva Jean Wrather tirelessly working and devoting thousands of hours, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society was moved to the Joint University Libraries of Vanderbilt University in Nashville. With the Society safely ensconced in Nashville attention was soon turned to a freestanding building in an advantageous location. With limited resources the Society began to plan on a very modest scale. Viewing the plans from afar, the Phillips family of Butler, Pennsylvania soon agreed to underwrite the costs for a much larger and grander building than anyone had hoped or anticipated. As a member of the Executive Committee, Wrather continued to devote countless hours to the many details requisite in the building project. Because of her artistic interest it also became clear that Eva Jean would play a significant role on the Fine Arts Committee which was

charged with the artistic development of the monumental Phillips Memorial building. In order to create the stained glass windows in time to meet the 1958 dedication deadline Wrather went to work in the glass studio taking a full share in the work to be done. One job was for her to cut the pattern pieces for each of the windows, a total of 5,865 pieces! All the while the Campbell manuscript lay locked in the safe awaiting the author's return.²¹

Dedication of the Phillips Memorial complete, Eva Jean returned to the job of editing. In the intervening years of 1951-1958, she had translated another form of history into reality, but at a terrible price. She lost Greig's partnership in the work after only revising about a third of the manuscript and she soon found that rapidly escalating publishing costs had cost her Scribner's backing for a definitive two-volume work. She later posed the question "if we had known from the start what the full personal cost would be, would we have had the courage to begin?"²² Not wanting to concede loss, she and the editors at Scribner tried other means of regaining the affirmative for publication. But eventually, the end had to come. "And thus," she wrote, "I can only count the definitive publication of my manuscript as one of the intangibles that lie buried beneath the cornerstone of the Phillips Memorial."²³

Facing such a stark reality she took a lone trip to New Orleans to salve her wounds. Gradually, drawing upon old wells of faith and discipline, she drew up new strength to start again.²⁴ In July of 1960, before setting sail on her second major European research trip she signed a contract for publication with Harper and Brothers with a publication date set for the autumn of 1962. But almost immediately upon her return from Europe she began to face one setback after another in the form of serious health issues for both her father and her mother, some lasting for months at a time. She tried to maintain a regimen of work, if not for the effort itself, for the sake of appearance. Her devoted parents did not want anything, least of all their own care, to stand in the way of progress. Gradually Eva Jean began to be plagued by "spells of melancholy, lassitude and despair that have always plagued the creative artist."²⁵ It was a slump she could not easily shake. The manuscript, "that great pile" became in her words, "a hard, unyielding mass, defying every attempt of chisel and mallet to mold into the trim, svelte form..." Inhibited by Harper's word limit she came almost to the point of paralysis. The visage of Alexander Campbell that stared down at her from a dozen portraits on the wall became "so formidable a face."²⁶ One illness led to another with both parents and with Eva Jean, and she sank from discouragement to despondency. Then Robert Isaiah Wrather suffered a massive coronary and died on February 1, 1965. Aubrey Hayes Wrather suffered a stroke that left her incapacitated for a year before her death on May 2, 1971. Undergoing major surgery following her mother's death Eva Jean required a year's convalescence. All the while and for all intents the Campbell manuscript sat idle, though she did other shorter pieces, articles, and lectures in this time.

Enticing distractions cropped up in the decade of the 1970s. The sesquicentennial of her beloved Vine Street Christian Church was on the horizon. Given Alexander Campbell's pivotal role in the history of that congregation and her skill in the area Eva Jean was called upon to translate the congregational history to paper.²⁷ In this decade Eva Jean had become

involved in events associated with the American bicentennial and the Nashville bicentennial. Particularly important in 1976 was an extensive paper for Bethany College entitled *The Campbells and the American Experience: A Bicentennial Reflection*.²⁸ The decade leading up to the bicentennial of Campbell's birth was probably her most productive in terms of public speaking, as she delivered at least a half dozen major addresses and papers in this period. The spirit of inquiry was again marching forth and Eva Jean by 1988, in her eightieth year, enjoyed somewhat a celebrity status as the Campbell biographer.

The jubilee celebrations for the founding of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society lay just around the corner and Eva Jean would play a significant role as one of the few remaining founders and as the longest serving trustee. She was awarded a citation marking her fifty plus years of service. Soon she began work on revising her earlier published work *History in Stone and Stained Glass for the Thomas W. Phillips Memorial*, and the book was republished in 1993.²⁹ Back in the mood of revision Eva Jean, for perhaps the first time in a quarter of a century, began revising the Campbell manuscript. This time she had as her aide in the project D. Duane Cummins, then President of Bethany College. The two began to work out a plan for revision, and Wrather signed a contract with Bethany College Press on June 1, 1993 for the publication of *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom*. Chapters revised decades earlier with the help of John Greig were further honed. Material which had not been previously revised was begun. Illustrations were collected and formatted. But the work and workers soon met an obstacle in dealing with the *Christian Baptist* years. These chapters were seen as more theology than biography. Wrather felt that the *Christian Baptist* years had caused Campbell to be misunderstood, that the drama of Campbell's life and thought had become obscured. It was this misunderstanding that had caused Campbell's "season of neglect" on the part of the scholars in the decades after his death, and she intended to set the record straight.³⁰

Late in her eighth decade, she was dealing with multiple illnesses, including a major trauma to one eye that affected her vision. She had waited too long. Perhaps she had paid too high a cost in bringing the Disciples of Christ Historical Society to Nashville. Publication was not to be seen in her lifetime. Cummins wrote "illness overtook her and she was never able to complete the rewriting."³¹ She died in her home on September 13, 2001.

"Behind every extended work of biography or history stands a possible second book of the writer's experiences and impressions," Miss Wrather once wrote, calling the work of a biographer and historian "a kaleidoscope of discoveries and disappointments, of joys and frustrations, of persons and places."³² Certainly an entire volume could be written about Eva Jean Wrather. Her discoveries in the field of Discipliana now deposited in the Disciples of Christ Historical Society will long serve scholars who share her spirit of inquiry. The people she encountered and the places she visited in her lifelong endeavor were a source of joy for her. The lasting friendships made over the course of her research were, for her, one of its most rewarding aspects. And yet, there were disappointments and frustrations.

In writing about her own conversion experience at the age of twelve and at the same time about her budding interest in Campbell she said that in

time “my search for Alexander Campbell would become not only an intellectual quest but also a voyage of discovery of spiritual roots, as well.”³³ Early on, perhaps even as a child or teenager, she aspired to write the “definitive” biography. “I was once so young that I aspired to know everything to be known about Campbell, to write the so-called ‘definitive’ biography (an elusive goal at best)...” she wrote in her eightieth year, “but now I know –as Robert Frost once remarked in an interview –that the writer must at some point face his or her own ‘incompleteness’ [his word] and get on with the job at hand.”³⁴ Two questions come to mind. Was Eva Jean Wrather ever able to, in Frost’s words, face her own “incompleteness” and get on with the job at hand? She aspired to write the definitive biography of Alexander Campbell, and toward that goal, she wrote 3,200 pages.” Perhaps publication of the biography was another matter altogether. Or had the intellectual quest for Alexander Campbell been surpassed by a “discovery of spiritual roots”? In making that voyage of discovery had she found some middle ground to clarify and assert her spiritual values, as the “intelligent conservatives” before her had advocated, had she found some place where she could live with inner self while making peace with God? At the end of her life she told a reporter “I have no regrets.”³⁵

“It has been claimed that Eva Jean Wrather so devoted herself to Mr. Campbell that he vicariously became her life’s mate” wrote Duane Cummins. In succession to Margaret Brown and Selina Huntington Bakewell, Eva Jean Wrather became the third Mrs. Campbell, bonded in a marriage that lasted more than seven decades.³⁶ If permitted to take the analogy a step further, the offspring of that union between Alexander and the third Mrs. Campbell is the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The legacy of Alexander Campbell’s and Eva Jean Wrather’s spirit of inquiry can be found at the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Ensuring the presence of that spirit of inquiry the Historical Society is heir and guardian of four sacred trusts: fostering a community of historians, offering hospitality, extending the Movement’s witness, and preserving and providing resources.

Through significant bequests in her estate Miss Wrather ensured that her “offspring” would continue to uphold its sacred trusts. One way that she did that was to leave her voluminous collection of materials, including her Campbell manuscript, for the future community of historians. The following pages represent the inventory of that portion of her significant resources that have been maintained as her personal papers. The inventory is presented here with pride by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in loving memory of Eva Jean Wrather as a continuing catalyst for the spirit of inquiry marching forth.

NOTES

¹Eva Jean Wrather, "In Search of Alexander Campbell: The making of a Biography," (lecture presented at the annual Russell Heritage Lectures of Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas, 15 March 1989), 6, Wrather Papers, DCHS, Nashville, TN. Eva Jean wrote of her childhood “with some children the love of books early translates into a desire to write books.”

² In 1928 Eva Jean suffered from appendicitis. She appears to have been susceptible to illnesses throughout the remainder of her life, albeit nearly 93 years of life belies that fact.

³ Eva Jean Wrather, "Some Thoughts on My Years with Alexander Campbell and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society," (17 page letter to the Publications Committee, DCHS, dated 18 February 1962), 5, Wrather Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Another Vanderbilt professor who would have considerable influence over Wrather was Dr. John Y.T. Greig, a visiting British Professor who would later teach in South Africa and New Zealand. He is principally known for his biographical work on David Hume.

⁶ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 6.

⁷ Though her vocation was always listed as "Writer" Eva Jean derived her income from rental properties and businesses owned by her family. Upon her father's death in 1965 she succeeded as President of Belle Meade Hardware, organized in 1941.

⁸ Aubrey Hayes Wrather, her mother, held membership at Nashville's Seventh Street Christian Church, an instrumental congregation of the Restoration movement.

⁹ Much of Eva Jean's early spiritual journey can be found in an untitled essay found in the biographical file of her personal papers. Her Lenten readings, Elders prayers and prayers at the Lord's Table, show the depth of her faith and personal piety.

¹⁰ One might use the terms quixotic or eccentric. She might even have considered herself eccentric as she kept a newspaper clipping describing the characteristics of eccentrics.

¹¹ See Memberships held by EJW file of her Papers. She held charter membership in Vanderbilt's Friends of the Library and was a founder of the Symphony Association.

¹² Among the succession of famous Wrather cats were: Princess, D-Day, Sherrie, Prince, Alex (for Alexander Campbell), Twilight I and Twilight II. In 2002 Princess's casket, vault, headstone and footstone were moved from the Wrather house to the grounds of the Historical Society.

¹³ For much of her life Eva Jean's parents took care of running the household and employed domestic help.

¹⁴ Wrather, *Search*, 8.

¹⁵ Eva Jean Wrather, "Prospectus," (1935 version of Prospectus for Campbell biography), Wrather Papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.

¹⁶ These dates are given in her 1945 desk calendar.

¹⁷ *Thoughts*, p. 6. Donald Davidson opened the doors for her with Scribner. Frank Owsley was the one who suggested she footnote her work. Others who offered critical assistance in the early stages were Thorn Pendleton, Ivar Lou Myhr Duncan, and J. Edward Moseley.

¹⁸ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 7.

¹⁹ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 10.

²⁰ James M. Seale, "Forward from the Past, The First Fifty Years of the

Disciples of Christ Historical Society," (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1991) 10-12.

²¹ Seale, 146; Wrather, *Thoughts*, 12.

²² Wrather, *Thoughts*, 12. The chapters edited with Greig's help are 1-7; 12, and 21.

²³ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 14.

²⁴ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 15.

²⁵ Quoted in a letter from EJW to Melvin Arnold at Harper & Brothers, October 16, 1961. Wrather Papers, Correspondence file 186, Harper and Row.

²⁶ Quoted in a letter from EJW to Melvin Arnold at Harper and Row, April 2, 1964. Wrather Papers, Correspondence file 186, Harper and Row.

²⁷ The Vine Street history, *Church of the Golden Candlestick*, was only developed as far as the first five chapters dealing with the era of 1828 to 1879, numbering nearly 300 pages.

²⁸ 1976 was the year that she deposited a photocopy of the original Campbell manuscript at DCHS for safekeeping with the stipulation that it may not be used by researchers. This action could arouse speculation that by that point she had given up the idea of publishing the definitive biography.

²⁹ Eva Jean's work on revising was done in tribute to her dear friend, Gus Baker, artist behind the stained glass. Baker, born in 1922, died in 1994.

³⁰ D. Duane Cummins, "The Third Mrs. Campbell," *Discipliana* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 102. Notes in Wrather Papers, Correspondence file 180, Bethany College Contract. Another portion which gave her particular trouble was Chapter 11 of Volume 2, dealing with the question of slavery. There are 2 versions of chapter 11.

³¹ Cummins, 102.

³² Wrather, *Thoughts*, 20.

³³ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 7.

³⁴ Wrather, *Thoughts*, 21.

³⁵ Patsy Bruce, "Resolutions and Leftovers: Things We Love to Throw Out," *The City Paper*; 4 January 2002, 7.

³⁶ Cummins, 100.

Eva Jean Wrather
Personal Papers 120
C.1900-2000

Wrather, Eva Jean, 1908-2001, 25 cubic feet in 25 boxes, 810 files.

The collection contains biographical material, genealogy, photographs, day planners, research notes, manuscripts, published material, correspondence, and material on the career of Gus Baker collected and produced by Miss Wrather in her lifelong career as a biographer of Alexander Campbell and founder of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

The bulk of the material was bequeathed to the Society by Miss Wrather at her death in 2001, though much material had been given during her lifetime (see Accessions). Thousands of books, periodicals, pamphlets, tracts, photographs, letters, clippings, artifacts, and sundry historical items were incorporated into the larger collections of the Historical Society.

No special restrictions apply. Arranged March – October, 2002 by Clinton J. Holloway.

Series I: Biographical Material

Boxes 1-7, 177 files, two containers of day planners

Series I contains Miss Wrather's biographical material, including personal files, genealogy, photographs, Historical Society material and two containers of day planners (1930-1996).

Series II: Writings

Boxes 8-19, 408 files

Series II contains Miss Wrather's research notes, manuscripts, lectures and published articles primarily on Alexander Campbell; Vine Street Christian Church, Nashville; and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society.

Series III: Correspondence

Boxes 20-23, 201 files

Series III constitutes a sampling of Miss Wrather's voluminous correspondence both personal and professional.

Series IV: Gus Baker Papers

Box 24, 34 files

Series IV contains material collected by Miss Wrather about artist Gus Baker.

Box 25 contains over-sized material from Series I, II and IV.

Eva Jean Wrather Papers Folder List

Series I: Biographical Material

Box 1, Wrather Biographical material

1. Accounts, 1949-1959
2. Accounts, 1962-1965
3. Accounts, 1990-1996
4. Addresses and Lectures (see Writings, Series II)
5. "An Adventure into the Mind of Alexander Campbell," lecture, Vanderbilt, 1952
6. Articles about EJW
7. Artifacts
8. Baker, William, "Bill," of Scotland (see III/6)
9. Belle Meade Hardware (co-owned by Wrather family)
10. Bethany College, General
11. Bethany College, Oreon E. Scott Lecture, 1957
12. Bethany College, Founder's Day Address, 1978
13. Bethany College, Lectures, 1976
14. Bethany College, Campbell Bicentennial Lectures, 1988
15. Bible Study
16. Biographical material
17. Biography of Campbell (miscellany)
18. Birth Certificate
19. Brite Divinity School, Lectures, 1989
20. Carter Inauguration, 1977
21. Cats
22. Childhood
23. Christmas cards from EJW
24. Cockrill School, Nashville, Tennessee
25. Council on Christian Unity
26. Diaries: 1917; 3/14/20; 1926-1929
27. Disciples of Christ Historical Society
28. Dispersal of Wrather Estate
29. Funeral
30. General/Mementoes
31. Gifts/Donations/Philanthropy
32. Guest Book, 1949-1984
33. Hand-writing analysis
34. Hirsch, Sidney Mtrton (Author)
35. House
36. House Deed
37. Illnesses/Sicknesses/Hospital visits
38. International Convention/General Assembly
39. Lectures on History of Disciples outlines, Bethany Hills, Tennessee, 1952
40. Letters of Introduction
41. Letters of Recommendation Re: Campbell biography
42. "Life of A.C. for Young People," Carol Brown
43. Lipscomb University

44. Lipscomb University, Wrather Fund
45. Literary and Biographical Scrapbook (see over-sized box)
46. Memberships held by EJW
47. Mims, Puryear (Sculptor)
48. *Mission Journal* Reader's Seminar, June 1984
49. Neuhauser, Edward and Laura (Artist)
50. Notes on Alexander Campbell lectures by EJW
51. Notes on Biblical Archaeology lectures, Vanderbilt, 1967
52. Notes on Lectures attended by EJW
53. Obituaries/Death notices of EJW
54. "On Writing Biography," Belmont College workshop notes, 1959, by EJW
55. Page, W. Edward (Artist)
56. Passports
57. Peabody Demonstration School, Nashville, Tennessee
58. Political miscellany
59. Priest, Percy (Representative)
60. Priest, Percy (Representative)
61. Priest, Percy (Representative)

Box 2, Wrather Biographical material

62. Princess (the cat)
63. Public Relations Department, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
64. Ration books, WWII
65. Reynolds Farm Store (co-owned by Wrather family)
66. Royalties/payments for writings
67. Scrapbook, European Tour, 1935 (see over-sized box)
68. *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*
69. Speeches, on Alexander Campbell
70. Straub, Herman (Artist)
71. Tennessee Association of Christian Churches (later Tennessee Region)
72. Talks by EJW, 1942-1966
73. Travel
74. Travel
75. Tributes to EJW
76. Tributes to EJW, 50th Anniversary of DCHS
77. Twelfth Night/Epiphany parties
78. USO/War work (see III/200; II/62)
79. Vanderbilt University
80. Vine Street Christian Church/Wrather family (see also Vine Street history)
81. West Nashville History, Wrather/Hayes families (see also Genealogy)
82. Will and Testament
83. World Convention of Churches of Christ
84. Wrather's Cleaners (owned by Wrather family)
85. "Wrestling with God," script with critiques by EJW
86. "Wrestling with God," general
87. "Light from Above," Abilene Christian University

Box 3, Genealogy

88. Wrather, Robinson (Robert) Isaiah (father)
89. Wrather, R. I., biographical
90. Wrather, R. I., biographical
91. Wrather, Enoch Baker (uncle)
92. Ford, Martha Wrather (aunt)
93. Reynolds, Edna Wrather (aunt)
94. Wrather, Andrew Johnson and Harriet Williams Ward (grandparents)
95. Ward Genealogy
96. Wrather, Enoch Baker and Ellen V. Robinson (great-grandparents)
97. Robinson Genealogy
98. Wrather, (Rather) Baker (great-great-grandfather)
99. Rather, William (great-great-great-grandfather)
100. Daughters of the American Revolution application; Wrather, William
101. Wrather, Samuel; land grants (great-great-great-great-grandparents)
102. Wrathers in Murfreesboro
103. Wrather Genealogy: miscellaneous
104. Wrather Genealogy: miscellaneous
105. Wrather Genealogy: miscellaneous
106. Wrather, Eddy
107. Wrather Genealogy: Ann Patterson Yokley
108. Genealogical Charts: Wrather family
109. Wrather-Hayes in West Nashville History
110. Wrather, Aubrey Lee Hayes (mother)
111. Hayes, Edgar Martin (uncle)
112. Foster, Pauline "Polly" Hayes (aunt)
113. Penuel, Althia Hayes (aunt)
114. Hayes, John R. and Sarah E. Fitts (grandparents)
115. Fitts, Tandy W. and Isabelle Foster (great-grandparents)
116. Fitts Genealogical Charts
117. Hayes, Isaac (great-grandfather)
118. Robinson Genealogy
119. Hayes Genealogical Charts and miscellaneous
120. Hayes Genealogy: miscellaneous

Box 4, Photographs

121. Photographs: family
122. Photographs: Wrather family
123. Photographs: Hayes family
124. Photographs: Robinson and Aubrey Wrather
125. Photographs: EJW
126. Photographs: EJW
127. Photographs: EJW as baby/child
128. Photographs: EJW in teens and 20s
129. Photographs: EJW with parents
130. Photographs: EJW with others
131. Photographs: EJW with cats
132. Photographs: cats
133. Photographs: house exteriors

134. Photographs: house interiors
135. Photographs: home inventory
136. Photographs: DCHS related
137. Photographs: Barclay, Magarey, Campbell descendant
138. Photographs: Wright, Vernon (see III/169)
139. Photographs: Europe, 1935
140. Photographs: Bethany and Cane Ridge
141. Photographs: General
142. Photographs: Britain, 1960
143. Slides: DCHS, Home, Cats, Mexico 1971

Box 5, Disciples of Christ Historical Society

144. Correspondence: Architects
145. Correspondence: Fine Arts Committee
146. Correspondence: General
147. Correspondence: General
148. Correspondence: General
149. Correspondence: Jones, Willis
150. Correspondence: Re: Move to Nashville
151. Correspondence: Phillips Family
152. Correspondence: Regarding Claude Spencer
153. Dedication Committees
154. Dedication of Phillips Memorial: Speeches
155. Executive Committee: Fine Arts
156. Fiftieth Anniversary
157. Fine Arts Committee, 1955-1958
158. Foundation Committee
159. Huff, Roland
160. Johnson/White House visit
161. Jones, Willis
162. Lecture Committee
163. Property Committee
164. Reed Lecture Committee, 1986
165. Suggestions for Inscriptions/Symbolism
166. Twentieth and Twenty-fifth Anniversary Dinners 1961 and 1966
167. Windows-Symbolism
168. Wrather Fund
169. Nashville Library Committee: Financial statements/agreements
170. General Minutes
171. Letters: General
172. Letters: Nashville sponsors
173. Publicity/Fundraising
174. Sites for DCHS
175. Kick-off Dinner, 1/18/1952
176. Wrather articles/introductions
177. Executive Committee/General

Box 6, Day Planners

Day Books: 1930-1965

Box 7, Day Planners

Day Books: 1966-1996

Series II: Writings

Box 8, Vine Street Christian Church

1. History: *The Church of the Golden Candlestick*, Prologue, outlines
2. Chapter 1: A Spirit of Inquiry is Marching Forth
3. Chapter 2: The Church is...Constitutionally One
4. Chapter 3: A Fearful Schism Exists
5. Chapter 4: The Fearful Schism Sunderers a Nation
6. Chapter 5: Reconstruction: Religious and Political
7. Chapter 1, Revised
8. Chapter 2, Revised
9. Chapter 3, Revised
10. Chapter 4, Revised
11. Notes
12. Timeline, ministers and miscellaneous
13. Timeline, 1920-1976
14. Ministerial staff
15. Fall, Phillip Slater
16. Fall, Phillip Slater
17. Fall, Phillip Slater: First pastorate
18. Fall, Phillip Slater: Second pastorate
19. Ferguson, Jesse Babcock
20. Ferguson, Jesse Babcock: Copies from the British Museum
21. Ferguson, Jesse Babcock: Pamphlets
22. Ferguson, Jesse Babcock
23. Ferguson, Jesse Babcock
24. Wharton, William H.
25. Kelly, Samuel A., 1877-1879
26. Cave, Robert Catlett, 1880-1881
27. Cave, Reuben Lindsay, 1881-1898
28. Ellis, William Edward, 1898-1903
29. Gowan, George F., 1903-1905
30. Shelburne, William Jackson, 1905-1907
31. Pendleton, Phillip Yancey, 1907-1912
32. Morgan, Carey Elmore, 1912-1925
33. Nooe, Roger Theophilus, 1925-1951 (1951-1969, Minister Ecumenical)
34. Jones, G. Curtis
35. Braden, Arthur Wayne
36. Emerson, Charles
37. Moseley, Dan
38. Research notes
39. Research notes
40. Research notes
41. Research notes
42. Bulletins and programs
43. Christian Women's Fellowship

44. Dramatic Pageant, Mrs. Don Brewer, 1958
45. Dramatic Pageant, 1970
46. Dramatic Pageant, 1978
47. Financial records
48. First Christian Church, separated in 1953
49. General historical items
50. Gift of paraments by EJW, 1975
51. History of Vine Street by Claude Spencer
52. Historical articles by EJW
53. Interviews
54. Nashville Historical Notes
55. Newspaper clippings (early)
56. Nooe Prayer Room
57. Painting of Vine Street
58. Photographs
59. Pilkington-Marshall Sunday School Class
60. Publicity Committee
61. Sermons
62. Servicemen's Lounge, 1943-1945 (See I/78)
63. Promotional brochures
64. Scrapbooks
65. Sesquicentennial, 1978
66. Shepherding
67. *Vine Street Visitors*

Box 9, Writings (Other than Campbell Biography)

68. Bibliography
69. "A Day to Remember," *World Call*, February, 1961
70. "Adventures in Biography" series, *Discipliana*
71. "Adventures in Biography" series, manuscripts
72. "Alexander Campbell: Marx to Jackson"
73. "Alexander Campbell and the Judgment of History"
74. "My Most Cordial and Indefatigable Fellow Laborer: Alexander Campbell Looks at Walter Scott," *The Christian-Evangelist* October 23 & October 30, 1946
75. "Enlightenment in the Wilderness," written for *American Heritage* (unpublished)
76. "Alexander Campbell: Portrait of a Soul," *The Christian-Evangelist*, September 8, 1938
77. "Alexander Campbell's Tour of Scotland," *The Christian*, May 22, 1960
78. "Alexander Campbell in Nashville," *The Scroll*, June, 1946; Alexander Campbell Comes to Tennessee, Tennessee Historical Society, lecture November 11, 1947
79. "Alexander Campbell's Beau Ideal," *Restoration Quarterly*, 1988
80. Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Disciples of Christ, Encyclopedia articles
81. "Alexander Campbell and His Relevance for Today," *Footnotes to Disciple History #1*, 1953
82. "Alexander Campbell on Union," *The Christian-Evangelist*, May 27, 1953

83. "Alexander Campbell -75 Years After His Death," *The Christian Evangelist*, February 14, 1941
84. "Amazing Grace: The Great Awakening of the 1800s," (paper, pre 1938)
85. Book Reviews by EJW
86. Books to be written by EJW
87. "The Campbell Home as Americana," *Discipliana*, July, 1947
88. "The Campbells and the American Experience: A Bicentennial Reflection" (longer)
89. "The Campbells and the American Experience: A Bicentennial Reflection" (shorter)
90. "The Campbell-Purcell Debate 1837: A Nineteenth Century Disciple-Catholic Dialogue"
91. *Creative Freedom in Action*, by EJW, 1968
92. *Creative Freedom in Action*, Publicity
93. Devotionals
94. "Exciting Adventures with History," January 1959
95. "A Flame of the Lord's Kindling: Disciple Women and Disciple History," and other feminist writings
96. "Alexander Campbell -Adventurer in Freedom," chapter in *Founders of Christian Movements, 1941*
97. In Search of Alexander Campbell: The Making of Biography, lecture (see 135)
98. *Lenten Readings*, Vine Street Christian Church
99. "Library Center of the Church Ecumenical," *Southern Observer*, 1953
100. "Life in these United States," written for *Reader's Digest*

Box 10: Writings (Other than Campbell biography)

101. New Explorations: Faith and Symbol, address, 1969
102. Our Views Were One, *The Christian-Evangelist*, June, 15 and June 22, 1955
103. Portraits of Alexander Campbell
104. Prayers
105. Reflections on the Silver Anniversary...of the Phillips Memorial, 1966
106. Short Stories
107. Some Thoughts on My Years with Alexander Campbell and DCHS, 1962
108. Vine Street Christian Church historical pamphlet (see box 8)
T.W. Phillips Memorial Building Book
109. *Symbolism in Stone*, 1958
110. *History in Stone and Stained Glass*, 1958
111. *History in Stone and Stained Glass*, 1958
112. Introduction, Title Page, Bibliography, etc.
113. Obelisk Inscriptions, 1955-56
114. Symbols for Shields, 1955-57
115. Entrance Inscriptions
116. *History in Stone*, study, notes, etc.
117. Medallions -Lists
118. Medallions -Lists
119. Area 1: Entrance Porch
120. Area 2: Museum

121. Area 3: Reading Room
122. Area 4: First Floor Conference Room
123. Area 5. Director's Office
124. Area 6: Stair landing
125. Area 7: Second Floor Conference Room
126. Area 8. Lecture Hall
127. Notes on Sources
128. *History in Stone and Stained Glass*, 1993
129. Revision 1993
130. Revision
131. Revision
132. End Notes
133. Bibliography
134. "Alexander Campbell and Social Righteousness," *Christian Standard*,
September 17, 1938
135. In Search of Alexander Campbell: The Making of a Biography (draft of
speech, 1989, see file 97)

Box 11, Research Files

136. Index to Wrather Research Materials (for I-XI; Supplementary I-XIV;
travel notes)
137. I. Literature of the Disciples: pp 1-52
138. II. Disciples Periodicals: pp 53-153
139. III. Alexander Campbell: pp 154-240
140. IV. Constitutional Convention: pp 241-322
141. V. Manuscripts - Letters: pp 323-442
142. VI. Manuscripts - Documents, Will Court Case: pp 443-547
143. VII. Scrapbooks: pp 548- 605
144. VIII. Newspapers: pp 606-751
145. IX. Histories: pp 752-802
146. X. Presbyterian Periodicals: pp 803-881
147. XI. Baptist Publications: pp 882-951
148. Supplementary I: pp 952-1058
149. Supplementary II: pp 1059-1133
150. Supplementary III: pp 1134-1189
151. Supplementary IV
152. Supplementary V
153. Supplementary VI (Not in the collection)
154. Supplementary VII: Alexander Campbell letters
155. Supplementary VIII: Miscellaneous letters
156. Supplementary IX: From DCHS/Claude Spencer
157. Supplementary X: Seropyan material
158. Supplementary XI: Campbells in California material
159. Supplementary XII: From W.P. Harman, C.C. Ware
160. Supplementary XIV: New Harmony, Indiana (no XIII file)
161. Research notes for insertion in Supplementary IV-XIII
162. Research notebooks: Great Britain, Bethany, W.V., 1935
163. Research and travel notes: Great Britain, 1935

164. Research and travel notes: Great Britain, 1960

Box 12, Research Files

165. Bethany College
166. *Bishop Alexander Campbell, Editor, Printer, Publisher, Bookseller,*
Notes on Matheny manuscript
167. Campbell Country in Europe: photographs
168. Campbell-Owen Debate
169. Campbell, Thomas in Ireland
170. Centennial Convention, Pittsburgh, 1909
171. Chronology/Tours
172. Confederate Disciples
173. Cox Lane/Davies Family, Church of Christ, Cam-Yr-Alyn, Great Britain
174. Death of Alexander Campbell
175. Alexander Campbell as Educator
176. Last days/death/tributes
177. Mental decline/Will trial
178. Notes-General
179. Notes-General
180. Notes-General/indices
181. Notes-General/Quotes
182. Notes-Unsorted
183. Notes and outlines: *Campbell and the Structure of the Church*
184. Notes-People
185. Notes-Topical
186. Periodical literature
187. Alexander Campbell and Philosophy
188. Campbell-Rice Debate
189. Alexander Campbell and Slavery
190. Slavery-General notes
191. Slavery-General notes
192. Timeline of Alexander Campbell's life
193. Tours
194. War and Reconstruction
195. Notes-Index cards

Box 13, Research Files

196. Campbell Genealogy
197. Indices/outlines/inserts
198. Index to 1945 manuscript
199. Index to revised manuscript begun in 1950
200. Index to revised manuscript begun 1989
201. Illustrations
202. Maps
203. Plans for revision
204. Prospectus: Drafts, 1935, 1939, 1943, 1945
205. Synopsis to Scribner's, 1958
206. Synopsis to Harper, 1960
207. Synopsis of Volume II

- 208. *The Sage of Bethany*, handwritten copy, c. 1932-1935
- 209. *The Sage of Bethany*, handwritten copy continued, c. 1932-1935
- 210. *The Sage of Bethany*, first typewritten copy, c. 1935-1938
- 211. *The Sage of Bethany*, typewritten copy, c. 1935-1938

Box 14, Original 1945 Manuscript: *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom*

- 212. Volume I, Book 1, Chapter 1-3
- 213. Volume I, Book 1, Chapter 4-5
- 214. Volume I, Book 2, Chapter 6
- 215. Volume I, Book 2, Chapter 7
- 216. Volume I, Book 2, Chapter 8
- 217. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 9
- 218. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 10
- 219. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 11
- 220. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 12
- 221. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 13
- 222. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 14
- 223. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 15
- 224. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 16
- 225. Volume I, Book 3, Chapter 17
- 226. Bibliography/Notes Volume I, Chapters 1-17
- 227. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 1
- 228. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 2
- 229. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 3
- 230. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 4
- 231. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 5
- 232. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 6
- 233. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 7
- 234. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 8
- 235. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 9
- 236. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 10
- 237. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 11 (Slavery)
- 238. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 11A (Golden Candlesticks)
- 239. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 12
- 240. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 13
- 241. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 14
- 242. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 15
- 243. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 16
- 244. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 17
- 245. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 18
- 246. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 19
- 247. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 20
- 248. Volume II, Book 4, Chapter 21
- 249. Bibliography/Notes Volume II, Chapters 1-21 (two chapter 11s)

Box 15, Carbon copy of 1945 Manuscript: *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom*

250. Volume 1, Chapter 1, A Call and a Wedding
251. Chapter 2, A Son is Born
252. Chapter 3, One of the Best Scholars in the Kingdom
253. Chapter 4, A Shipwreck and Its Strange Conclusion
254. Chapter 5, A Voyage Accomplished and a Story Related
255. Chapter 6, I Like the Bold Christian Hero
256. Chapter 7, A New Peak on the Mountain of God
257. Chapter 8, We Court Discussion
258. Chapter 9, *Ecrasez L'Enflame*
259. Chapter 10, My Great Object was to Please Myself
260. Chapter 11, A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things
261. Chapter 12, A Spirit of Inquiry is Marching Forth
262. Chapter 13, Call No Man Master
263. Chapter 14, They Are Good Philosophers
264. Chapter 15, Mr. Robert Owen and the Social System
265. Chapter 16, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*: A Venture Into Politics Initiated
266. Chapter 17, The Charm of Political Life: The Virginia Constitutional Convention
267. Volume 1 Notes, copy
268. Volume 2, Chapter 1, Harbinger of the Millennium
269. Chapter 2, Alexander the Great
270. Chapter 3, Yours, Voltaire
271. Chapter 4, The Fine Arts, To Which I Add Good Manners
272. Chapter 5, I Circumscribe Not the Divine Philanthropy
273. Chapter 6, A Letter from Lunenberg
274. Chapter 7, A New Institution
275. Chapter 8, Three Dispensations of Education
276. Chapter 9, *Lux Descendit E Caelo*
277. Chapter 10, I Am Weary of Controversy
278. Chapter 11, Always Anti-Slavery but Never an Abolitionist
279. Chapter 11A, Golden Candlesticks to Illuminate the World
280. Chapter 12, Letters From Europe
281. Chapter 13, Trumpets of Peace and Drums of War
282. Chapter 14, The Destiny of Our Country
283. Chapter 15, A Grand Idea of the Human Race
284. Chapter 16, Disturbance at Bethany
285. Chapter 17, Fire By Night
286. Chapter 18, That Little Paradise Below
287. Chapter 19, The War Drum Rolls
288. Chapter 20, I Shall Never See Peace Again
289. Chapter 21, A Fullness of Blessedness
290. Volume 2 Notes, copy

Box 16, Photocopy of 1945 manuscript (deposited at DCHS in 1976): *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom*

291. Volume I, Chapter 1, A Call and Wedding
292. Chapter 2, A Son is Born
293. Chapter 3, One of the Best Scholars in the Kingdom
294. Chapter 4, A Shipwreck and Its Strange Conclusion

295. No file, mis-numbered
296. Chapter 5, A Voyage Accomplished and A Story Related
297. Chapter 6, I Like the Bold Christian Hero
298. Chapter 7, A New Peak on the Mountain of God
299. Chapter 8, We Court Discussion
300. Chapter 9, *Ecrasez L'Inflame*
301. Chapter10, My Great Object Was to Please Myself
302. Chapter11, A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things
303. Chapter12, A Spirit of Inquiry is Marching Forth
304. Chapter13, Call No Man Master
305. Chapter14, They Are Good Philosophers
306. Chapter15, Robert Owen and the Social System
307. Chapter16, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*
308. Chapter17, The Charms of Political Life
309. Notes, Volume I
310. Volume II, Chapter 1, Harbinger of the Millennium
311. Chapter 2, Alexander the Great
312. Chapter 3, Yours, Voltaire
313. Chapter 4, The Fine Arts, to Which I Add Good Manners
314. Chapter 5, I Circumscribe Not the Divine Philanthropy
315. Chapter 6, Letter From Lunenberg
316. Chapter 7, A New Institution
317. Chapter 8, Three Dispensations of Education
318. Chapter 9, *Lux Descendit A Caelo*
319. Chapter10, I Am Weary of Controversy
320. Chapter11, Always Anti-Slavery, Never An Abolitionist
321. Chapter 11A, Golden Candlesticks to Illuminate the World
322. Chapter 12, Letters from Europe
323. Chapter 13, Trumpets of Peace and Drums of War
324. Chapter 14, The Destiny of Our Country
325. Chapter 15, The Grand Idea of the Human Race
326. Chapter 16, Disturbance at Bethany
327. Chapter 17, Fire By Night
328. Chapter 18, That Little Paradise Below
329. Chapter 19, The Drums of War Roll
330. Chapter 20, I Shall Never See Peace Again
331. Chapter 21, A Fullness of Blessedness
332. Notes, Volume II

Box 17, The Work of Revision

333. 1950 Preface with Comments of J.Y.T. Greig
334. 1950, Chapter 1, A Call and A Wedding
335. 1950, Chapter 2, A Son is Born
336. 1950, Chapter 3, One of the Best Scholars in the Kingdom
337. 1950, Chapter 4, A Shipwreck and a Voyage Accomplished
338. 1950, Chapter 5, I Like the Bold Christian Hero
339. 1950, Chapter 6, A New Peak on the Mountain of God
340. 1950, Chapter 7, We Court Discussion

341. 1950, Revised Carbon, Preface
342. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapters 1-7, 12, 20
343. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapters 1-3
344. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 4
345. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 5
346. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 6
347. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 7
348. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 12
349. 1950, Revised Carbon, Chapter 21
350. In Revision, Chapter 8, The Charms of Political Life
351. In Revision, Chapter 21, Letters from Europe
352. In Revision, Chapter 23, Disturbance at Bethany
353. In Revision, Chapter 24, The War Drums Roll
354. In Revision (first writing) Chapter 26, A Fullness of Blessedness
355. In Revision, Outlines –Alexander Campbell, Bethany, War Years, 1861-1865
356. 1958 Preface, Table of Contents
357. 1958, Chapter 1, A Call and A Wedding
358. 1958, Chapter 2, A Son is Born
359. 1958, Chapter 3, One of the Best Scholars in the Kingdom
360. 1958, Chapter 4, A Shipwreck and a Voyage Accomplished
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Dale Fiers: Twentieth Century Disciple

by
D. Duane Cummins

This new biography, sponsored by the Historical Society, is being published by TCU Press.

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DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)

Founding Editor Claude E. Spencer

Editorial Committee D. Newell Williams, Editor (n.williams@tcu.edu)
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— From the Editor's Desk

Context is critical to the historical understanding of any text. Robert Foster illustrates this principle in "Alexander Campbell's 'Sermon on the Law' in its Historical Context." Moreover, Foster's article shows the critical importance of historical study of texts for the contemporary life and witness of the church. Campbell's sermon, read out of context, has often led to a devaluing of the Old Testament. Foster demonstrates that Campbell's treatment of the law was addressed to specific issues in the religious culture of nineteenth-century Baptists. He also delineates how Campbell's arguments were shaped by intellectual and social currents of the time. A responsible contemporary reading of Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" requires acknowledgment that this text, like all other texts, is culturally conditioned. Foster expresses the hope that such a reading will also free contemporary Christians to explore their own contexts in order to more faithfully interpret the Old Testament for their own time.

A reading of Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" in its historical context shows that one of the issues Campbell was addressing was the church's understanding of sin as it was commonly represented in revivalist preaching. The relationship of the church's understanding of sin to its practices of worship, in particular, the relationship of that understanding to the use or absence of a formal confession of sin in worship is the topic of Mindy Janelle Wills Fugarino's article, "Toward Forgiveness." Beginning with Campbell's views and practices in the 1830s, Fugarino examines two later ten-year periods in Disciples history. She concludes that historically the relationship between Disciples' understandings of sin and the practice of worship is ambiguous. Fugarino calls on contemporary Disciples to be intentional about relating their theology to the practice of worship.

Both of the articles in this issue were written by persons who were then students in theological seminaries of the Stone-Campbell Movement - one at the Churches of Christ-related Graduate School of Theology of Abilene Christian University; the other at the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-related Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University. Clearly, both of these contexts, as is true of other schools related to the Stone-Campbell Movement, encourage students to explore the Stone-Campbell heritage with an eye to its relevance to the contemporary witness of the church. May the number of these students increase!

-D. Newell Williams

— From the President's Desk

Your Historical Society has sixty years of quiet persistence in encouraging youth and preparing the next generation of historians. By this column and this issue of *Discipliana* we are striking the "quiet" and emphasizing the "persistence" in our support of young scholars.

Robert Foster and Mindy Fugarino are young persons whose work we honor by publishing them in this issue of *Discipliana*. Each year the Society recognizes a graduate student with the Lockridge Ward Wilson award for outstanding essay in Stone-Campbell history. Winners receive a life membership and publication of their essays.

The Society further encourages selected Ph.D. candidates or recent degree recipients by naming them Ketcherside Scholars. Their expenses are paid to the Society's Kirkpatrick Seminar where they meet and share their scholarly endeavors with colleagues from across the country.

Sixty-four-years ago Lester McAllister was encouraged as a student librarian/archivist at Transylvania College. You will enjoy his telling the story in "Just As I Lived It" (p. 62). Lester went on to become an eminent Stone-Campbell historian and serves the Society today as Life Trustee and valued advisor to the president. At the time of Lester's introduction to his life and work as historian, our founder Claude Spencer had already been quietly and persistently encouraging youth for seventeen years. Our record is impressive. Look at the student historians who have passed this way: James Duke, Anthony Dunnavant, Paul Jones, Douglas Foster, Richard Goode, Richard Harrison, Nadia Lahutsky, William Paulsell, Richard Phillips, and Newell Williams. One name on that distinguished list deserves our congratulations. D. Newell Williams, the editor of *Discipliana*, was recently named President of Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, Texas.

It may be time to be less quiet in our persistence. Do you know any young scholars who need to discover the Historical Society?

-Peter M. Morgan

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S "SERMON ON THE LAW" IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Robert Foster*

Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" continues to influence at least the Restoration movement's discussion of the use of the Old Testament. One notes Robert J Owens' article in a recent issue of *Leaven* entitled, "The Old Testament in the Christian Church."¹ Owens relates the story of a student of his who once preached a sermon from the Old Testament. Several leaders of the church responded to the sermon by pulling the young preacher aside to remind him that theirs was a *New Testament* church. Owens remarks that the perspective of these church leaders reflects a distorted view of the teachings of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, especially the views represented by Alexander's "Sermon on the Law," that sought to distinguish between the authority of the Old and New Testaments for Christians.²

Historians work in part to clarify such distortions as Owens highlights in his article. The goal of this paper is to present as fully as possible the historical context of Campbell's "Sermon on the Law." Campbell's sermon reacts to at least two different issues prevalent among the Baptist churches in the United States at the time of its delivery in 1816. Furthermore, the arguments Campbell presents display the influence of several streams of thought that impacted the intellectual discourse in the church and political world of the early 1800s. Hopefully a better understanding of the historical background of the sermon will free contemporary Restoration preachers and teachers to explore their own context in order to interpret the Old Testament faithfully in the present.

The Setting

Campbell originally delivered the "Sermon on the Law" at the Redstone Baptist Association meeting at Cross Creek, Virginia in 1816. The Redstone Association accepted Campbell and the Brush Run Church he preached for as members only the year before in 1815.³ Initially, Campbell was not supposed to preach that day but as he puts it, the person he replaced "providentially" fell ill.⁴ Campbell presented his sermon as the second of three that day, and the minutes of the Redstone Association record that the crowd listened in "good order" and that the message came "not in word, but in power."⁵ Campbell remembers the reaction a bit differently, commenting that some preachers disagreed over whether they should inform the people that the sermon did not represent Baptist doctrine.⁶ Nevertheless, Campbell and the minutes agree that at the next meeting he came before the association to defend his sermon against the charge of heresy.⁷ Campbell came through the trial, and he and the Brush Run Church remained part of the association for several more years before parting ways. The published sermon actually comes from a few notes Campbell wrote down before his defense at the association meeting. Only after continued requests did Campbell publish the sermon some 30 years after the original delivery.

*Robert Foster has completed a Master of Divinity degree at Abilene Christian University and in September will begin a Ph.D. program in theology at Southern Methodist University. He was a student of Douglas Foster at ACU.

The Sermon

Romans 8:3 functioned as the basic text for the “Sermon on the Law,” “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The sermon itself divides into five distinct sections. The first section clarifies the meaning of the phrase “the law” in Romans 8:3 and similar contexts. Campbell demonstrates that when Paul used the phrase “the law” without qualification he referred to the whole Mosaic Law. Therefore one must not allow tradition to divide the law into three distinct classifications: judicial, ceremonial, and “moral” law and to bind the “moral law” on Christians. The only exceptions to this rule are the commands to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself—those commands reaffirmed by Christ.

In the second section Campbell discusses what the law could not accomplish. The law could not impart a righteous life, demonstrate the gravity of sin, or function as a suitable rule of life for sinful humanity. Campbell next turned to the reason why the law could not accomplish these things—because of human weakness. However, as Campbell shows in the fourth section, God accomplished these things by sending his Son Jesus Christ. Jesus truly imparts righteousness; he makes the gravity of sin apparent by bearing humanity’s sin on the cross. Jesus gives a suitable rule of life as the Perfect Lawgiver, the Beloved Son greater than Moses or Elijah.

The final section draws five major conclusions from the preceding discussion.

The five conclusions are as follows:

1. There is an essential difference between law and gospel, the Old and New Testaments.
2. The Old Testament cannot function as a rule for life, even the so-called “moral law” of the Ten Commandments.
3. It is not necessary to preach the law in order to prepare people for the gospel.
4. Using the Old Testament to instruct people to baptize infants, pay tithes, observe holy days, keep the Sabbath, etc., is unnecessary for the Christian.
5. Christians ought to venerate Jesus high above all others, including Moses.

Campbell’s “The Sermon on the Law” Confronts Cultural Trends

In an article outlining the contents of “The Sermon on the Law,” Everett Ferguson discusses one of the major issues Campbell challenged in his sermon.⁸ Ferguson observes that one of the key emphases in Campbell’s “Sermon on the Law” was the division of the law of Moses into judicial, ceremonial, and “moral law.” Campbell protested against those who said that Christians were not obligated to the judicial or ceremonial parts of the law but ought to obey the “moral law,” especially the Ten Commandments.⁹ Campbell argues that when the Apostles refer to “the law” of the Old Testament, they make no such distinction, but refer to the law as a whole.

Ferguson clarifies Campbell’s protests by noting that at the time Campbell gave this sermon he and the Brush Run Church belonged to the Redstone Baptist Association. Furthermore, the Redstone Association subscribed to the Philadelphia Confession, which exactly represented an earlier confession, the Assembly Confession, with two additional articles about singing

psalms and the laying on of hands.¹⁰ Chapter XIX of the Philadelphia Confession states:

Besides this law [the 10 Commandments] commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people *Israel* Ceremonial Laws . . . all which Ceremonial Laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are by Jesus Christ, the true *Messiah* and Lawgiver, . . . abrogate and taken away.

To them also he gave sundry judicial Laws, which expired together with the state of that people . . .

The "moral law" doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof, . . . (emphasis in the confession).¹¹

Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" reacted in part to the divisions of the law present in the Philadelphia Confession and thus bound the "moral law" on all people. Campbell sought to demonstrate that those who made such divisions of the law did so contrary to the use of "the law" in the New Testament and that the Ten Commandments could not bind Christians except as any were recommended by Jesus.¹²

It is important to note that Campbell did not simply fight against some obscure confessional statement. Rather, one could reasonably expect that all Baptists would adopt this view of the law and the importance of the Ten Commandments for their lives. Baptists expected their catechumens to affirm the importance of the "moral law." Thus, one question in an early Baptist catechism reads, "Where is the first revelation of God for obedience?" Answer? "The moral law." The next question asks, "Where is the "moral law" summarily comprehended?" Answer? "In the Ten Commandments."¹³

Two key words in the second question are "summarily comprehended." Obviously Campbell felt that too many preachers took liberty with the idea that the Ten Commandments "summarized" the "moral law" so that the second commandment pointed to the office of the Ruling Elder and the seventh command forbade dancing and stage plays!¹⁴ Campbell in part stood against the excesses of those who tried to force all morality into the Ten Commandments against the plain wording of the commands. In addition, one again observes that for Campbell, only what Jesus reaffirmed as law applied to the Christian. Thus, all teachings concerning the observance of the Sabbath day, for example, based on the "moral law," were ineffectual because Jesus did not enjoin them upon his church.¹⁵ If Jesus did not require a thing of the Christian, Campbell believed the thing ought not be done, even if it belonged to the "moral law."

As Campbell defended his conclusion that the "moral law" cannot function as a rule of life for the Christian, he emphasized one particular section of the Philadelphia Confession. In the sermon he stated, "What a pity that modern teachers should have *added to* and *clogged* the words of inspiration by such unauthorized sentences as the following: 'Ye are not under the law' *as a covenant of works, but as a rule of life*" [emphasis his].¹⁶ The words in italics basically quote a line from the Philadelphia Confession, minus some words that expand the thought given here.¹⁷ Campbell then questions why people in his day proposed the necessity of the law as a rule for the Christian life. His answer was that some were afraid that without the law people would become more wicked, immoral, and profane.¹⁸

The Brush Run Church worshiped in the Appalachians and had some connection with the stream of revival ideals stemming from Kentucky, especially

as people continued to experience the effects of the revivals begun at Cane Ridge nearly 15 years earlier. In fact, J. H. Spencer referred to the time between 1800 and 1820 as a time of “general revival.”¹⁹ Some refer to this revival as “The Second Great Awakening” or “The Great Revival.”²⁰ Three preconditions to any “great awakening” include 1) a network of churches and ministers, 2) at least a core of believers, and 3) *a perception that society has fallen away from a better state of religious piety that existed sometime in the past* (emphasis mine).²¹ Revivalism always concerns itself with reform, attacking licentiousness, lewdness, intemperance, etc.²²

One of the problems with revival preaching was that its central purpose was to convert the individual. Thus, the interpretation and selection of texts in revivals focused on the need to move the individual.²³ “Theological precision was ignored as ministers—caught up in the religious maelstrom—tried to urge the listeners to repent and convert.”²⁴

Thus, it appears that Campbell’s suggestion that preachers emphasized the “moral law” because they feared antinomianism reacted to many revival preachers. He felt that in their concern to reform and their zeal for conversion, revival preachers misused the Scripture and promoted the “moral law” to combat what they perceived as the immorality of people’s lives. When Lyman Beecher preached a sermon entitled “A Reformation of Morals Practicable and Indispensable,” he not only railed against pride, greed, and drunkenness, he also attacked Sabbath breaking—no less than nine times.²⁵ It seems that for Beecher a great variety of sins interconnect with the breaking of the Sabbath. If a person breaks one of God’s basic “moral laws,” commandment four of the Ten, one will likely fall into a wide variety of other sins. Perhaps Campbell was challenging this kind of thinking, noting that for Paul the Christian is dead to sin and so finds the “old way” of dealing with sin ineffectual compared to the new way provided in the New Testament.

Campbell becomes more explicit about his concern for the use of the law (Old Testament) in revival preaching when, in his third conclusion, he states that it is not necessary to preach the law in preparation for the gospel.²⁶ He notes that people could argue from their own experience of “awakening” through the preaching of the law first and then the gospel. However, Campbell notes that people awaken because of earthquakes, thunderstorms, dreams, etc., but these means of awakening are not then necessary in order for others to experience awakening. One must allow the Scripture to test the individual’s experience of conversion, not the individual’s experience to test the Scripture.²⁷ The sermons recorded in Acts simply preach the gospel, not using the Old Testament first to convict people of their sins. For Campbell, preachers ought to follow the model provided in Acts.²⁸

The Historical Influences on Campbell’s Arguments in the “Sermon on the Law”

So far we have shown that Campbell’s “Sermon on the Law” reacted to two important impulses in his day. First Campbell challenged the division of the law into moral, judicial, and ceremonial, as found in the Philadelphia Confession that enjoined the moral law on Christians. Second he confronted revival preaching that used the Old Testament to inculcate good morals on society and

emphasized the necessity of preaching the law as a preparation for the gospel. Now this present investigation turns to the way Campbell supports his arguments in order to show that he was influenced by particular intellectual movements in the culture of his day. Three particular aspects include Calvinistic Covenant Theology, the developing "Jacksonian Democracy," and Common Sense Realism.

Many Campbell scholars note that Covenant Theology influenced Campbell's theology.²⁹ Covenant Theology divides history into three dispensations: 1) the Patriarchal [from Adam to Moses], 2) the Mosaic [from Moses to Pentecost] and 3) the Christian [from Pentecost to the Eschaton]. For Campbell, those things taught in the Christian age were normative and authoritative for the Church. As a result, as he recorded later in his *Christian System*, when a person approaches the biblical text one must ask who is speaking, who the person addresses, and under which dispensation.³¹

One finds several hints of discriminating between dispensations in the "Sermon on the Law." For example, Campbell argued that one reason the law was not suitable for imperfect humanity in later stages of history was that God gave the law only to the Jewish nation.³¹ Therefore, extending the law to others outside the Jewish nation was unjust and improper. God delivered the law to a certain people in a certain dispensation and thus one must not impose the law on a different people in a later dispensation.

As Campbell argues against using the "moral law" to prevent immorality, he remarks that anyone who teaches the law as a rule of life for Christians misunderstands "the tendency of the gospel and *the Christian dispensation*"³² (emphasis added). The Christian dispensation calls for a new way of attaining righteousness. This righteousness stems from the grace (not law) of God as he redeems his people from iniquity, purifying them as his people zealous for good works (Titus 2:11-14). Importing the law as a rule of life for the Christian violates the very nature of the Christian dispensation.

One also finds Campbell's dependence on the threefold division of history into dispensations as he argues for the proper way to preach the gospel. Again, only texts originating in the Christian dispensation could function normatively for the life of the church, including Christian preaching. Therefore the Acts of the Apostles provides "the most satisfactory information on the method the apostles preached under this [Great] commission." Campbell further states that the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles "affords us the only successful, warrantable, and acceptable method of preaching and teaching." Neither Peter nor Paul preached the law to prepare their hearers (Jew or Gentile) for the gospel.³³ Therefore, Christian preachers ought to address their audience, Jew, Barbarian, or Christian, in the manner of the apostles.³⁴

In addition to using Covenant Theology to defend his thesis, Campbell also expresses the ideals of his time by challenging the ministerial and theological elite who supported the idea of the "moral law" as a necessity for Christians. Nathan Hatch points out that between 1780 and 1820 the idea of the sovereignty of the people caught the American imagination. Many began "to speak, write, and organize against the mediating elites, of social distinction, and of any human tie that did not spring from volitional allegiance."³⁵ Radical Jeffersonians at the time claimed the elites could no longer function as adequate spokespersons for the general populace.³⁶

The establishment of democracy contra the feudalism and monarchy of the European nations (especially England) translated into the appeal to establish New Testament Christianity contra the Church of religious privilege and ecclesiastical tradition.³⁷ Men like Benjamin F. Austin called upon the common people not to take everything on trust or surrender their right of judgment either to lawyer or *priest*.³⁸ In the environment of emerging democracy, many churches, including the Baptist churches Campbell argued with, originally formed in opposition to the establishment churches.³⁹

Campbell was a product of his age. He believed that the common person could be trusted with the results of the critical study of the Bible. On the other hand, he mistrusted the scholarly elites in the age of emerging Jacksonian democracy when “experts” were distrusted generally.⁴⁰

One finds this distrust of established religion and the clerical elite scattered throughout the “Sermon on the Law.” As early as the preface to the sermon, Campbell asserts that the question people ought to ask is “What is truth?” *not* “Have any scribes or rulers of the people believed it?”⁴¹ Campbell wants people to discern truth for themselves, not blindly trust the teaching of scholarly elites.

In his arguments against the teachers of his day, Campbell ridicules them for various indiscretions. For example, he derides the voluminous work of the teachers who promote the law for Christians as useless. He compares those who try to fit all morality into the Ten Commandments with Peter D’Alva who wrote 48 folio volumes trying to explain Mary’s virgin conception of Jesus.⁴² In a later passage, he condemns those who apply the law to Christians for perplexing the students of the Bible and causing many fruitless controversies.⁴³

When he reacted to those who claimed Christians were not under the law as a covenant of works but as a rule of life, he blames them for “*adding to and clogging*” the clear teaching of the New Testament.⁴⁴ He seemingly mocks such teachers, who also invent such non-biblical phrases as “Solemn League” and “St. Giles Day.” He sarcastically remarks that he will leave such phrases to those better skilled and with more leisure time to expound on them.⁴⁵ He also ridicules these teachers saying that it seems easy to discern which is better to preserve people against Antinomianism, the way of law or gospel. But, “Not so easy, however, amongst the learned Rabbis and Doctors of the Law.”⁴⁶

In this same vein, he points out the inconsistency of some teachers who promote the “moral law” of the Ten Commandments. He says one may ask them if a Christian must obey the whole law. Their reaction will be, of course, “No.” So, which part must Christians obey? They will answer, “The Ten Commandments.” But, then asked if Christians must honor the Sabbath and they will say, “No.” Why? They will respond, “Because Christ did not enjoin the Sabbath on Christians.” Such teachers are inconsistent in their thinking and in their application of their own teaching.⁴⁷

Along with Covenant Theology and anti-traditionalism/anti-clerical elitism, one finds that Campbell relies on Common Sense Realism to establish his argument in the “Sermon on the Law.” Thomas Reid and those following him in the Common Sense school urged people pursuing knowledge to begin where every philosopher must begin, with those things every person of good sense was obliged to believe.⁴⁸ One of the many things everyone must believe to be reliable

was reasoning. Furthermore, reasoning bridged the cultural and historical gaps between humans so that, "Despite our cultural differences we can understand much that [the ancient world] experienced and said because we share the faculties of common humanity."⁴⁹ In addition, in the United States Baconianism came to mean simply looking carefully at the evidence, determining the facts, and classifying those facts. In regard to Scripture, determining the facts meant discovering the meaning of the words of Scripture. "Once [the meaning of the words of Scripture] was settled the facts revealed in Scripture could be known as surely as the facts discovered by the natural sciences."⁵⁰

Campbell's theological perspective conformed to this stream of thought prevalent in Scotland and America. Due to a shipwreck Campbell spent a brief period of time studying in Glasgow. The program there emphasized Aristotelian logic filtered through common sense philosophy. During his time at Glasgow, Campbell even wrote a paper, "On Logic."⁵¹ Thus Campbell assumed truth as a rational enterprise and as propositional in nature.⁵² Perhaps more important, Campbell believed that when people of goodwill came to Scripture using the right method for studying they were bound to agree on the meaning of the Bible.⁵³

The "Sermon on the Law" is filled with common sense idealism. The whole premise, that if one understands the meaning of "the law" in Paul one is bound to agree that Christians are not bound to the "moral law," bears the marks of American Baconianism. In fact, the sermon begins precisely with a discussion of the meaning of the phrase "moral law." Campbell explains that words are signs of ideas or thoughts and that if one wants to understand the ideas one must understand the words. He asserts that though the words "the law" are sometimes difficult to understand because of their diverse usage, "by a close investigation of the context, and a general knowledge of the scriptures, every difficulty of this kind may be easily surmounted."⁵⁴

One finds, especially at the beginning of the sermon, Campbell's reliance on John Locke, and especially his "Essay Concerning Human Understanding." Early in young Alexander's life, his father Thomas Campbell introduced him to this essay and Locke's "Letters Concerning Toleration," guiding Alexander in the study of these texts.⁵⁵ Within the "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" is a section "On Words" which Alexander seems to rely on heavily as he discusses the term "the law."

For example, Campbell states that those who make a distinction between moral, judicial, and ceremonial law show that the origin of such distinctions is not divine because they perplex, bias, and confound rather than assist judgment.⁵⁶ In an "Essay Concerning Human Understanding," Locke addresses the abuse of words. One of the abuses he discusses concerns using words for things they do not or cannot signify.⁵⁷ The remedy for such abuse is to explicate the word or phrase by use of synonyms or by showing examples of their use.⁵⁸ Campbell follows Locke's teaching by trying to clarify the meaning of "the law" through several examples of its use in Scripture.⁵⁹

When Campbell addresses the issue of moral law, he also seems to rely on things he learned from Locke's essay. Campbell is at pains to define the term "moral," arguing that "moral" pertains to the practices of human beings toward one another, virtuous or criminal. Therefore, one cannot maintain that the Ten Commandments present "moral law" because four of the ten concern human

relationship with God.⁶⁰ This argument seems to follow Locke's rule that when two or more words combine one needs to provide a definite definition of the phrase.⁶¹ Campbell provides a definition of "moral" to combat what he deems to be the abuse of the reference to the Ten Commandments as "moral law."

Furthermore, Campbell argues that confusion arises from the fact that people substitute a modern phrase, "moral law," for a traditional phrase like "ministration of death" (2 Cor. 3:7,14). In this way people make what Paul says regarding the law unintelligible.⁶² This also reflects Locke's teaching. Locke wrote that philosophers sometimes brought an "affected obscurity" into language by either applying old words to new significations or introducing new and ambiguous terms.⁶³ Campbell challenges this kind of "affected obscurity" in regard to "the law" by urging the listeners/readers to maintain traditional words and phrases.

Throughout the sermon, Campbell displays a confidence in the common sense reasoning of people to discern the truth once the clutter has been cleared away. The preface sounds a call to common sense reasoning as Campbell asserts that in his time the only safe course is to take nothing on trust, but bring everything "to the test." He intends to put everything in plain speech so that people will clearly see the truth. He intends to help his listeners/readers discover the truth by an "impartial appeal to the oracles of truth."⁶⁴

Several times one finds Campbell's firm belief that his arguments stem from an unbiased investigation and all clear thinking individuals will necessarily acknowledge the veracity of his presentation. Thus, he states at the beginning of the sermon that the conclusions he draws from his discourse "must obviously present themselves to every unbiased and reflecting mind."⁶⁵ As he begins his discussion on the invalid claim that one must preach the law to prevent antinomianism, he states that he will not shrink back from a full and fair investigation of the issue. He claims truth as the subject of his inquiry and intends to make a cool and dispassionate investigation of all arguments pro and con.⁶⁶

Similarly, Campbell assumes that as a result of his discussion, "every person who has an ear to distinguish truth from falsehood" will comprehend that people do not need the law to prevent immorality because Christ imparts righteousness to the Christian.⁶⁷ He presents an argument from "the fitness of things" to show that one does not need to preach the law as a precursor to the gospel. He argues that the gospel is the most perfect revelation of salvation; that being so, everything necessary must be connected with the gospel, including conviction of sin. This argument follows sound Aristotelian logic. Finally, Campbell thinks that one insults "any person skilled in the use of words" by defending the preaching of law to prepare people for the gospel with the text of Galatians 3:24. The idea that the law functioned as a schoolmaster to bring people to Christ in the context condemns law preaching because the text "clearly" means that whatever service the law provided up to Christ, it provides no longer.⁶⁸

Conclusion

This paper sought to demonstrate that Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" was a culturally conditioned document. As one reads the text in relation to the historical circumstances in the United States at the time, one finds

that Campbell challenged two currents of thought in his day: the division of the law into three classifications as present in the Philadelphia Confession and revival preaching that used the “moral law” as a means of preventing antinomianism and a preparation for the gospel. Additionally, one discovers that Campbell used current patterns of thinking and arguing to defend his thesis. Calvinistic Covenant Theology, emerging “Jacksonian democracy,” and Common Sense Realism all factored into Campbell’s defense that the law must not be used in the ways preachers and teachers in his day used it.

Whatever “postmodernism” is, one of the trends in intellectualism today insists that people recognize that their view of the world is culturally conditioned. Moreover, the claims of history arose from cultural situations in a stream of historical actions and thoughts. In one sense this threatens those who lack a consciousness of historical development. On the other hand, this understanding of cultural influences can also provide liberation to people today as they realize they are not bound to the ways of thinking and acting of previous generations.

I hope that as people read this paper they will recognize how their thinking in regard to the Old Testament stems in part from Campbell who reacted to issues in his own time and circumstances. As a result of this historical consciousness, perhaps people will recognize that they live in a different cultural and historical circumstance and find the courage to address the way to use the Old Testament as preachers and teachers in this time and circumstance. Perhaps one will find issues that call for a reaction so that people will faithfully use the Scripture to present transforming truth rather than allowing obscuring methods to develop unchecked. Perhaps people will look for ways of arguing that make sense to humans today to show how to use the Old Testament in ways that both fit and challenge present realities. But, that is a story for another paper at a future date.

NOTES

¹ Robert J. Owens, “The Old Testament in the Christian Church,” *Leaven* 9 (Spring, 2001): 80-85.

² *Ibid.*, 80.

³ W. H. Hanna, “The Campbell’s and the Redstone Baptist Association,” *Christian Standard* (August 3, 1940): 8.

⁴ Alexander Campbell, “Sermon on the Law,” *Millennial Harbinger* 3 (September, 1846): 494.

⁵ Hanna, “The Campbell’s and the Redstone Baptist Association,” 8.

⁶ Campbell, “Sermon on the Law,” 494.

⁷ Campbell, *ibid.*; Hanna, 8. It ought not disturb the reader too much that the association tried Campbell for heresy. At that time in American church history churches often conducted trials to halt moves toward heresy. Campbell’s trial simply reflects the mood of the times. See the comments on the Presbyterians’ attempts to eliminate doctrinal and educational deviancy in Fred J. Hood, “Kentucky,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, ed. Samuel Hill (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1984), 379-380.

⁸ Everett Ferguson, “Alexander Campbell’s ‘Sermon on the Law’ A

Historical and Theological Examination," *Restoration Quarterly* 29 (1987): 71-85.

⁹ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 497-500.

¹⁰ Ferguson, "Alexander Campbell's "Sermon on the Law": A Historical and Theological Investigation," 76; William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Rev. ed. (Valley Forge, Judson Press, 1969), 349.

¹¹ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Rev. ed., 276.

¹² Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 500.

¹³ *The Baptist Catechism (Based on the Confession of Faith Adopted by the General Assembly of Philadelphia September 22, 1742)* in *Early American Imprints, 2nd series* (Wilmington: P. Brynberg, 1809), text-fiche, 12.

¹⁴ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 499.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 520.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 509.

¹⁷ Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 276. This quote comes from Article XIX, #6.

¹⁸ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 509.

¹⁹ J. H. Spencer, *A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769-1885, Vol. I* (Cincinnati: J. R. Baumers, 1885), 581.

²⁰ See John B. Boles, "Great Revival, The," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, ed. Samuel S. Hill (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1984), 311-313.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 311.

²² Stuart C. Henry, "Revivalism," in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, Vol. II*, ed. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 805-806.

²³ Thomas W. Mann, "Bible, Interpretation of," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, 100.

²⁴ Boles, "Great Revival, The," 312.

²⁵ Lyman Beecher, "A Reformation of Morals Practicable and Indispensable: A Sermon Delivered at New-Haven on the Evening of October 27, 1812," in *Lyman Beecher and the Reform of Society: Four Sermons, 1804-1828 Religion in America-Series II*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Arno Press, 1972). 1-32

²⁶ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 513.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 518-519.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 513-514, 520.

²⁹ M. Eugene Boring, *Disciples and the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1997), 63; Everett Ferguson, "Alexander Campbell's Sermon on the Law," 77-78; Winfred Ernest Garrison, *Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting* (St. Louis, MO: Christian Publishing Co., 1900), 117-158.

³⁰ Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, reprint* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), 4. This is Rule 2 of seven that Campbell thought ought to guide biblical interpretation.

³¹ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 502.

³² *Ibid.*, 513.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 520.

³⁵ Nathan O. Hatch, "Sola Scriptura and Novus Ordo Seclorum" in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, ed., Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A.

Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 64.

³⁶ Ibid., 65.

³⁷ David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "Restorationism and the Stone-Campbell Tradition" in *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, Vol. II*, 845.

³⁸ Hatch, "*Sola Scriptura* and *Novus Ordo Seclorum*," 65.

³⁹ Mark A. Noll, *Old Religion in a New World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 53.

⁴⁰ Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 60.

41 Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 495.

⁴² Ibid., 498-499.

⁴³ Ibid., 505.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 509.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 510.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ See Thomas Reid, *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969). For this introductory section I am especially indebted to George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Bible in America*, 79-100.

⁴⁹ Marsden, 83.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 101.

⁵² Ibid., 102.

⁵³ Ibid., 87.

⁵⁴ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 496.

⁵⁵ Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 55-56.

⁵⁶ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 497-498.

⁵⁷ John Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in *Great Books of the Modern Worlds 33: Locke, Berkeley, Hume*, ed. Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1990), 295.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 303.

⁵⁹ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 496-497.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 498.

⁶¹ Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," 303.

⁶² Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 499.

⁶³ Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," 293.

⁶⁴ Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," 495.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 496.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 509.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 513.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 518.

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TOWARD FORGIVENESS

Mindy Janelle Wills Fugarino*

Introduction

In *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, H. Richard Niebuhr proposed that the “character of a religious movement is probably more decisively determined by its definition of the sin from which salvation is to be sought than by its view of that saving process itself.”¹ True or not, his comment illustrates the shaping function of a movement’s understanding of sin. How one defines sin will determine both the means of being saved from it and its effects upon us. I would even suggest that one’s conception of sin should both account for God’s response to it and provide for how we, in turn, deal with it faithfully. Hence, one’s theology of sin should inform one’s praxis. For a congregation or even a denomination, what is said and done (or not said or done) in worship regarding sin, should reflect the body’s beliefs about sin.

When we turn to the Preamble of *The Design for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, we do not find any mention of sin. There is mention of Christ as “Savior” of the world and the “saving acts” of Christ, but no mention of that from which we are to be saved.² For many Disciples, the first paragraph of the preamble is used as an affirmation of faith, even in worship.³ It represents a connection of both theology and worship. When compared to the Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ, with whom Disciples are in partnership, one might begin to wonder. The UCC statement of faith makes three references to sin and states God’s desire to save us from its effects through reconciliation and forgiveness.⁴ Does the absence of sin references in the Disciples Preamble tell us anything about Disciples theology and worship?

I suggest that the history of Disciples’ theology of sin does occasionally correspond to Disciples’ acts of worship, but that it often does not play a key role in determining what actually happens in the worship service. In an effort to explore the issue, I first take a brief look at the historical, ecumenical use of confession of sin in worship. Next, I have researched three decades from Disciples’ history, looking at statements about sin, at orders of worship, and at what happens in worship. The primary measurements for what happens in worship will be the presence or absence of and the placement of a confession of sin.⁵ The three slices of ten years are 1830-1840, 1918-1928, and 1957-1967.⁶ As we look at these slices of history from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), we will discover that the relationship between the theology of sin only relates ambiguously to the actual acknowledgment of sin in the worship service.

Brief Historical, Ecumenical Glance

Historically, confession of sin has been prevalent and regular in the services of worship throughout various traditions. Catholic churches have included it for centuries, especially since its use began in the times of the New Testament for churches. Of course, people have confessed sins for millennia.

*Mindy Janelle Wills Fugarino is co-pastor of First Christian Church, Blue Springs, Missouri. She was a student of Mark Toulouse at Brite Divinity School when this paper was submitted in 2001.

However, our interest especially relates to the Reformed tradition since Disciples are rooted in it. Martin Luther's recommended order of worship includes the confession of sin directly after the sermon.⁸ Martin Bucer includes it as the very first act of worship in the Strassbourg Liturgy. In Calvin's Form of Church Prayer in Geneva in 1542, Sunday morning worship begins with confession of sin.¹⁰ Most Reformed traditions follow his form of the liturgy. In the Westminster Directory, people are supposed to prepare their hearts before they come to worship, enter gravely, and collectively acknowledge the greatness of God next the vileness of self, requesting mercy.¹¹ With its Reformed (Presbyterian) and Scottish roots, early Disciples must have been familiar with these resources. While we may not know why Disciples did not collectively maintain this tradition of confession of sin in worship, the fact that they did not do so while other denominations in America did do so should cause us to reflect more fully on the issue. Let us now turn to how Disciples theology relates to worship with respect to sin.

Campbell from 1830-1840

Alexander Campbell took sin very seriously. In *The Christian System*, he described the state of humanity. God created humans as intellectual, moral, pure and holy companions of God. Then, God gave them a law that tested character. Obedience would have shown loyalty to God, but we know that humans did not obey. Humans sinned. The glory of God left them, and they felt their guilt. They trembled, and they knew their nakedness. The wages of sin are death,¹² but God did not execute them immediately. All humans since the first humans "inherit" a weakened nature physically, intellectually, and morally. Even infants who may not have committed a specific transgression suffer from a nature of sin. This nature of sin is "original sin." Although human nature is sinful, humans do not need to sin. Humans can choose not to sin; hence, humans represent varying degrees of depravity. Regardless of one's level of depravity, no one can please God without first submitting to Jesus Christ as the only mediator and savior of sinners. However, one must actually choose darkness (as opposed to the light of Christ) in order to suffer eternal punishment. Having said all of this about sin, Campbell did admit that there is much that we cannot understand or know concerning the origin of moral evil. Even so, he believed that God set the plan of salvation before the world even began.¹³

This plan of salvation meant that God predestined all who were in Christ "to be holy and without blame before him in love," to be conformed to Christ's likeness, and to be shareholders in Christ's immortality. The choice is open to all, and each must make his or her own election to follow Christ or not. The choice should not be considered a work any more than eating free food when one hungers is a work.¹⁴ Religion, then, serves as a gift to humans. As Campbell says, it "is a system of means of reconciliation—an institution for bringing [humanity] back to God—something to bind [humanity] anew to love and delight in God."¹⁵ Grace saves us from alienation from God, giving us the Messiah, sacrifice, justification, the Holy spirit, eternal life, and the means of personal sanctification. God made the sacrifice. It had to be made to propitiate the immense moral offense of our sin, to make it just for God to pardon us. As a crime (not just a debt), the sin still warrants punishment, even after the just atonement has been made. Thus,

out of mercy, God forgives the sinner. Hence, the sacrifice of Christ allows God to express strong disapproval and intolerance for sin, but also provides a means of mercy. The sacrifice's value easily atones for all of the sin of the entire world, but not all sins are forgiven. Redemption, or deliverance from guilt, belongs to those who believe in and obey Jesus. Reconciliation with God is for the redeemed. Though the atonement is as universal in scope as the sin of the world, it does not expiate the sins of non-believers. Part of God's plan includes sending the Holy Spirit to "awaken penitence in [humanity], and to lead the wanderer back to [God]." Thus, judgment still looms over us all even as all who seek pardon may obtain it.¹⁶

Sin has necessitated this plan of salvation. Campbell said that sin is "transgression of law." Since law exists for the good of humans, as designed by God, a violation of the law represents both rebellion and wickedness. That being said, we must observe history truly to understand the nature of sin; we must look at the effects of sin. To this end, Campbell wrote a series of eight articles in the *Millennial Harbinger* concerning the history of sin. Not only humans, but also nature experience the disease caused by sin. The sin of a perfect human (Adam was the only human besides Christ to ever exist outside of a state of sin.) proved worse than any other sin because it had the power to make all other humans imperfect sinners.¹⁷ The next five articles in the series quoted S. Whelpley's lectures on Ancient History that detailed the rise and fall of rulers and nations. Wars and betrayals, rewards and punishments, good and evil all permeate the material. The reader sees a world whose face completely changes at the hand of evil. Suffering looms large, and it never completely ceases.¹⁸ In the seventh article, he briefly sketched a biblical history of sin, reminding us that no person is without sin, and that no sin goes unpunished.¹⁹ Finally, in the last article, continuing the biblical witness, he concluded that when people of Israel were obedient, they enjoyed reward, but their rebellion brought punishment. The hope is that the wounder also heals. We are to rejoice because God will be merciful to God's own people.²⁰ These articles gave a very intense view of sin and its consequences.

Campbell gave a summary of the effects of sin in *Christian System*:

1st. That every sin wounds the affection of our heavenly Father. 2d. Insults and dishonors [God's] law and authority in the estimation of [God's] other subjects. 3d. Alienates our hearts from [God]. 4th. Oppresses our conscience with guilt and dread. 5th. Severs us from society by its morbid selfishness and disregard for [humanity]. 6th. Induces to new infractions and habitual violations of right. And 7th. Subjects us to shame and contempt—our bodies to the dust, and our persons to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.²¹

The voluntary sacrifice of God's Son, and only that, honorably, justly, mercifully, and safely puts away sin by addressing the seven listed effects of sin.

As sinners, all must repent to be forgiven. According to Campbell, one also needs a change of state—from a sinner to a sanctified person. Only immersion brings this change of state, as God acts upon the sinner in this time of rebirth—as a child of God instead of "Man." For the sinner, the process is passive.²² At some points in Campbell's discussion, conversion seems to be a continuing process while other times it seems to be complete in baptism. He appears to have been saying that the conversion into the state of a sanctified person may be complete with baptism, but that the full realization of living

without sin will not occur until we are fully united with Christ. If this is an accurate interpretation, confession of sin becomes more important. Campbell said that it is the “old sins” or “former sins” that are washed away in immersion.²³ As we are not yet perfected, this leaves post-baptism sins still to be forgiven. So, Campbell reminded the sanctified that they always have the “great Advocate” to intercede for them. If they sin, they should confess and forsake it, knowing that they will always receive mercy.²⁴ Confession needs to be indicative of true repentance that includes restitution when possible.²⁵ A regenerated person should also be reforming his or her ways by the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁶ Confession, then, receives God’s merciful forgiveness and contributes toward the transformation God is working in the individual, in the church, and in the world.

Campbell put it this way: “In the Kingdom of Heaven, faith is, then, the *principle*, and ordinances the *means*, of enjoyment; because all the wisdom, power, love, mercy, compassion, or *grace of God* is in the ordinances of the Kingdom of Heaven; and if all grace be in them, it can only be enjoyed through them.”²⁷ He identifies the ordinances as not only baptism and the Lord’s Supper, but also preaching, reading and teaching Scripture, the Lord’s Day, fasting, prayer, praise, and confession of sins. By doing these things, we may enjoy the present salvation of God.²⁸ Ironically, though, of this list he only left out fasting and confession of sins in his recommended order for the Lord’s Day service. All of the components lend toward a regeneration of the world by inviting worshippers to participate in God’s work. They experience God’s grace and should commit to communicate that grace through transformed living in the world.²⁹ Combine these ideas with the fact that Campbell stressed the corporate experience of God’s love through ordinances empowered by the Spirit manifested in the gathered church.³⁰ One can only guess why he made no suggestion of explicit confession in worship.

The possibilities transcend a historian’s ability to draw concrete conclusions, but we might gain insight by suggesting a few. First, in his description of the experience of the Lord’s Supper, Campbell suggested that communion confronts our sins with the power of God’s love.³¹ Perhaps such a confrontation leads a person to personal confession. Another possibility is Campbell’s desire to avoid mandating anything not established in scripture.³² While he did argue for the order including the components of attending to teachings of apostles, breaking of bread, fellowship, prayers, and praise, he does so in reference to the second chapter of Acts.³³ A third option could be that he may have been more concerned about the state of the unconverted than with the forgiveness of the converted. This, if true, could only be inferred by the great amount of space given to the discussion of remission of sins, most of which addressed the unrepentant. Calling him individualistic with regard to sin would be unfair given his emphasis on community, but one certainly observes much discussion on the individual state and individual acts of commission or omission. Another consideration could be that Campbell, as well as other founders, were wary of any formalities that could be seen as a means to refuse access to the table. Requiring a communal confession could be seen as judging the gathered community to be unworthy until they confess. Once again, we are purely in conjecture. Finally, Campbell could have been assuming that confession would

certainly be included in the prayers of worship. Once again, we cannot assume the accuracy of this assumption. All that can be said is that Campbell's theology of sin and of worship supported confession of sin, but for some unknown reason, he did not explicitly recommend confession of sin in worship. Hence the relationship between theology of sin and worship is ambiguous.

Post WWI—(1918-1928)

In order to represent the span of commentary on sin and worship, I will try to categorize the examples according to whether or not they lend themselves to the inclusion of a confession of sin. Recognizing that omission of a confession in a suggested order does not equate with an opposition to using a regular confession of sin in worship, no materials displayed an explicit antipathy toward confessions of sin. Several, however, did omit them, and one might at least wonder about the reason for the absence. An editorial entitled "Ideals for the Morning Worship Hour," proposed no confession unless one considers the Lord's Prayer to be a confession of sin.³⁴ W.S. Lockhart published four orders of worship in the journal. Of these, one has a prayer for pardon, one requests freedom from sin in two of the three hymns, and one vaguely mentions God as one's salvation and pardon. Overall, one sees little attention to confession.³⁵ Leslie Finnell gives us an activist view of forgiveness and individualistic view of sin that would likely see no need for confession. Sin possesses a powerful gravity upon individuals that begins working on them "the moment they reach the age of accountability."³⁶ In order to overcome it, one must get the power of the Gospel through opening one's heart to the Spirit, reading scripture, or praying for strength to resist. He gives us a to-do list, but does not mention confession or forgiveness.³⁷ A contributing editor had a more liberal idea that our sins disclose our divinity, and he came close to suggesting confession. Because a person feels regret, guilt, or remorse from sin, he or she must have divine origins. The burden and weight of sin make a person long for forgiveness. While he did not explicate how it would happen, he believed that humans would eventually climb out of the pit of sin. Perhaps he meant that remorse leads to confession, which leads to pardon. However, his optimism and use of an active verb "climb" suggest that the humans will somehow free themselves.³⁸ This view may not possess enough humility or receptivity to lead a person to confession. While all of these omissions may not have been intentional, their presence at least highlights an in-attention to or lack of clarity about the subject.

Meanwhile, theologically, Howard Kauffman gave a powerful representation of sin that echoes Campbell. Sin is deceptive and universal, and it leads to death, power for the devil, exclusion from the Kingdom, separation from God, sorrow and suffering. He added that sin is far-reaching because we are entangled in one another's sins—communal sin. He advised us to seek the "Great Physician," recognize our sin, and accept Christ.³⁹ Echoing the deception of sin, J.B. Hunley warned all lest they fall under the power of Satan by denying Satan's existence.⁴⁰ An editor also warned of sin's deception.⁴¹ This means that there may be many more sinners than yet realize it. In some cases, society itself constitutes the "sinner."⁴² From Caleb Davis, we hear that both church and individual are called to repent, that all are sinners by nature, and that conviction should lead to humiliation, confession, and reconciliation to the benefit of the

whole church.⁴³ It is not by education, but by the power of God that we are made holy and transformed; therefore, we need to confess the need of all of humanity to confess sin and evil against God.⁴⁴ Confessing sin leads to the freedom to embrace what is provided by God.⁴⁵

These theological views blend well with the following understandings of worship. The meaning of worship, according to Frank G. Tyrrell, is to pray. Praying means humbling the self, confessing and forsaking sins, and glimpsing God's kingdom with the saints. Worship provides a time to meet God in our weaknesses and be healed and forgiven.⁴⁶ He also suggested that true worship cleanses and enriches us when we take personal initiative in participation. One aspect of that participation includes confession of sin.⁴⁷ Davis echoed this by identifying confession of sin as part of the language of worship.⁴⁸ An editor argued for a culture of repentance during worship as a means to a genuine spiritual experience. There is benefit in self-reproach, but he did not merely mean psychologically. Referring to the humbled sinner in the temple who cried for mercy, he reminded us of Jesus' promise of justification to the penitent.⁴⁹ He also noted that confession and repentance were not popular. He described the need to shift one's center of gravity from the self to Jesus Christ. Implying that we must repeatedly repent, he said that we are done repenting when we permanently sin no more and are right with God.⁵⁰ He tired of ministers who cannot tell people that the trouble with the world is sin. A church service should challenge the sinner and encourage the saint, providing a place for cleansing and exaltation by God's presence.⁵¹ John F. Atkins wrote in a sermon about the need to confess our sins. He suggested that we are all sinners and explained some of the various kinds of sin involving the flesh, the mind, and negative sins (sins of omission). As the church comes to meet Christ, it should be confronted and recognize the necessity of confession. Only if worship has no cleansing vitality should confession be avoided. We must repent of sins and confess them to God before they are forgiven.⁵² As worship involves us in God's cause, it has the power to cleanse us and lead us into righteousness.⁵³ God receives a "broken and contrite heart," and rejoices when the stray soul returns. This is what it means to worship in spirit and in truth.⁵⁴

In light of these prevalent views of worship and theologies of sin, we will now examine the actual orders of worship published as books during this decade. Peter Ainslie and H.C. Armstrong prepared *A Book of Christian Worship For Voluntary Use Among Disciples of Christ and Other Christians*. They tried to honor penitence and confession as one mode of devotion.⁵⁵ A prayer of confession appeared in the longer of two orders for the Lord's Supper, but not in the brief order. In the section of materials to aid one's preparation for worship, they had placed about six scriptures dealing with sin. Finally, a few meditative prayers to be available during the Lord's Supper include penance themes.⁵⁶ If they used the longer order for Communion frequently, churches could have been confessing regularly, but all questions of usage are irrelevant. The issue for these two men is that they did address a need for confession. This should serve well in supporting the Disciples endeavor to further the redemption of the whole world.⁵⁷

In Lockhart's *The Ministry of Worship: A Study of the Need, Psychology and Technique of Worship*, we finally find an order that gives a permanent place

to confession. He called this movement of worship "Humility." An affirmation of forgiveness follows in the "Vitality" movement containing a scripture and hymn. He also added confession and consciousness of forgiveness to the Intercession. In this way, he gives extra attention to sin. In over ten example services (all of the services in the book), some of them even special services, confession and absolution had a place.⁵⁸ Placed next to his four services in the *Christian Evangelist*,⁵⁹ one might wonder if the absence of confession in those services indicates editorial pressures or simply an oversight.

A Manual of Forms For Ministers by Benjamin L. Smith fares less well in attending to the human need for confession. None of the five suggested orders, one of which is even termed "Evangelistic," includes a confession of sin. However, all five do incorporate the Lord's Prayer. Some of the communion prayers have a penitential tone.⁶⁰ In light of the most common theologies from the *Christian Evangelist*, it seems that this worship book does not correspond well to the prevailing theologies that identify a need for confession and freedom from sin.

As for the relationship between theology of sin and the practice of confession in worship, this decade also yields ambiguity.

In Transition (1957-1967)

In this time of transition, a variety of understandings of sin still compete with one another. However, post-WWII realities have certainly increased the gravity of and attention to sin. Ronald Osborn described neo-orthodoxy and its emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity. Humans constantly need redemption; they cannot transcend their sinfulness, and social structures just multiply the sins of individuals. The idea of progressive improvement for humanity dies in neo-orthodoxy.⁶¹ Osborn also suggested that in spite of the slips worship studies had taken into psychological and aesthetic manipulation, liturgical understanding and integrity was deepening during this period.⁶² Charles Kemp added to the theology of sin by his discussion of conversion. He insisted that conversion leads to a transformation of character. Like Paul, no one has achieved a full conversion or perfection, but we all "press on toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."⁶³ J. Phillip Hyatt added that the individualistic view of salvation in the New Testament needed to be balanced with the communal aspect of the Old Testament.⁶⁴ Ralph Wilburn added to the understanding of sin and salvation as he presented the idea that sin causes God to suffer. This suffering love of God, in turn, saves us.⁶⁵

Looking at worship resources, we see more support of confession of sin. In one resource pamphlet, we find a comment about the corporate nature of the church, its need to praise God as the Body of Christ, and its focus being broadened from just converting individuals.⁶⁶ G. Edwin Osborn saw worship as submission of our nature to God. It is the chief remedy for our sin.⁶⁷ His son, Ronald, added that our spirits require God's forgiveness which we will find in worship.⁶⁸ *A Recital of the Mighty Acts of God, Orders for Christian Meeting and Thanksgiving* provided for a confession of sin as part of the Great Thanksgiving⁶⁹ and also provided five possible confession prayers.⁷⁰ Finally, G. Edwin Osborn's *Christian Worship, A Service Book* gives us multiple resources for confession. While it did not include an isolated confession of sin

as a part of the order of worship, it did provide an outline of the pastoral prayer that calls for confession, three opening prayers asking for forgiveness, eleven penitent collects, a Lenten confession litany, a penitence litany, and two communion sentences highlighting God's forgiveness and two on penitence.⁷¹ Obviously, Osborn took sin seriously and addressed it in worship. The only worship resource from this period which had no confession material was *A Service Manual for Ministers of Non-Liturgical Churches, also Serviceable for Ministers of Education, Leaders of Youth, Women, Men.*⁷²

While the denomination worked on restructure, most of the theology focused on what it deemed most essential. Looking through the work of the Panel of Scholars, I found no explicit attention to sin, only references embedded in a work on another "topic." Even as the theologians did not focus on sin, the worship materials of the time certainly acknowledged sin. By no means am I making the claim that no theologians of the day wrote on sin; rather, the absence of sin from the Panel of Scholars and from the *World Call Index*⁷³ suggests a minimal focus. Given this conclusion, once again, the connection between worship and theology is ambiguous.

Conclusion

From the slices of history we have examined, we see both continuities and discontinuities between theology of sin and recognition of sin in the context of worship. Where the continuities do exist, the order for services still generally lack a mechanism for consistency. While Disciples admittedly only offer recommendations, never mandates, in matters such as these, it behooves us to be intentional about relating our theology intimately with the order we recommend. The degree of attention we give a matter should reflect its relative importance in our theology. Historically, the relation reveals ambiguity. Perhaps we can expect no more in a tradition that unites around methodology rather than theology. However, I suspect that intentional attention to this and other issues of worship will yield a clearer relationship between theology and practice. Actually, the loudest voices in more current arenas of Disciples worship dialogue tend toward more prolific use of confession of sin in worship. For example, Richard Spleth and Nancy Brink Spleth urged us to engage in self-appraisal through confession and absolution. With great personal and corporate sin, we need assurance of God's grace. Such a confession could lead the faithful to recognize their responsibility as Christians.⁷⁴ Another source gives much insight to the former neglect of confession, and it reminds us that penitence as a response to God leads to reconciliation, and to a vision of what God is calling us to be.⁷⁵

The new *Chalice Worship* does acknowledge this through defining an opening moment of "Praise, Affirmation, and/or Prayer" as having four possible directions, one of which is confession and absolution. If confession does not take place at this point, writers recommend it to be included in the pastoral prayer.⁷⁶ The problem with this location for confession is the absence of absolution. The authors did seem to recognize this by providing twenty pages of confessions and absolutions.⁷⁷ One sees the importance of confession to the authors, but it still must vie against other possible parts of worship in order to be utilized.

Even with this current trend toward at least acknowledging the need for

a confession of sin some of the time, our denomination has a long way to go toward reconciling theology of sin with worship practices. One recent example highlights the lack of reflection on the issue. During Texas Christian University's Ministers Week on Wednesday, February 7, 2001, the 8:00 PM worship service included an oddity in liturgical use of confession. After the celebration of Communion, the minister offered "Words of Assurance" otherwise known as an Assurance of Pardon. There was no verbal confession or even an invitation to confess silently.⁷⁸ Perhaps the leaders assumed that people have a tradition of confessing their sins privately as they partake of the Lord's Supper. However, this assumption is dangerous because it implies that all are taught the same things about the Eucharist, ignores the aspect of thanksgiving that might be being offered, ignores ecumenical liturgical tradition, and emphasizes an individualistic notion of sin.

The questions of our history should still be asked: What do we believe about sin? How does our worship embody or reflect this belief? If we believe that sin provides the primary need for God's saving acts in Christ, that sin is so pervasive that none escape guilt, that sin is both individual and communal, that God's reconciling work with all of creation involves the overcoming of sin, that our mission as a church is to witness to and participate in that reconciling work, that we continually need God's grace and forgiveness, and that worship provides a place to proclaim and experience the grace of what God has done and is doing, should we not somehow acknowledge sin in worship?

NOTES

¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1929; reprint, Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1987), 67 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

² *The Design For the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, 3.

³ See Daniel Merrick and David Polk, eds., *Chalice Hymnal* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1995), 355.

⁴ *United Church of Christ History and Program* (Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press, 1986; reprint 1997).

⁵ I could analyze further the presence or absence of an absolution, the placement of the confession before or after the sermon, or the proximity of confession to the Eucharist. However, I will not attempt this here. For readers' interest, an absolution should always follow a confession if we are truly to proclaim what God has done and is doing in Jesus Christ—that's why we call it "good" news. Absolution is an important reminder that confession is not meant to encourage us to wallow in guilt; rather, it is meant to free us and lead us toward healing.

⁶ I admit these slices are quite arbitrary, but will still try to explain why I chose them. The first decade represents Alexander Campbell's first ten years publishing the *Millennial Harbinger*. Because this publication contributed strongly to the beginning of the movement, it should illustrate the "original" theology. Although Campbell is considered one of four founders, his voice tends to carry the most theological weight. As such, I will also use his *The Christian System* to

understand his theology, the shaping theology of the movement.

I chose the other “slices” because I actually found books of worship published in those years. After re-examining those worship materials, I determined that not all spoke to the Lord’s Day service of worship; hence, I will not be using all of them. Thus, the brackets of my decades become even more arbitrary. Regardless, we will still obtain a substantial perspective on the theology of sin and the praxis as seen in worship.

⁷ See particularly James 5:16 and 1 John 1:5- 2:2

⁸ Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (New York: Collins World, 1961), 82-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 167-8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 197.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 357, ff.

¹² Campbell emphasizes sin as cause of death as an addition to Stone’s definition of sin. See B.W. Stone, “Atonement,” *Millennial Harbinger* 11 (1840): 243-246. And Campbell’s reply, Alexander Campbell, “A.C.’s Reply to B.W. Stone,” *Millennial Harbinger* 11 (1840): 246-250.

¹³ Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, in Reference to the Union of Christians and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as Plead in the Current Reformation*, (Bethany, VA: By the author, 1839; reprint, Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, 1863), 25-30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 33-35.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35-45.

¹⁷ Alexander Campbell, “History of Sin, Including the Outlines of Ancient History—No. I,” *Millennial Harbinger* 1 (1830): 106-111. I would like to add Eve to the list, as well. For the purpose of this paper, however, I am sticking purely with Campbell’s arguments.

¹⁸ See Alexander Campbell, “History of Sin, Including the Outlines of Ancient History—No. II, III, IV, V, and VI,” *Millennial Harbinger* 1 (1830): 181-188, 210-213, 384-389, 435-439, 508-512.

¹⁹ Alexander Campbell, “History of Sin, Including the Outlines of Ancient History—No. VII,” *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (1831): 252-258.

²⁰ Alexander Campbell, “History of Sin, Including the Outlines of Ancient History—No. VIII,” *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (1831): 318-321.

²¹ *Christian System*, 46.

²² *Ibid.*, 187-207.

²³ *Ibid.*, 216.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 238.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

²⁶ See *Ibid.*, 258-259.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 174. Emphasis original to Campbell.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, 282-291.

³⁰ Mark Toulouse, *Joined in Discipleship, The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), 32.

³¹ *Christian System*, 311.

³² While confession of sin is obviously in scripture, he may not have seen

it as a necessary part of worship or of the weekly gathering of the faithful on the Lord's Day.

³³ Alexander Campbell, "Order of Worship," in *The Pioneers On Worship*, ed. John Allen Hudson (Kansas City, MO: The Old Paths Book Club, 1947), 57-62.

³⁴ Editorial, "Ideals for the Morning Worship Hour," *The Christian Evangelist* (October 20, 1927): 1415. NOTE: I do not consider a request for forgiveness to be a confession of *sins*, but it could be an acknowledgment of a sinful state. This acknowledgement is, at best, only implied. An embedded sentence which proclaims no absolution and names no sins shows little, if any, attention to a need for confession. It is a petition for forgiveness without ever confessing what we have done or left undone. Ecumenically, the lack of a confession of sin followed with pardon is a glaring absence. Experientially, relying on the brief phrase within the Lord's Prayer to offer the ritual experience of forgiveness is a bit anemic. Theologically, it pays only fleeting attention to the enormity and gravity of sin. If we do not recognize this enormity, we are in danger of thinking that we can save ourselves or that there is nothing really wrong with our world or our selves in the eyes of God. We are in danger of forgetting that toward which God is calling us through sanctification and we are relying on "cheap grace."

³⁵ W. S. Lockhart, "Order of Worship for Small Congregations," *The Christian Evangelist* (1925): 1394., "Order of Worship for Small Congregations," *The Christian Evangelist* (1926):138., "Order of Worship for Large Congregations," *The Christian Evangelist* (1925): 1034., "Order of Worship for Large Congregations," *The Christian Evangelist* (1926): 266.

³⁶ Leslie Finnell, "Sermon: Overcoming the Gravity of Sin," *The Christian Evangelist* (April 2, 1925): 428.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 428.

³⁸ Contributing Editorial, "Man's Divinity Disclosed in His Sins," *The Christian Evangelist* (December 20, 1923): 1615.

³⁹ Howard A. Kauffman, "Facts About Sin," *The Christian Evangelist* (May 30, 1918): 561.

⁴⁰ J.B. Hunley, "The Mirage of Life," *The Christian Evangelist* (December 24, 1925): 1649.

⁴¹ Editorial, "The Deceptive Quality of Sin," *The Christian Evangelist* (1923): 1420.

⁴² "Who Is the Sinner?," *The Christian Evangelist* (July 23, 1925): 934. (A borrowed editorial)

⁴³ Caleb Davis, "Repentance," *The Christian Evangelist* (February 24, 1921):218-9.

⁴⁴ J.M. Rudy, "The Sense of Sin," *The Christian Evangelist* (January 20, 1921):56.

⁴⁵ Stanley R. Grubb, "Sermon: Repentance," *The Christian Evangelist* (February 14, 1924): 205.

⁴⁶ Frank G. Tyrrell, "The Meaning of Worship," *The Christian Evangelist* (March 7, 1918): 243.

⁴⁷ Frank G. Tyrrell, "The Experience of Worship," *The Christian Evangelist* (December 23, 1926):1625.

⁴⁸ William A. Davis, "The Language of Our Worship," *The Christian Evangelist* (November 23, 1922): 1487.

⁴⁹ Editorial, "The Way to Genuine Spiritual Experience," *The Christian Evangelist* (Sept 8, 1927): 1198-99.

⁵⁰ Editorial, "Repentance and Character," *The Christian Evangelist* (1921): 1024.

⁵¹ Editorial, "What Does the Church Service Lack?," *The Christian Evangelist* (March 8, 1923): 291.

⁵² John F. Atkins, "Sermon: Confessing Our Sins," *The Christian Evangelist* (March 29, 1928): 407.

⁵³ W.M. Hopper, "Sermon: The Power of Divine Worship," *The Christian Evangelist* (July 29, 1926): 939.

⁵⁴ Thomas Miller, "Worship God in Spirit and in Truth," *The Christian Evangelist* (August 26, 1920): 847.

⁵⁵ Peter Ainslie and H.C. Armstrong, *A Book of Christian Worship For Voluntary Use Among Disciples of Christ and Other Christians* (Baltimore: Seminary House Press, 1923), 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 15-40.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁸ W.S. Lockhart, *The Ministry of Worship* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1927), 137-192.

⁵⁹ See footnote #30.

⁶⁰ Benjamin L. Smith, *A Manual of Forms For Ministers* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1928), 127-136, 160-173.

⁶¹ Ronald Osborn, *The Spirit of American Christianity* (New York: Harper, 1958), 162-3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 177-8.

⁶³ Charles Kemp, "About Conversion," in *What We Believe*, ed. James M. Flanagan (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1960), 54.

⁶⁴ J. Philip Hyatt, "The Place of the Old Testament in the Christian Faith," in *The Reconstruction of Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Wilburn (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1963), 60.

⁶⁵ Ralph Wilburn, "Disciple Thought in Protestant Perspective: and Interpretation," in *The Reconstruction of Theology*, ed., Wilburn (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1963), 331.

⁶⁶ Winniford Smith, *Let's Think About the Church at Worship* (Indianapolis: The United Christian Missionary Society, 1968). (pamphlet)

⁶⁷ G.E. Osborn, *The Glory of Christian Worship* (Indianapolis: Christian Theological Seminary Press, 1960), 24.

⁶⁸ Ronald Osborn, *Come! Come and Worship!*, in *Church Life Pamphlet Library* (Indianapolis: The United Christian Missionary Society).

⁶⁹ This is a term used to refer to the Eucharist, the Service of Communion, or the Celebration of the Lord's Supper—which Disciples celebrate every Lord's Day/Sunday/or Weekly Worship

⁷⁰ John Wilson, III, *A Recital of the Mighty Acts of God, Orders for Christian Meeting and Thanksgiving* California: Community of the Great Commission, 1966, 6-7, 11. This source provides no assurance of pardon. I believe this source is from the Campbellite movement, and even affiliated with the Disciples.

However, I have not been able to verify this; hence, its information could be irrelevant to this paper.

⁷¹ G.E. Osborn, ed., *Christian Worship, A Service Book* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1953, reprint 1958), 14-23, 221-2, 243, 358-9, 425, 443-5, 521-2, 543-4.

⁷² Samuel Ward Hutton, *A Service Manual for Ministers of Non-Liturgical churches, also Serviceable for Ministers of Education, Leaders of Youth, Women, Men.* (Fort Worth: Author, 1958), 163-6. I believe that this was written by the pastor of a Christian church in Ft. Worth for the neighboring churches.

⁷³ *World Call Index* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1991). [computer file]

⁷⁴ Richard Spleth and Nancy Brink Spleth, "Contemporary Worship Issues in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ," in *Mid-stream* 26, no. 3 (July, 1987): 299-305.

⁷⁵ Worship Study Commission, *Worship in the Christian Church, The Common Worship of God* (St. Louis: CBP, 1969), 19, 23, 25, 29, 32, 35, 44, 47.

⁷⁶ Colbert S. Cartwright and O.I. Cricket Harrison, eds., *Chalice Worship* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), 7, 12-13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 306-26.

⁷⁸ "The Service of Worship," at TCU Ministers Week (Fort Worth, TX: University Christian Church, February 7, 2001). [Worship Bulletin]

JUST AS I LIVED IT

by

Lester G. McAllister

(Recalling events occurring during an 80-plus year fellowship
in the Stone-Campbell Movement)

Transylvania is an old college; so rooted in the past that at the time of the French Revolution in 1792 the school sent a professor to Paris with \$5,000 in gold to purchase books and scientific apparatus. Somehow the books purchased in the long ago had never been accessioned by the library.

When I arrived on campus in September, 1939, it was necessary that I secure employment as soon as possible. The federal government had a program known as the National Youth Administration (NYA). Students were employed for \$.25 an hour up to twenty hours per week.

I secured an NYA job and was assigned the task of recording and accessioning the rare books purchased at the time of the French Revolution. Most of them were in beautiful glove leather; some of them had the fleur de lis of the French royal family and others had crests of noble families.

Such a valuable library through the years has put a burden on a small college. Not only does Transylvania have to provide the latest references and current books on liberal arts subjects but also has to care for a rare and valuable library closed to all but qualified scholars. I count it a privilege to have had a part in preserving such a scholar's library.

Recent Acquisitions

The foundation upon which the Society builds its work is its collection. It is constantly growing.

We receive contributions for biographical files, congregational files, organizational files, regional files. The materials come to us as books, pamphlets, periodicals, and AV materials as well as museum artifacts. Here you can see a sample of the variety of materials received thus far in 2003:

Biographical files: materials for 24, including photos and personal papers of William D. Hall, missionary to India; and two copies of sheet music by Frank Huston, noted Disciples hymn writer

Congregational files: material for 30, including History of the Bendavis Church of Christ 1882-2002, Bendavis, Missouri

Organizational files: Greater Miami Christian Church Fellowship, Florida; Regional and General Minister's Spouses--"a mini-history of a group who supported each other while our spouses were in meetings all over the US and Canada," 1969-1997, by Georgia Flock

Regional files: Northeastern Region, Disciples of Christ

Books: new releases from Chalice Press; plus two books by Sue Gerard, Columbia, Missouri, a long-time member of Olivet Christian Church in Columbia. She is 88 years old, and still writing. Her first book was *My First 84 years*

Pamphlets: from Ben Hobgood, retired missionary to Africa, two pamphlets published by the United Christian Missionary Society: *Congo Mission in Africa* and *New Life for Africa*

Periodicals: two missing issues of Christian Unity 1968, 1978

AV: CDs: Adventures in Worship, songs composed by Darrell Faires for the Christmas season

Artifacts: blue glass necklace which belonged to Minnie Vautrin, missionary to China under UCMS; newspaper clippings and a hand-written letter from Minnie to her aunt, dated 1934.

The Society can be no better than the materials it has to work with. Thank you for your contributions of historical materials.

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Biographical files, materials 24, including photos and personal papers of William D. Hall, missionary to India; and two copies of sheet music by Frank Johnson, 1870-1900, from the collection of the University of

Transylvania. The French Revolution, 1789-1799, in French with an English translation. (copy original file: material for 20, including the history of the book, and the book purchased in the book store.)

Organizational files: Greater Miami Christian Church Fellowship, Florida; Regional and General Ministers' spouses--a mini-history of a group who supported each other while one spouse was in a foreign mission field and the other worked as a missionary in the U.S. and Canada; 1900-1901, by the National Y.M.C.A. Administration, New York; a program known as the National Y.M.C.A. Administration, New York; were employed in the region of Chicago.

Handwritten notes from the 1900-1901, by the National Y.M.C.A. Administration, New York; a program known as the National Y.M.C.A. Administration, New York; were employed in the region of Chicago.

Pamphlets from Rev. Howard, returned missionary to Africa; two pamphlets published by the United Christian Missionary Society; Congo

Such a variety of materials, including a variety of

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Artifacts: blue glass necklaces which belonged to Missions Vietnam; missionary to China under UCMF; newspaper clippings and a hand-written letter from

China to her aunt dated 1934.

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DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Order of the Stone-Campbell Fellowship

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.

Such a fellowship expresses confidence in the future of the Society

Members of the Fellowship are persons who have a hope and a dream for the future of the Society as it continues to serve individuals and the church. They have named the Historical Society in their Will, established a charitable gift Annuity or Trust, made a gift of life insurance, or given their home or personal property while retaining lifetime use of the property. Some of these provisions were made early in the days of the Society's 50 year history while others were made in recent months. Each is a testimony to a life of stewardship and an expression of faith in the purpose and mission of the Historical Society.—

The fellowship is named for two of the earliest Church leaders

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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Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)

Founding Editor Claude E. Spencer

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— From the Editor's Desk

“Separation and Reunion in the Stone-Campbell Movement” was the theme of this year’s Kirkpatrick Seminar for Historians of the Stone-Campbell Movement. The theme was chosen in recognition of the two hundredth anniversary of the separation of Barton W. Stone and four ministerial colleagues from the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky. Included in this issue of *Discipliana* are two papers addressing the first part of that theme—separation. Papers addressing efforts at reunion in the Stone-Campbell Movement will appear in a later issue.

D. Newell Williams’ “The Separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky: Predestination or the Revival?” argues that the standard view of the separation of Stone and his colleagues from the Synod has contributed to a greater sense of historic distance between Presbyterians and the Movement than is warranted. Jesse C. Fletcher’s “The Separation of the Campbells From the Baptists” shows that the division was often rancorous and bitter, leaving a legacy of acrimony and distrust, and also distinctive marks on the later development of both groups.

Also included in this issue is Karen-Marie Yust’s response to the papers by Williams and Fletcher. Yust identifies common themes in these two stories of separation that point to the contemporary challenge of forming Christian communities, especially in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and other more moderate to liberal North American denominations.

The two hundredth anniversary of the separation of Stone and his colleagues from the Presbyterians is not a particularly happy occasion, even though it might be argued that God has used the Christian unity impulse born of that separation to advance the greater unity of the church. In any event, this separation, along with the separation of the Reformers from the Baptists is worthy of historical analysis and reflection by a Movement that counts the unity of Christians among its polar stars.

— D. Newell Williams

— From the President's Desk

I read footnotes. I didn't always read footnotes. I read acknowledgements carefully. That, too, is a relatively recent practice.

I'm now rereading the notes and acknowledgements of D. Duane Cummins' *Dale Fiers: Twentieth Century Disciple*. This biography is an "inside job." It is published as a project of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. This Society is committed to providing historical resources. The notes in that volume only hint at how the Society's staff helped Dr. Cummins open the treasure chest of information we have in this collection. I add my praise to that stated in the acknowledgements to Sara Harwell, David McWhirter, Clinton Holloway, Lynne Morgan and Elaine Philpott. (*Dale Fiers: Twentieth Century Disciple* is available from the Society for \$20, plus \$3 s/h)

I'm reading the manuscript of *Pioneer in Tibet: The Life and Perils of Dr. Albert Shelton* by Douglas A. Wissing. Dr. Wissing's book on Shelton describes the heroic contribution of this Disciple who was the twentieth century's "Dr. Livingston." (Have I whetted your interest? The book will soon be released by Palgrave of St. Martins Press.) The notes and acknowledgements in the Shelton book once again tell me the importance of our able staff to this secular historian. Because of their work, the world will now better know a rich part of our Stone-Campbell story.

I didn't always read notes and acknowledgements. Now I read them and often see "Disciples of Christ Historical Society" and occasionally a staff name. I know that staff and their abilities and dedication. My chest swells with pride. Try reading the small print in the notes--it's enough to make you proud of your Society.

— Peter M. Morgan

**THE SEPARATION OF THE SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY
FROM THE SYNOD OF KENTUCKY:
PREDESTINATION OR THE REVIVAL?**

D. Newell Williams*

The recently organized Synod of Kentucky, meeting only for the second time, opened Tuesday, September 6, 1803, in the two-story log meetinghouse of the Presbyterian Church in Lexington.¹ By the end of the week, a conflict that had been building among Kentucky Presbyterians for more than two years reached a crisis. During a short recess of the Synod on Saturday, September 10, five ministers, Barton W. Stone, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar and John Thompson retired to a private garden to “ask counsel of the Lord, and consult one another.” Earlier the Synod had approved an examination of McNemar by the Washington Presbytery in October 1802 that had been conducted without written charges or witnesses and had condemned McNemar’s views as “dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion.” The Synod had also censured the Washington Presbytery for rejecting a petition calling for examinations of McNemar and Thompson in April 1803. Since the five ministers were convinced that the October 1802 examination of McNemar had been contrary to the due process required by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, it would have been appropriate for them to appeal to the General Assembly. However, they believed that as long as “human opinions,” rather than the Bible were esteemed the standard of orthodoxy, they would have little hope of redress from any court of the Presbyterian Church. Therefore, they determined to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Synod and, in Marshall’s words, “cast ourselves upon the care of that God who had led us hitherto in safety through many trials and difficulties; and who, we believed, would lead us safely on to the end.” The five ministers then drew up a protest against the proceedings of the Synod and a declaration of their withdrawal and immediately returned to the meetinghouse.² The Synod was already in session when they appeared. Under discussion was a resolution to conduct “the examination or trial of Messrs. McNemar and Thompson.” After each of the five ministers had stated his reasons for not having arrived earlier, Robert Marshall read the document and the five ministers left the meeting.³ Two days later the five ministers constituted themselves as a presbytery, taking the name Springfield for a town in southern Ohio where Thompson served as pastor.

Historians have long agreed that the conflict that resulted in the separation of the Springfield Presbytery and the Synod of Kentucky involved two issues: (1) practices associated with the Great Revival in the West (the “exercises” of falling, jerking, etc. and “disorderly” forms of worship) and (2) departure from the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination. But what was the relationship of the Revival practices and departure from the doctrine of predestination? Did the Revival practices and departure from the doctrine of

*D. Newell Williams is President of Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas.

predestination emerge simultaneously? Or, did one precede the other? And, what role did each issue play in the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky? Were the two issues of equal weight? Or, was one issue more important than the other in this Presbyterian schism?

The standard interpretation of the relationship and role of the issues of the Revival practices and departure from the doctrine of predestination in the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky first appeared in Presbyterian Robert Davidson's 1846 *History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky*. The enduring influence of Davidson's interpretation can be seen in such diverse works as Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, Sydney H. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, and William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Davidson argued that both the disputed revival practices and doctrinal controversy were the result of the influence of Methodists in the Great Revival, and that departure from the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination followed the introduction of Methodist revival practices. Davidson also implied that the issues of the Revival and predestination were of equal weight in the separation.⁴ The thesis of this paper is that Davidson and, consequently, those who have followed him have misinterpreted this separation. The introduction of Revival practices did not precede departure from the doctrine of predestination for key leaders of the Springfield Presbytery. And, the issues of Revival practices and departure from the doctrine of predestination were not of equal weight in the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky.

Rejection of Predestination Prior to Exposure to the Revival

At least one member of the future Springfield Presbytery had rejected the doctrine of predestination before the Revival appeared in northern Kentucky in the spring of 1801. During the preceding winter, Joseph Darlington, Robert Robb and Robert Robinson, elders of the Cabin Creek congregation, noted that their pastor Richard McNemar had begun to "deviate" in his preaching from the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Individually and as a session—the official governing body of the congregation—they conversed with him regarding their concerns, but with no effect other than "to make him more zealous in propagating those sentiments" that they opposed. Although they sought to keep their differences regarding doctrine confidential, they claimed that McNemar "frequently made use of such language, when on those points, as naturally led the people to understand that there was a difference" between them and repeatedly "misconstrued" their conduct and principles, ridiculing them from the pulpit, though not by name. As the next meeting of Presbytery was "far distant," they had sought the counsel of a neighboring minister and had conducted a public meeting to vindicate their cause and to show where McNemar's doctrine differed from that of the Presbyterian confession. Later, they proposed to McNemar, in the presence of neighboring minister John Dunlavy and two of his elders, that if McNemar would preach and defend the doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith, they would "bury all our former differences" and again support his ministry. But McNemar refused, responding that he would be bound by no system other than the Bible.⁵

The sentiments that McNemar had propagated, even prior to the appearance of the Revival in northern Kentucky, were sentiments that he had learned from Barton Stone. Prior to having any exposure to the Revival, Stone had proposed to McNemar that God loves all sinners and seeks to give them a willingness to come to Christ for pardon of their sins and release from power of sin through the preaching of God's love made known in Jesus Christ. According to the view that McNemar learned from Stone, God speaks to sinners through the preaching of the gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ and, hence, sinners who hear the gospel and ignore it are responsible for their own condemnation.⁶

Implicit in Stone's proposal was a departure from the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination. Stone's views had not been formed through exposure to Revival practices, nor were they as far removed from those of other Presbyterians as might at first appear to be the case. The notion that God spoke through the gospel to give sinners the power to "come to Christ" for release from the penalty and the power of sin was not new to Presbyterians. Presbyterians taught that God drew sinners to Christ for release from the penalty and the power of sin by giving them "a view of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." This was the "glory" of the One who sent the Son to save helpless sinners. They proclaimed that in response to a view of the glory of God in Jesus, sinners' hearts were filled with a love of God that made them willing to go to Christ for salvation. This is what Presbyterians meant by "rational" religion—a religion or love of God rooted in one's "understanding" of what God had done for sinners through Jesus Christ. What was new in Stone's understanding of how God gave faith or the willingness to "come to Christ" was his belief that sinners had the power to believe the gospel—to see the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus that would fill them with love toward God, without a *previous* work of the Spirit to convince them of the power of sin. Critics of Stone's position, who rightly saw him as departing from the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination, charged that he denied the work of the Holy Spirit in preparing persons to believe.⁷

Presbyterian minister John P. Campbell, who opposed Stone's sentiments, claimed that Stone had learned his new doctrine of faith from Thomas P. Craighead, the first Presbyterian minister to locate in middle Tennessee. Craighead was a Princeton graduate with North Carolina roots who had settled at Spring Hill, five miles north of Nashville in 1785.⁸ Craighead participated in two of the sacramental meetings of 1800, but soon became a determined opponent of the Revival. His opposition to the Revival was related to his criticism of the practice of seeking conversion or "regeneration" by praying for the gift of faith that would enable one to come to Christ for salvation. You hear nothing from Christ, he wrote in a sermon published in 1809, "of the current cant—Pray to God to give you faith to believe—pray, pray, strive, agonize, wait until Christ comes and delivers you." For Craighead, faith was not the "moral" act of coming to Christ but an intellectual act. "No man," Craighead stated, "can resist the force of credible testimony if he suffers it to enter into the view of his understanding. Neither disposition, nor will, nor motives," he continued, "have the least effect." Thus, he advised sinners to attend to the "truth" that the Spirit of God teaches in the Scriptures, not to pray for the Holy Spirit to give them faith.⁹

There is no reason to doubt that Stone was familiar with Craighead's views of faith and regeneration. In his autobiography, Stone reported that he and

John Anderson often preached “in the neighborhood” of Craighead’s church while making a tour of the Cumberland settlements in the summer of 1796 and that their final preaching appointment in the Cumberland settlements had been in “father Thomas Craighead’s congregation.” To support his charge that Craighead was the source of Stone’s views, Campbell reproduced signed statements of persons who reported having been informed by Stone of Craighead’s views of faith and regeneration as early as 1799, having heard from another as early as the summer of 1801 that Stone had received his new doctrine from Craighead, or as having heard Stone espouse “virtually” the same views as Craighead’s as early as 1800.¹⁰

Stone wrote two seemingly contradictory accounts of how he had come to his doctrine of faith. In the earlier of the two accounts, written in 1805, he stated that there *was* a relationship between the development of his new doctrine of faith and his first exposure to the Revival in Logan County, Kentucky, in the spring of 1801. Davidson used this account to support his thesis that exposure to Revival practices led to departure from the doctrine of predestination.

What had Stone observed in Logan County in the spring of 1801? By the spring of 1801, “falling” by a large number of the participants was a standard feature of the Presbyterian communions in Logan County. In his autobiography Stone described the “exercise” as he had first observed it. “Many, very many fell down, as men slain in battle, and continued for hours together in an apparently breathless and motionless state—sometimes for a few moments reviving, and exhibiting symptoms of life by a deep groan, or piercing shriek, or by a prayer for mercy most fervently uttered.” Gradually they would obtain release; the “gloomy cloud, which had covered their faces” giving way first to smiles of hope and then of joy, they would finally rise “shouting deliverance” and would address the surrounding crowd “in language truly eloquent and impressive.” “With astonishment,” Stone exclaimed, “did I hear men, women and children declaring the wonderful works of God, and the glorious mysteries of the gospel.” He reported that their appeals to others were “solemn, heart-penetrating, bold and free.” Noting that he was amazed at “the knowledge of gospel truth displayed” in their addresses, he observed that hearing their appeals, others would fall down “into the same state from which the speakers had just been delivered.”¹¹

In the account of his theological development that he wrote in 1805, Stone reported that his observation of the Revival had enabled him to resolve a struggle with the doctrine of predestination that had begun for him prior to his ordination in 1798. He indicated that before observing the Revival, he had concluded from Mark 16:16, “He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,” that God had chosen to exercise the divine power in saving those who “believed” and in damning those who “believed not.” This conclusion, however, had raised another question. According to Ephesians 2:8, faith is the gift of God. Thus, Stone inquired why God gave faith to one person and not to another. He knew that it could not be because some persons asked for it, since according to Romans 10:14, Hebrews 11:16 and James 1:6-8, one had to have faith before one could pray or receive anything from God. Stone further believed that God did not give faith to one and not to another because of “worthiness in one, and not in another.” He reported that he had thus remained in a terrible state of confusion regarding faith until observing the Revival in

Logan County. It was there, he wrote, that “all” his difficulties had been removed. “Many old and young, even little children,” he continued, “professed religion, and all declared the same simple gospel of Jesus. I knew the voice and felt the power.” The “voice” that Stone *knew* was the voice of God speaking through the gospel. The “power” that he *felt* was the power of God speaking through the gospel—the spiritual or “moral” power that made sinners willing to go to God for forgiveness of sin and release from the power of sin. Stone concluded his 1805 account of how he had come to his new doctrine of faith by declaring, “I saw that faith was the sovereign gift of God to all sinners, not the act of faith, but the object or foundation of faith, which is the testimony of Jesus, or the gospel; that sinners had power to believe this gospel, and then come to God and obtain grace and salvation.”¹²

In the autobiography that Stone wrote in 1843, he indicated that he had come to his new understanding of how God gives faith from a prayerful study of the scriptures *prior* to observing the revival, that objections to the doctrine had arisen in his mind, that these objections had been multiplied by a Presbyterian colleague to whom he had communicated his views (presumably McNemar), and that he had determined not to declare them publicly until able to defend them. Stone made no mention of the role of the Revival in removing his objections.¹³

It is possible that in describing events that had occurred more than forty years before, Stone simply forgot or failed to mention how his observation of the Logan County revival factored into removing his difficulties regarding how God gave faith.¹⁴ Another explanation for the differences between Stone’s autobiography and his 1805 account of his theological development, is that Stone wrote, in both cases, with his audience in mind. Linking the development of his new doctrine of faith to the revival would have commended it to Stone’s audience in 1805. Nearly forty years later many of the younger members of Stone’s religious movement identified the Great Revival with fanaticism.¹⁵ Certainly, Stone would not be the first person to have told different parts of a story to different audiences.

A “harmonization” of Stone’s two accounts that would also be consistent with Campbell’s claim that Stone learned his views of faith from Craighead years before his first observation of the Revival, would read as follows. Stone was acquainted with Craighead’s views and had developed his new doctrine of faith prior to observing the Revival; objections to the doctrine had arisen in his mind and had been multiplied by a Presbyterian colleague to whom he had communicated his views (presumably McNemar); his observation of the conversions in Logan County had “removed” his objections, leading him to believe that he could publicly declare and defend his views.

On the basis of Stone’s 1805 account of his theological development, Davidson might be excused for claiming that exposure to the Revival preceded departure from the doctrine of predestination. However, even on the basis of Stone’s 1805 account (Stone’s autobiography was published a year after Davidson’s history), one might have noted, as in fact, Davidson did, that Stone’s departure from the doctrine of predestination had begun well before his exposure to the Revival. Moreover, Davidson was familiar with Campbell’s claims that Stone had learned his doctrine of faith from Craighead well before the Revival, and in fact, quoted Campbell’s claims in his account of Stone’s theological

development. Nevertheless, Davidson did not allow this data, which appears in his history, to compromise his thesis that it was exposure to Revival practices that had led to departures from the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination.¹⁶

Predestination More Important As an Issue than the Revival

Examination of the records of the 1803 Synod indicates that differences over the doctrine of predestination, and that alone, accounted for the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky.

The opening sermon of the Synod was given by the patriarch of Kentucky Presbyterians, David Rice, whom Davidson identifies as a strong opponent of practices associated with the revival. Yet, there is very little in the published version of Rice's opening sermon to suggest that he was greatly concerned about Revival practices. On the contrary, he argued that "the present stir" was a genuine revival of the Christian religion.¹⁷ Turning to the "gathering clouds" that would darken the day of revival, and at length bring on a dismal night of darkness, "unless it shall please God by some means or other to disperse them," Rice focused on the doctrinal issue. He declared that "The important Scripture doctrine of divine influences in a work of conviction, conversion and sanctification, is, I believe, generally taught in our land." Nevertheless, if he understood them right, some preachers approached "too near" to representing the work of the Spirit in bringing persons to Christ as "a mere mechanical work, without considering the word of God as the mean by which the Spirit works, in producing the excellent effect." Others, if he understood them correctly, "leave in this work, but very little for the divine spirit to do; after the inspiration of the holy Scriptures." Both of these positions he understood to be "departures from the principles of reformation, and, what is more, departures from the written word of God."¹⁸

Rice said scarcely a word regarding falling or the jerks (to be described below), except that his confidence that the current excitement was a true revival of the Christian religion was *not* based on the fact that "many are thrown into great bodily agitations; sometimes into fainting or convulsive fits." Such bodily agitations, he asserted, "have been produced, and I suppose may again be produced, by the operations of imposture on the credulity and superstition of mankind; yea, by things which have no relation to religion."²⁰ As to the related issue of order, Rice advised distinguishing "between the humble, solemn, fervent pleading of faith, and a bold, noisy kind of earnestness; at the same time making proper charitable allowances for difference of custom, in different places and societies."²¹

Likewise, there is no indication that differences in practice were at issue in the protest presented to the Synod by the ministers of the soon to be constituted Springfield Presbytery. The document protested "the proceedings of Synod, in approbating that minute of the Washington Presbytery which condemned the sentiments of Mr. McNemar as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion" and stated the following reasons for the protesters' withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the Synod. First, they believed that the resolution of the Washington Presbytery condemning the doctrine of McNemar gave "a distorted and false representation of Mr. McNemar's sentiments" and was "calculated to prevent the influence of truth of the most

interesting nature." Second, they claimed the privilege of interpreting the Scripture without reference to the Confession, affirming in the words of section X of Chapter I of the Confession of Faith "that the Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures." And third, that while remaining "inviolably attached to the doctrines of grace, which, through God, have been mighty in every revival of true religion since the reformation," they believed that those doctrines are "in a measure darkened by some expressions in the Confession of Faith, which are used as a means of strengthening sinners in their unbelief, and subjecting many of the pious to a spirit of bondage." When they attempted to obviate these difficulties they were accused of "departing from our Standard, viewed as disturbers of the peace of the Church, and threatened to be called to account." Therefore, they were withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the Synod rather than be "prosecuted before a Judge [the Confession of Faith], whose authority to decide we cannot in Conscience acknowledge."²²

They stated that they did not desire to separate from the communion of the members of Synod, nor to exclude members of the Synod from their communion. On the contrary, they would "ever wish to bear, and forbear, in matters of human order, or opinion, and unite our joint supplications with yours, for the increasing effusions of that divine Spirit, which is the bond of peace." "With this disposition in mind," they concluded, "we bid you adieu, until, through the providence of God, it seem good to your reverend body to adopt a more liberal plan, respecting human Creeds and Confessions."²³

To be sure, there were differences between the two parties regarding practices associated with the Revival. From the beginning of the Revival, some ministers, notably David Rice and James Blythe, had been more critical of the general disorder that characterized the sacramental meetings of the revival than were others. By the Summer of 1803, the difference over order had come to focus on what John Lyle, whose diary is a major source for the history of the Revival called "mingled exercises"—the simultaneous offering aloud of individual prayers and exhortations. This practice, which had early been a feature of the revival in southern Kentucky and the Cumberland district of Tennessee, appeared in central Kentucky late in the fall of 1801, following the Cane Ridge meeting.²⁴

As the revival continued, mingled exercises were increasingly accompanied by "jerking" and "laughing." Lyle reported having observed one man "convulsed" at Cane Ridge and described another who had "laughed in a ha, ha, ha," at Silver Creek in May of 1802.²⁵ Stone described the jerking and laughing "exercises" in his autobiography. Of the jerks he wrote, "Sometimes the subject of the jerks would be affected in some one member of the body, and sometimes in the whole system. When the head alone was affected, it would be jerked backward and forward, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished." He indicated that both "saints and sinners, the strong as well as the weak, were thus affected" and that no one who had experienced the jerks with whom he had spoken could account for them, though some had told him that "those were among the happiest seasons of their lives." The laughing exercise, he asserted, appeared only among the religious

and he described it as “a loud, hearty laughter” that “excited laughter in none else.” He further stated that subjects of the laughing exercise appeared “rapturously solemn.”²⁶

Stone and the other ministers who preached his new doctrine of how God gave faith generally supported simultaneous individual audible prayers and exhortations and did nothing to discourage the growing catalog of exercises. Presbyterians who opposed the new doctrine *tended* to view simultaneous audible prayers and exhortations as “irregular” and were wary of at least some of the “wilder” physical manifestations of religious excitement. Opponents of the new doctrine also *tended* to oppose conducting outdoor meetings after dark, believing that evening meetings conducted indoors were less likely to become “disorderly.”

Attitudes regarding order among opponents of the new doctrine, however, were not uniform. In May of 1802, Lyle had commented that “Stones people were wild and disorderly more than needful.” However, he added “But as religion seems to be dull in my bounds I would probably rather wish them to be lively and wild and disorderly than cold and unanimated.” Lyle did not “strongly” oppose conducting outdoor meetings after dark. Lyle also noted that when hundreds of people had offered individual audible prayers simultaneously for more than an hour at the Walnut Hill sacrament in early June of 1803, it had appeared “that they pray’d in the spirit.” However, on the whole he was against mingled exercises, noting that the religious understanding of the participants was “unfruitful as to the edification of others.” James Blythe was opposed to the new doctrine and strongly opposed both mingled exercises and conducting outdoor meetings after dark. Isaac Tull opposed the new doctrine but favored conducting outdoor meetings after dark and changed his mind, at least once, regarding mingled exercises.²⁷

At Paris, during the second week in June of 1803, the mounting conflict regarding practices reached a climax. On the final day of the meeting Lyle was introduced to the “dancing” exercise. Like jerking and laughing, the dancing exercise became prominent at sacramental meetings during the summer of 1803. In his autobiography, Stone reported that subjects of the dancing exercise would “move forward and backward in the same track or alley,” while offering prayer and praises to God. He noted a connection between dancing and the jerks, stating that dancing generally began with the jerks: “The subject, after jerking awhile, began to dance, and then the jerks would cease.” “Sometimes,” he noted, “the motion was quick and sometimes slow.” This exercise, he asserted, affected only religious people.²⁸

Arriving at the preaching stand, Lyle was prevailed upon to preach. Taking as his text 1 Peter 4:8, “Above all hold unfailing love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins,” he preached on “brotherly affection.” Then, after taking many “cautions,” he introduced the subject of order and “the impropriety of many praying at once etc.”²⁹

When Lyle finished speaking, a Colonel Smith “began to pray and in his prayer to use his arguments in favor of all praying at once.” In particular, Smith said that “there was one spirit but a diversity of operations.” Lyle, who had sat down, arose and told the people that he “hoped they would not suppose that the spirit operated in any diversity not described in the word and beseech’d and

charg'd them to attend to the divine word." From behind the stand two women "were agonized and pray'd out." A young man, whom Lyle thought was a Methodist, ran into the crowd and "with apparent rage" called on the people to pray aloud. Comparatively few responded. However, as if to make up in intensity for the small number who prayed aloud, one older man "pray'd out with clinched fists."³⁰

Nevertheless, as the near absence of references to "disorder" and the "exercises" in the records of the 1803 Synod implies, differences among Presbyterians regarding practices, contrary to Davidson, should not be overdrawn. To wit: after Lyle left the stand following his sermon on order, he was met by a Mr. McCune of Stonner Mouth, who thanked him for his sermon and remarked that "if ever he had like to pray out in his life it was today [in response to Lyle's sermon!], but, (said he) I never have pray'd out in society because I thought it not agreeable to the word of God." A Mr. Patton, also of Stonner Mouth, told Lyle that he had been trying unsuccessfully to "regulate matters" for over a year, and that when he heard Lyle on the subject he was so overcome with joy, hoping that God had inspired Lyle to do what he had failed to do, that he had actually fallen!³¹

It may seem ironic that advocates of the new doctrine, who viewed God as giving faith through the hearing of the gospel, generally supported the simultaneous offering of prayers and exhortations, which made it difficult to hear individual prayers and exhortations, and could even drown out the preaching of the gospel. This irony may be explained by differences in openness to change among the Presbyterian clergy. Stone, who had adopted a new doctrine of how God gave faith was also open to new, or in this case Methodist, forms of worship. Lyle and other Presbyterians who saw no reason to adopt a new theology were also suspicious of new forms of practice. Col. Smith, who "prayed" following Lyle's sermon against simultaneous prayers, asked Lyle how he accounted for the practice of "praying out" among participants in the Revival in southern Kentucky and the Cumberland district of Tennessee. Lyle replied that the practice had originated among the Methodists and that he would say more on the subject later. However, from Lyle's perspective, to say that a practice was Methodist was really all that one needed to say! "Praying out" was not Presbyterian.³²

Davidson's Agenda Revealed

How is one to account for Davidson's misinterpretation of the relationship and relative significance of the issues of Revival practice and the doctrine of predestination in the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky? Davidson had an agenda.

First, he was determined to show that Presbyterians were not responsible for the "excesses" of the Revival that had occurred at Presbyterian communions. Thus, the importance of showing that the Presbyterian clergy "as a body" had opposed both "disorder" and departure from the doctrine of predestination almost from the start, suffering separations and a loss of influence as a result. Davidson concluded his chapter on "The Revival of 1800—Camp-Meetings" by stating his thesis that "the extravagant irregularities and enthusiastic fantasies which deformed the Great Revival" are to be laid at the

door of the Methodists. Having been invited by the Presbyterians to share in their communions, the Methodists had contributed their distinctive practices (“boisterous emotion, loud ejaculations, shouting, sobbing, leaping, falling and swooning. . . as the true criteria of heartfelt religion”) and through the influence of these practices their “peculiar sentiments,” that being opposition to the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination. Davidson cleared even those Presbyterians who later separated from the Synod of the charge of having initiated the excesses of which they were guilty. “Even those few who madly seized the reins, and figured afterwards conspicuously as leaders in the disorders of the time, were not the originators of those disorganizing measures, but only adopted the work of other hands.”³³ Disorder had never been Presbyterian.

A second item of Davidson’s agenda was to associate departure from the doctrine of predestination with “enthusiasm.” Hence, the importance of showing that acceptance of Revival practices had led to rejection of the doctrine of predestination. Davidson followed his chapter on the Great Revival with a much longer chapter titled “Extravagances and Disorders Attending the Revival.” Included were detailed descriptions of the “exercises” and “Disorderly Proceedings in Public Worship.” Toward the end of the chapter he discussed “The Promulgation of Doctrinal Errors.” Here he returned to the deleterious influence of the Methodists who had first been invited to join the Presbyterian communions in the Cumberland region. Jumping ahead chronologically to the Cumberland schism, which followed the separation of the Springfield Presbytery, he observed: “When an investigation [of the Cumberland Presbytery] by a Commission of the Synod became necessary, it was found that the rumors of departure from the Confession of Faith were well founded; the doctrines of election and special grace being openly denied and ridiculed.” He transitioned to developments in northern Kentucky by declaring “While error was widely spreading the lower section of the State, under the fostering warmth of extraneous influence, the upper section became prey of similar calamities.” He continued “A mongrel mixture of Antinomianism and Arminianism began to be broached by Marshall, Stone, and McNemar, as early as the great camp-meeting at Cane Ridge, in August, 1801.” He concluded, driving home his view of the relation of Revival practices and departure from the doctrine of predestination, “These errors prevailed among the advocates of the Bodily Exercises and other extravagances, and ripened into the New Light schism.”³⁴

Davidson’s widely accepted interpretation of the relationship and relative significance of the issues of revival and predestination for the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky might have been questioned in light of the later history of the Christian Church, which succeeded the Springfield Presbytery in June of 1804 with the publication of *The Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery*. If enthusiasm, received from the Methodists, or imbibed in some other way, had been at the heart of Stone’s conflict with the Synod of Kentucky, one would have expected the exercises and forms of worship associated with the Revival to have been abiding characteristics of the Christian Church. But in fact, after some years, the distinctive practices of the Revival disappeared from the Christians as they did from the Presbyterians. Responding in March of 1834 to an article describing the Christians as having about them “a kind of noise or fuss, which they call religion” in imitation of “the

Methodists,” Stone declared that “for a number of years back we have neither heard, nor seen” anything like “noise or fuss” among the Christians. He added, “When we were in the Presbyterian church, and for some years after, it is true, we saw and heard a great deal of what was called by many, ‘noise and fuss,’ but these things have passed away from us, and are by no means characteristic of our religion.”³⁵ On the other hand, Stone never tired of opposing the doctrine of predestination. In his autobiography, written near the end of his life, he warned,

Calvinism is among the heaviest clogs on Christianity in the world. It is a dark mountain between heaven and earth, and is amongst the most discouraging hindrances to sinners from seeking the kingdom of God, and engenders bondage and gloominess to the saints. Its influence is felt throughout the Christian world, even where it is least suspected. Its first link is total depravity.

Characteristic of one who in 1803 had not wanted to be separated from the communion of the Synod, or to separate members of the Synod from his communion, he added, “Yet there are thousands of precious saints in this system.”³⁶

And what is this historian’s agenda? To show that differences between the Springfield Presbytery and the Synod of Kentucky were not as great as has sometimes been argued and that the separation was not over practices, but rather the struggle within the Presbyterian community to make Christian sense of the implications of God’s gift of faith.³⁷

NOTES

¹ This structure was located at the corner of Short and Mill streets. See Charles C. Ware, *Barton Warren Stone, Pathfinder of Christian Union* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1932), 64-65, 131.

² *An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky. To which is added a Compendious View of the Gospel, and a few remarks on the Confession of Faith* in Stone, *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself, with additions and Reflections by Eld. John Rogers* (Cincinnati: Published for the author by J.S. and U.P. James, 1847); reprinted in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke S. Dickinson (n.p., 1972), 169.

³ “Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky,” in Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840, Vol. 2, The Presbyterians*, 317-318; Apology, 169-170; Stone, *Biography*, 29.

⁴ Robert Davidson, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky: With a Preliminary Sketch of the Churches in the Valley of Virginia* (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), 140-141, 190-222.

⁵ *Apology*, 149-150.

⁶ Stone, *A Reply to John P. Campbell’s Strictures on Atonement* (Lexington, Ky.: Joseph Charles, 1805), 6.

⁷ D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 20-24, 92-94.

⁸ John P. Campbell, *The Pelagian Detected: Or a Review of Mr. Craighead’s Letters Addressed to the Public and the Author* (Lexington: Thomas T. Skillman, 1811). For information on Craighead see Davidson, 264.

⁹ Thomas B. Craighead, *A Sermon on Regeneration with an Apology and an Address to the Synod of Kentucky Together with an Appendix* (Lexington,

Ky." William Worsley, 1809), 15, 26, 93.

¹⁰ Stone, *Biography*, 24; John P. Campbell, *The Pelagian Detected*, 56-60. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that Stone was simply a disciple of Thomas Craighead. Despite similarities in their views of faith, they held strikingly different views of the fundamental character of both conversion and the Christian life, making one an opponent and the other a promoter of the Great Revival. For Craighead, conversion or "regeneration" was a carefully reasoned decision to act in one's own best interest. Craighead taught that converts came to love the law of God only after they had lived by it long enough to discover "its tendency to personal and general happiness." Acknowledging that regeneration was often described by Presbyterians as "the implanting of a spiritual principle," Craighead argued, "Every moral, political or civil principle is formed by a fair examination of the objects of pursuit and aversion, with their several relations and consequences." Believing "in full confidence that God will accomplish what He has promised," the regenerated person knows "it to be infinitely best for him to keep God's law, and therefore, steadfastly resolves to keep that law as his greatest intent." "This choice or resolution built upon these promises," he continued, "is his moral or religious principle." For Stone, conversion was a change of heart born of a view of the glory of God that caused one to desire to be free from the power, as well as the penalty, of sin; rather than a carefully reasoned decision based on enlightened self-interest. For Craighead, the Christian life was a matter of keeping God's law as taught by God's Spirit in the scripture. According to Craighead, the Spirit, having written the scriptures, was no longer active in the world. For Stone, the Spirit was active in individual believers and in the church, as well as in and through the scriptures. In coming to Christ, one receives the Spirit, without which, for Stone, one could not be saved from the power of sin. See Craighead, 23, 38, 43-44; Williams, 90-94, 242-244.

¹¹ Stone, *Biography*, 34-35.

¹² Stone, *Reply to J. P. Campbell*, 6.

¹³ Stone, *Biography*, 33-34.

¹⁴ Stone made chronological errors in his autobiography that appear to be simply the result of a failing memory. See Stone, *Biography*, note, 64.

¹⁵ See Rogers' chapter on the history of the exercises in Stone, *Biography*, pp.374ff.

¹⁶ Reflecting on Stone's 1805 report of his struggle years before his exposure to the Great Revival to reconcile the message of God's gracious love in Jesus Christ with the doctrine that God had predestined some individuals to eternal damnation, he observes "His first mistake was, like other enthusiasts, to make his feelings a criterion of truth." Commenting on Stone's report of having felt an indescribable love for God in response to John 14:19, Davidson averred, "Thus he allowed himself to be deluded by raptures which are known to proceed sometimes from false views of religion, and which so far from proving the soundness of any given position, may only result from a deceived heart; like that of the Fakirs of India, and the Romish devotee before a crucifix." Driving home his point, he declared that when Stone observed the Revival in Logan County "His passions again misled his judgment; he 'knew the voice and felt the power,' and returned home fully satisfied of the correctness of his views." One is hardly surprised to learn from Davidson a couple paragraphs later that this enthusiast

“was foremost in encouraging the extravagances of the times.” Italics mine. See Davidson, 218-219.

¹⁷ *A Sermon on the Present Revival of Religion, etc. in this country; preached at the opening of the Kentucky Synod* (Lexington: Printed by Joseph Charless, 1803), 25-28.

¹⁸ Rice, *Sermon*, 32-33.

¹⁹ Rice, *Sermon*, 23. In a footnote, Rice acknowledged that he had never experienced the exercises associated with the revival and that therefore it behooved him to “speak about them with modesty.” He then observed that it appeared that if persons “have right notions of divine things, previous to their falling into these exercises, their ideas in the time are just, lively, and very impressive: and their exercises have a happy influence on their temper and conduct.” The danger, he warned, was “enthusiasm,” for persons with wrong notions of divine things, expressing those notions while engaged in such exercises, might assume that their “wrong” notions had been given to them by the Holy Spirit. *Ibid.*

²⁰ Rice, *Sermon*, 41.

²¹ Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, in Sweet, 318-319. See also *Apology*, 169-171

²² See also *Apology*, 171.

²³ “Rev. John Lyle’s Diary, 1801,” Manuscripts Division, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky, 58, 83-84, 100-101, 103-104, 107, 116, 117, 120, 121.

²⁴ *Diary*, 30, 68.

²⁵ Stone, *Biography*, 40, 41.

²⁶ *Diary*, 66, 116, 125

²⁷ *Diary*, 128-129; Stone, *Biography*, 40.

²⁸ *Diary*, 129.

²⁹ *Diary*, 130.

³⁰ *Diary*, 127-128, 131.

³¹ *Diary*, 132.

³² Davidson, 140-141.

³³ Davidson, 166.

³⁴ CM 8 (March 1834), 74.

³⁵ Stone, *Biography*, 33-34.

³⁶ For a different view of these matters see Ronald P. Byars, “Cane Ridge: A Presbyterian Perspective,” *American Presbyterians* 70 (fall 1992): 141-150; reprinted in Anthony Dunning, ed. *Cane Ridge in Context* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992), 93-110.

THE SEPARATION OF THE CAMPBELLS FROM THE BAPTISTS

Jesse C. Fletcher*

In or around 1830, the growing numbers of followers of Alexander Campbell both by separation and expulsion parted ways with the Baptists among whom they had developed their persona and mission during an uneasy seventeen-year gestation. It was not earth shaking; a revolution in Paris, the birth of the society of Latter-day Saints and the death of Pope Pius VIII probably made more news. But the separation tore the fabric of frontier communities and households as well as churches and associations of churches. Often rancorous and bitter, it left a legacy of acrimony and distrust.

Disciples historians called the separation "a complex and lengthy process."¹ It was all of that as it was a relationship that began to unravel from the beginning and reverberated for years after the separation was complete. Ahead for the Campbell followers, called reformers during their Baptist days, lay a union with the followers of Barton Stone in 1832. For Baptists, the years just ahead included a north-south split over slavery and sectionalism and a new battle with several Campbell themes in a movement called Landmarkism. What follows is an effort to chronicle Campbell's Baptist ties and understand the process of dissolution that left distinctive marks on both groups.

I. The Campbells and the Baptists

The Campbells came from Ireland and Scotland with Thomas Campbell coming in 1807 and the rest of the family including his talented son Alexander in 1809. A seceder Presbyterian, Thomas settled in Pennsylvania where differences with his synod led to censure and Thomas' followers organizing "The Christian Association of Washington" (Pennsylvania). The term Association was designed to avoid even more proliferations of denominations and names of Christians who were to all be one. They proclaimed that where the "scriptures speak we would speak and where silent, we are silent."²

Alexander Campbell, while waiting to join his father, attended Glasgow University in Scotland where he was exposed to influential Scots Independents. Among them he developed some decided opinions about church polity including: "independence of local congregations, a plurality of elders, denial of clerical privileges and dignities, the rights of laymen to have a part in the edification and discipline of the church, and faith as a result of belief in testimony to facts supplied by scripture."³

Alexander Campbell came to America in 1809, the same year James Madison became president and Charles Darwin was born. His developing spiritual convictions caused him to react both to the intense party spirit among denominations on the American frontier and to its emotional revivalism which violated his Scottish rationalism. In contrast he relished being reunited with his father in Pennsylvania and becoming a member of his father's fellowship. Thomas had written of his own beliefs in a Declaration and Address in connection with the Association in 1809. "The document was an appeal for unity

*Jesse C. Fletcher, author, historian, lecturer, is President-Emeritus of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas.

on the practices of the primitive New Testament on the practices of the primitive New Testament Church.”⁴ Alexander, who as noted had undergone profound changes in his own beliefs, found himself in total agreement. When an effort by Thomas to unite the Association with a Pittsburgh Synod failed, they reorganized the Association into the Brush Run Church.

In the meanwhile Alexander married a wealthy landowner’s daughter, Margaret Brown, and the union soon bore a child. Questions of the baby’s baptism led Alexander to embrace believer’s baptism by immersion. Instead of the baby being baptized, he and his father and five other adults sought out a Baptist preacher, Matthias Luce, to baptize them.⁵ Luce did so despite the Campbells’ refusal to provide the time-honored experience of grace narrative that Calvinist Baptists practiced as a prelude to baptism.

Local Baptists, however, took little note of that and, delighted at the groups embrace of immersion, asked them to join the Redstone Baptist Association. A number of other differences were also downplayed including the Brush Run Church’s refusal to accept the Baptists’ Philadelphia Confession with its Westminster Calvinism.⁶ It reportedly submitted a document of “sentiments, wishes and determination” at that time, detailing the differences, but the document was soon lost.⁷ The association accepted them in 1813 with their objections to the Confession noted. Contextually, the war of 1812, between the United States and Britain, seemed to be a world away.

Thus began Campbell’s Baptist sojourn, but the differences in place from the beginning would ultimately separate the charismatic Campbell and what would become a host of followers from their Baptist hosts. According to Errett Gates, “He was possessed at this time with the conviction that a reformation was needed in the religious world. He felt that many things needed setting right among the Baptists.”⁸ As he articulated these “things,” he and his followers became known as Reformers among the Baptists. The effort to bring reform would facilitate the process of separation that would include their own initiatives, expulsion from local churches and associations and, in a shocking number of situations, gaining control of churches and associations.

Understanding the Baptist heritage Campbell joined is an important key to interpreting this dramatic and far-reaching conflict. At this time, Baptist life was two hundred and four years into its own turbulent history. Born of Separatist dissenters of the English reformation and Amsterdam exiles from Britain’s oppressive state church, the group to be known as the first Baptists, intent on seeking “further light”, adopted believer’s baptism in 1609. Shortly after, along with their strong commitment to religious freedom, they rejected their Calvinistic particularism for James Arminius’ general atonement and after two years migrated back to the dangerous church- state environment in England. Despite the initial incarceration for their leaders, this group proliferated and early on exhibited a fondness for assemblies and extra-church organization to bolster their minority status.

A second genesis of Baptists emerging from Puritan Calvinism began three decades later in England from other separate dissenters and the two groups were distinguished from each other as either General or Particular Baptists over their differences on the doctrine of atonement.” The Particular group, while embracing associations during the Cromwell era, largely distrusted extra-church

organization in contrast to the General group.

Roger Williams led a third Genesis in 1639 in that part of colonies that would become Rhode Island. Also persecuted by a church-state environment in Massachusetts, Williams was to highlight Baptists' commitment to religious freedom. This group's initial Calvinistic beginning would swing back and forth between General and Particular sentiments as emigrating English Baptists joined them. A largely coastal version of this growing Baptist presence became predominantly Particular and were called Regular Baptists and a frontier version leaned to a modified Calvinism and were known as Separate Baptists. The Regular Baptists were wary of extra church organizations while the Separates seemed to welcome such as a bridge of frontier isolation.

The two groups of Baptists were uneasily reconciled in many areas by 1780 around a Philadelphia Confession of Faith that dated back to 1742 and was adapted from an English Baptist Confession, The Second London Confession. The Separate tradition, however, was resistant to Confessions, and to Calvinism and may have provided the ready ground for Campbell's reform movement. A decade later, energized by English Baptist William Carey's missionary vision, Baptists in the fledgling United States were organizing extra church entities for both home and foreign missions along with their traditional associations. The year after Campbell joined them, they organized a Convention for missions to go along with proliferating mission societies, Bible societies, Associations and state organizations. This meant Baptists were moving to become a more cohesive body.

Generally accepted Baptist distinctives by this time included religious freedom, separation of church and state, a regenerate church membership, baptism by immersion, local church autonomy, the scriptures as the sole norm for faith and practice, and the priesthood of the believer (or right to approach God through Christ without need for priest or cleric). Areas of conflict among Baptists, tending to work against this cohesiveness, ranged from the Sabbath to Foot Washing, from Calvinism to Arminianism, from isolated churches to organized groups of churches, from tendencies toward creedalism to sola scriptura.

As it became evident, Campbell was attracted to the generally accepted distinctives, but brought strong convictions about areas of existing differences while carving out significant new ones in a quest for the restoration of "the Ancient order of Things." One of the reasons the Campbells turned to the Baptists was their desire not to create another denomination in deference to their unity dreams. As would become evident, however, restoration trumped unity.

II. Baptist Reformers: The Differences with Baptist Traditionalists

Campbell and his followers began to carve out their role as reformers almost immediately in reaction to Baptist frontier evangelistic and Calvinistic practices, their denominational connectionalism and their concept of a divinely called clergy. A 1904 study of this whole episode by Errett Gates, essentially confirmed by subsequent studies, highlighted the differences that Campbell would stress and Baptists would come to oppose. While these differences became front and center in historical sequence, most were held by Alexander Campbell prior to their becoming a Campbell-Baptist issue.

The first of these differences was clearly established when the Campbells declined to give the traditional Calvinist experience of grace, but were baptized upon their simple confession of faith. This was a significant departure from the prevailing pattern and would be the key to the Campbell evangelistic thrust in later years. Based on Scottish rationalism that called for a mental and physical response to the scriptural promises, it was a defining difference in Campbell's developing theological system. Campbell's approach is best seen as a reaction to Baptist Calvinism and excessive emotionalism related to conversion.

A second difference was established with the admission to the Redstone Association without allegiance to the Philadelphia Confession. Again Campbell's opposition to anything that smacked of creedalism was in place, and the sola scriptura principle was in compelling prominence. At this point, and especially in places like Kentucky, old Separate Baptist objections to creeds would create a ready reception for Campbell's positions.

A third difference became clear in 1814 when Baptists established the Triennial Convention missionary society to support Burma missionaries Luther Rice and Adoniram Judson. Campbell rejected extra church organizations such as Baptists' state conventions and missions societies. His position put the reformers into an alliance of sorts with Baptist anti-missions churches, though the latter's hyper-Calvinism prevented any real togetherness among the two groups. Campbell's free-will stance made it a short-lived alliance but it left its mark on Baptist traditionalists.

A fourth difference position surfaced with an address Campbell made to the annual Redstone Association meeting. Now known as the Sermon on the Law, it was a subordination of the Old Testament, i.e. the Law, to grace and the New Testament. Baptist tradition gave the Old Testament and the New equal standing.

A fifth difference was less controversial, but gradually became a revealing difference between the Reformers and traditional Baptists. It was the elevation of the Lord's Supper to an every meeting status. Most Baptists celebrated it monthly or quarterly. Both groups regarded it as a memorial.

A sixth difference was the rejection of a pre-millennial eschatology taking root among some Baptists. Campbell's Old Testament position and his symbolic interpretations of Revelation guaranteed his opposition to a position that would bedevil Baptists a century later. In Regular Baptist environs, however, this was not a problem as they also looked askance at the pre-millennialists.

A seventh difference was the denial of a divinely called clergy and its prerogatives in favor of a local, gifted leadership from the laity and the position that any believer could baptize. Much of this position could be traced back to Campbell's Haldane influence, but as a rhetorical club in both debate and publication it became a heated issue. In frontier settings where much of Campbell's movement played out, this was most appealing. A non-clergy leadership did not depend upon formal education and it smacked of the level ground frontiersmen espoused.

An eighth difference was one that denied the scripturalness of creeds and confessions consistent with the Brush Run church's Redstone position. As previously noted, this appealed to the Separate tradition and was in line with

the Campbells' emphasis upon the New Testament as the final authority for faith and practice.

A ninth difference, and perhaps the earliest position embraced by the reformers, was that the very name Baptist or Methodist or Presbyterian should be scrapped in favor of Churches of Christ, Disciples, Christians. They held that all Christians should be of one mind and fellowship through local bodies. It was a cry for Christian unity that was soon overshadowed by sectarian differences which surfaced in the restoration quest.

As these differences were highlighted, the reformers' convictions and practices were clearly outside many Baptists' comfort zone and especially that of their clergy. While Campbell's rhetoric convinced some clergymen and many laymen, a plethora of objections began to rise among Baptist traditionalists.

The venues used to both support and oppose Campbell and his increasing numbers of adherents were:

1. Sermons, both in local churches and associations. Sermons not only had great authority but when printed achieved a broader impact.
2. Formal debates. Campbell's initial efforts opposing pedobaptism gave him great prominence among Baptists.
3. Religious newspapers and periodicals (especially after 1823 when Campbell established *The Christian Baptist*) such as *The Religious Herald*, *The Columbian Star*, *The Baptist Recorder*, *Baptist Register*, *The Church Advocate* and *Western Baptist* among others.⁹ Campbell saw the power of the printed word and exploited it as no other religious figure on the American frontier.

In all of this, Campbell excelled and seemed to relish the battle. He contended Baptists were supporting their traditions with historical and emotional arguments while his were rational, Biblically driven positions that the Baptists would not debate on those terms. But after a while even the Baptists tended to carry Bibles with fingers ready to find a scripture to make a point.

III. The Process of Separation and Expulsion.

It is not exaggeration to say that Campbell's separation from the Baptists began at the beginning, 1813, with his disassociation from the Philadelphia Confession and his refusal to submit to a pre-baptism examination for an experience of grace.

The process of separation took another step with Campbell's famous Sermon on the Law subordinating the Old Testament to the New Testament in 1816. Ironically, he preached it at an annual Redstone Association meeting despite several minister's efforts to keep him off the program. Preaching from Romans 8:3, Campbell set out to prove scripturally that Christians are under the law to Christ and not to Moses. He eliminated the Mosaic code as binding upon Christians. To many Baptists, however, preaching the law was a necessary preparation for conviction of sin and hearing the gospel. Campbell used this basic foundation to later undermine pedobaptists in his widely publicized debates.

But while the Sermon on the Law became a cornerstone of Campbell's system, it was a stone of stumbling to traditional Baptists who felt it denigrated part of the Bible. It became one of the charges when the Redstone Association

impeached and tried him for heresy though unsuccessfully in 1817.

About this time Thomas Campbell and a group of fellow church members decided to move further west. Obtaining their letters from the Brush Run Church they organized the Wellsburg Church in 1823. They applied to the local Association only to be denied Baptist connection because of their refusal to endorse the Philadelphia Confession. An interesting spin-off of this venture was Alexander Campbell's father-in-law, John Brown's fear Campbell would take his wife and Brown's grandchildren to Ohio. He deeded Campbell a 300 acre farm to keep him there. This became the basis for Campbell's becoming a wealthy man which undoubtedly helped him maintain his independence and to continue to attack clerical privilege and practice. The 300 acres became over a thousand and a publishing venture, a college and a small village, a most impressive base for Campbell's widespread efforts. Margaret Brown died in 1827, leaving him with four young children. Less than a year later and reportedly at the request of his dying wife, he married her best friend, Selina Bakewell, with whom he would father ten more children.

In 1820 Alexander Campbell held a two-day debate with Presbyterian John Walker over the scriptural authority of infant baptism. Campbell was extremely effective in this debate and it was widely heralded as a Baptist victory further endearing Campbell to many Baptists and opening still more doors. Followers of the debate may have also taken note of the Missouri Compromise that portended another growing divide.

When the debate was published and widely read, Campbell was encouraged to begin to plan *The Christian Baptist*. While doing so he received a challenge from W. L. McCalla of Augusta, Kentucky for another debate. Held in Washington, Kentucky in October, 1823, with crowds that moved the debate outdoors in beautiful weather, it lasted for seven days. While he again won the debate, the problem for some perceptive Baptists was that he took the act of baptism beyond symbolism to the efficacy of formal and personal remission of sins. In doing so, Campbell raised the specter of baptismal regeneration though defending the Baptist position against pedobaptism. For Baptists, baptism was for believers already regenerated by the work of the Holy Spirit. Yet, the immediate aftermath was further celebration of Campbell as a Baptist champion.

Beginning with its prospectus *The Christian Baptist* gave traditional Baptists concern. In it Campbell said, "*The Christian Baptist* shall espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting the ancient sect 'called Christians first at Antioch.' Its sole object shall be the eviction of truth and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice."¹⁰ On July 4, 1823 the first issue appeared and a series on "The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things" gave the terminology and marching orders for Campbell and his followers. The issue took no notice of that year's "Monroe Doctrine" nor the ascension of Pope Leo XII. That fall's debate with McCalla, however, so pleased Baptists in Campbell's dealing with pedobaptism that they swelled his subscriptions and offers to preach.

Also in 1823, Campbell and several Brush Run church members were received into the Mahoning Baptist Association. This took them out of the constant fire emanating from the Redstone Association where, since Campbell's Sermon on the Law, there had been continuing efforts to expel him. But despite an association with like minded supporters, this was little more than a holding

pattern since the reformers were already questioning the efficacy and indeed the validity of such organizations.

By the close of 1823, however, *The Christian Baptist* had become the lightning rod in which attacks on the clergy, missions organizations and associations elicited serious Baptist opposition. In subsequent issues he caricatured missionary societies, ministerial calls, pew rents system, salaried clergy, Bible societies and church associations. At this point one would wonder if Campbell was seriously trying to reform Baptists or simply gathering his flock from among Baptists. He was especially hard on the Baptist ministry using such terminology as hireling priests, textuary divines, scrap doctors and characterizing their theological schools as priest factories.

By the second year of publication he composed a long lost epistle which he called Third Peter which instructed preachers to live well, wear the best clothes, be called by high-sounding titles, fleece the people, drink the most costly wines as was their due, etc.¹¹ Since the majority of Baptist preachers were poor and struggling on subsistence level salaries and hardly fit the caricature mold, they felt assaulted and were notably critical of Campbell's maritally based security which allowed him the luxury of such criticism. His ridiculing and satirical style, however, would be emulated for years to come by iconoclastic religious editors.

Yet, his writing style or polemic seemed to contradict his rhetoric in the pulpit and his considerable social skills. The jarring difference came to the attention of a widely regarded Virginia Baptist minister, R. B. Semple. He cautioned Campbell in a letter not to go to extremes and to be careful lest he find himself "running past Jerusalem, as he hastens out of Babylon."¹² But Campbell felt Semple was a kindred spirit in recognizing the need for reform and began a congenial correspondence with him. The two men finally met face to face in a Campbell visit to Virginia in the fall of 1825. In a letter following the visit, Semple chided him for the bitterness in his writing compared to his gentleness and graciousness in person.¹³ Campbell defended himself by the example of Jesus and the apostles who displayed "sharpness toward false teachers." But in December of the year, Semple was more direct. "... your views are generally so contrary to those of Baptists in general, that if a party was to go fully into the practice of your principles I should say a new sect had sprung up, radically different from the Baptists as they are now."¹⁴ Semple's statement was prescient but premature. Campbell was still trying to reform Baptists.

Semple's concerns and indeed most Baptists' concerns were often focused on Campbell's perceived anti-missionism. Semple was then president of the General Missionary Society, often called the Triennial Convention, which was the most unifying factor among most Baptists. Campbell's opposition to the means, i.e. missionary societies or boards, came out as ridiculing missions and missionaries. Campbell's own subsequent missionary efforts belied this in the long run, but it played an emotional role among Baptists in the process of separation.

As evidence of the gathering momentum of the separation, the Redstone Association expelled thirteen churches in 1825 for holding Campbell tenets and practices. The same year, Tate's Creek Association in Kentucky saw ten so-called orthodox churches disassociate themselves from the majority of 16 that

avored Campbell teachings.

A case study of the reformers' progress in Baptist churches can be seen in the story of the First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee. Phillip S. Fall was a talented pastor in Kentucky when the Nashville church approached him to be their pastor. He had declined in 1821, but in the summer of 1825 he accepted even though he had been told some members were wary because of his identity with the reformation views of Alexander Campbell.

When Lynn May wrote his history of the church, he said some were in sympathy with his reformation leanings but many others were unaware of "his unbaptistic views."¹⁵ In fact he was an enthusiastic endorser of the doctrines of Campbell and yet clearly saw himself as a Baptist as Campbell himself did at this point. He informed his critics that he had notified the Long Run Association in Kentucky of its acceptances of such positions in his previous church in Kentucky and did not feel he was flying under false colors.¹⁶

Upon assuming the Nashville charge, the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper was soon followed by the discontinuence of the examination of baptismal candidates. Fall held and taught the view that "The act of baptism secured the pardon of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁷ Creeds were rejected for sola scriptura. In the same year, a sister church, the Mill Creek Baptist Church, called for a meeting to consider these "questionable" actions by their sister church. They let Fall preach twice in the course of the meeting, but in the end the Mill Creek church withdrew fellowship from the Nashville body.

Strangely the Concord Association ignored this in October of that year and seated Fall's church in its annual meeting. It even designated the talented preacher as its next meeting's annual preacher. A year later, however, the Association severed ties with the Fall-led church. In the church itself, only a small minority opposed Fall's reformer views, but that minority refused to leave. In 1827, Campbell himself showed up to help Fall. In 1830, the minority withdrew from the main body to constitute themselves as the Nashville Baptist Church. The Fall-led congregation became know later as the Vine Street Christian Church, though, when Fall left in 1831, it was still called the Baptist Church of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Fall was to return to Kentucky for a long ministry in the Campbell movement.

Between 1825 and 1830 numerous defections from Baptist associations and churches over Campbell's views were noted in Kentucky, western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia.¹⁹ However, as late as 1826, Campbell still affirmed his commitment to the Baptist identity.

Kentucky was one of the most contested areas. J. H. Spencer, in his *History of Kentucky Baptists*, claimed that by 1827 Campbellism was a raging fanaticism in Northern Kentucky and said that by 1829 "there were severed from the Baptists eight or ten thousand people."

One dissertation on the subject suggested a pattern for the exodus. It was characterized by repudiation of creed or constitution and the adoption of the Bible as a sufficient guide for faith and practice. Weekly communion would be held, and baptisms were made upon a profession of faith in Christ without examination of the candidate. No vote would be taken.²⁰ If the traditionalists still had a majority, they would dis-fellowship the reformers. If the reform views were represented by a pastor, they dismissed him. Those so dealt with would often

then organize a clearly articulated reform congregation. Traditionalists in the minority tended to follow the pattern of the Nashville church. In either case, the issue would usually be joined over baptism, the Lord Supper, creeds or constitutions, missions or clergy.

In 1829, the Baptists' Beaver Association, meeting near Pittsburgh withdrew fellowship from the Campbell dominated Mahoning Association and cited eight reasons for its action. Widely circulated, this list of supposed errors in the Reformers positions came to be called the Beaver Resolutions or Beaver Anathema, depending upon the convictions of the reader. The Franklin Association endorsed them in their minutes as follows:

1. They, the Reformers, maintain that there is no promise of salvation without baptism;
2. That baptism should be administered to all who say they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, without examination at any other point;
3. That there is no direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the mind prior to baptism;
4. That baptism procures the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit;
5. That the Scriptures are the only evidence of interest in Christ;
6. That obedience places it in God's power to elect to salvation;
7. That no creed is necessary for the church but the Scriptures as they stand;
8. That all baptized persons have the right to administer the ordinance of baptism.²¹

The resolutions were noteworthy both for what they addressed and what they ignored. In a sense, they were moderate compared to many Baptist invectives toward the reformers. Their Calvinism, confession and concerns about the role of baptism are most prominent, while the issue of ordination is oblique and missions is not mentioned.

But the Beaver Association actions were far down on Campbell's attention list in 1829. A widely publicized debate in Cincinnati, Ohio, with a renowned English humanitarian and anti-religionist, Robert Owen, was not only judged to have gone his way, but greatly increased his influence in a state that was probably second only to Kentucky in reform sympathies. The same year Campbell was elected as a delegate to Virginia's Constitutional Convention in Richmond, where a Disciples historian claims that despite the concentration of power in a "slave-owning" aristocracy, he made efforts to lay the groundwork to abolish slavery.²²

Yet, other associations were concerned with the Beaver action. In 1830, for instance, the Concord Association of Kentucky adopted clear-cut Campbell positions on baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit. In the same year, despite lack of support from Campbell, the Mahoning Association decided such organizations were unscriptural and dissolved itself. The Goshen Association, however passed a resolution that the "doctrines of A. Campbell are unscriptural." Other associations tended to follow according to who had the majority.

Aware that the sojourn with the Baptists was largely over, Campbell, suspended publication of *The Christian Baptist* in 1830 in favor of the *Millennial Harbinger*. At his point his disaffection was clear.

When the reformers united with the Barton Stone New Lights of Kentucky and Ohio in 1832 to become the Disciples of Christ, the separation,

while not over in many congregations, was effectively complete. Another kind of separation was blowing in the wind as the founding of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in the same year portended.

Baptists, despite their losses, continued to grow and moved on to more compelling concerns related to slavery and states rights and their growing missionary endeavors. The late Robert A. Baker summed it up saying the movement of Campbell did not make a great impact on the Atlantic seaboard Baptist churches from Pennsylvania and Jersey southward, partly because his Arminian theology could not counter the vigorous Calvinism of that section. "West of the Alleghenies, however, the strict biblicism which he asserted, along with latent Arminianism that had moved westward after the American Revolution attracted large numbers of Baptists." Baker said "hundreds of churches" left to follow Campbell and noted that Campbellism split Baptist churches as far west as Texas in 1841.²³ Strangely, Leon McBeth, in his widely appreciated tome, *The Baptist Heritage*, mentions Campbell only in relation to nineteenth-century anti-missionism.

This writer, in his *The History of the Southern Baptist Convention*, addressed Campbell's impact with more detail than either of the above, but still failed to give it the long range influence on subsequent Baptist life, he now feels it deserve. The reason for the relatively light treatment of Campbellism among Southern Baptists, despite the fact its primary impact was in their regions, can possibly be traced to their subsequent Landmarkism battles.

Putting religious histories into context, however, *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, gave Alexander Campbell only a fifth of the space it gave Robert Owen and the Baptist sojourn of Campbell, a single sentence. In other words, much of the foregoing played out on a very limited stage vis-a-vis the larger picture.

IV. IMMEDIATE RESULTS

The Campbells, in becoming reformers, clearly subordinated their Christian vision of unity to a restoration principle that stressed their polity and practice and their unique positions.

The Campbells, through the means stated above, gained a critical mass of followers and churches from Baptists to become a defined sectarian movement in connection with their 1832 union with the Stone group.

The Baptists lost large numbers of members, churches and even associations in the areas most impacted. Disciples historians estimated the believers that left Baptists with Campbell to number between 12,000 and 20,000. In 1832 they were said to number 22,000 after the Stone merger. Campbell was more optimistic in his estimates and in an 1833 article in the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* said, "Within the last seven years, they have increased with the most unprecedented rapidity; and during the present year, (1833), not much less than ten thousand have joined the standard of reformation. They probably at this time, in the United States alone, amount to at least one hundred thousand."²⁴

The Baptists, in defending themselves against the Reformers, increased their unifying extra-church organizations including state Baptist conventions in North Carolina in 1830, Missouri, 1834, Mississippi, 1836 and Kentucky, 1837,

numbers of associations and mission societies.²⁵ They slowly but surely replaced those lost to the reform movement, but continued to confront Campbell's followers as the frontier moved west.

Baptists replaced the Campbell dissent with Landmarkism, itself a possible outcome of Campbellism. According to G. S. Holt, J. R. Graves' ideas regarding the restitution of the primitive church owe a debt to the thinking of Campbell. He also notes that Graves patterned his editorial style after that of Campbell.²⁶

The Reformers made common cause with Barton Stone's followers who had separated from Presbyterianism. The names Disciples, Christian and Churches of Christ were used for the united group, but consensus on the actual terminology seems to be wanting.

IV. Long Range Results

The Campbells along with the Stoneites, while becoming a sectarian movement with all the tensions and divisions inherent in such, yet avoided the extra church organization that would have allowed for a formal split during the Civil War. Nevertheless the 1906 religious census recorded the separation of Churches of Christ from the Disciples. The Churches of Christ avoided modernist driven splits (though not internal divisions and tensions around publications and institutions) the same way, though becoming more sectarian. The Disciples continued to moderate their positions in favor of recapturing their original unity vision and moved back toward mainstream American Protestantism.

The Baptists in the South where Campbell's followers made their most serious inroads, moved into a structured Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, and thoroughly embraced a centralized denominationalism which endured challenges from the aforementioned Landmark movement and an early twentieth-century fundamentalism. It was, however, captured by a late twentieth-century fundamentalism that mastered the machinery of the centralized denominational structures and flew under the banner of coercive confessionalism.

Baptists in the years after their Campbell upheaval diminished their confessionalism. When they organized the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, they totally ignored confessional needs. This writer noted in his history of that body that it could have been Campbell's legacy to Baptists with his "no creed but the Bible" cry.²⁷ It was 1925 before their battle with modernity turned that around and 2000 before confessionalism had the force the Philadelphia Confession had once enjoyed.

The Stone-Campbell Movement, as Churches of Christ, tackled educational and missionary needs without central ecclesiology, maintained their conservatism and anti-modernity with only occasional fundamentalist tendencies, and in recent years tolerated the efforts of a few to resurface their old unity goals. Disciples and Baptists carried less of the separation scar tissue forward and found more in common in the years that followed.

One possibility that needs to be considered is whether the missionary zeal of Baptists did take hold on Campbell and his reformers and accounted for their mid-century missionary moves. Since Campbell's initial opposition was clearly methodological, the question may not be substantive.

Baptists greatly modified their original offending Calvinism (with the

exception of a recent revival of such among a few) and adopted a more propositional approach to salvation much more akin to Campbell's rationalism than their original experiential evangelism. They did continue to diminish the role of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both tendencies arguably could be a reaction to the Campbell movement.

Both Baptists and Campbell's followers had, however, set in motion a century of acrimony and distrust. After the division between the Disciples and the Churches of Christ, this antipathy was evidenced primarily among Southern Baptists and Churches of Christ in the westward march of the peoples from the original areas of conflict. They baptized converts from each other, often confronted each other, refused to participate in shared services or to allow use of each others houses of worship as practiced between other frontier denominations. Often they regarded the other as outside the scope of grace. It was a bitter legacy from their beginnings. Only a shared patriotism, and, more recently, a penchant for community building and the good offices of their academic institutions began to change things in the late twentieth century.

SUMMARY

The history of Baptists in the south and the followers of Alexander Campbell who became the Disciples or Christian churches and the Churches of Christ is a reactive dance of polity and doctrine begun during thirteen fateful years of mutual identity. Each group heavily influenced the other through both rhetoric and reaction. It is this writer's thesis that as an unwitting womb for Campbell's new movement, Baptists, particularly southern Baptists, were significantly influenced in the process of confronting Campbell's reforms as evidenced by increased Baptist denominationalism, confessionalism, and propositional evangelism with its greatly modified Calvinism among the arguable results.

Campbell's followers in turn were lured from their vision of unity to one of the restoration of the ancient order of things. This effort probably took them further from other evangelicals than they intended and in the case of the Churches of Christ from any interchurch cooperation for many years. Their separation from the Baptists and their quest for "restoration" took them deep into the sectarianism their initial vision tried to escape. But then Campbell's progeny, both Disciples and Churches of Christ, as well as Baptists are still evolving though less and less in response to each other despite a fringe dialogue among some moderates and more and more in response to modernity and religious pluralism in tension with their founding dreams.

NOTES

¹ William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1975), 118.

² Leo Ashby, *Influence of Alexander Campbell Upon the Separation of Disciples and Baptists in Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 1948, PH.D. diss), 56.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ashby, *Influence*, 130.

- ⁵ Errett Gates, *Baptists and Disciples* (Chicago: The Christian Century Company, 1904), 18.
- ⁶ The Philadelphia Confession, a make over of the Baptists's Second London Confession was Reformed or Calvinistic and had been developed by the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1741. It was the major Confession among Baptists in the colonies and in the post Revolutionary era. A modified confession, The New Hampshire Confession of Faith, was developed in 1833 and became the basis for subsequent Southern Baptist Confessions in 1925, 1963 and 2000.
- ⁷ Gates, *Baptists and Disciples*, 25.
- ⁸ Ibid., 30.
- ⁹ George W. Knight, *The Reply of Selected Baptist Editors to Alexander Campbell's Restoration Principles in the Christian Baptist* (Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1967, PH.D. diss.), 1- 2.
- ¹⁰ Campbell, Alexander, "Prospectus." *The Christian Baptist*. Volume II, 50.
- ¹¹ *The Christian Baptist*, Vol. II, 280.
- ¹² Ibid. I., 127.
- ¹³ Ibid. III., 197.
- ¹⁴ Robert A. Baker. *A Baptist Source Book* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1966) 77-78.
- ¹⁵ Lynn E. May, *The First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tennessee, 1820-1970* (Nashville: The First Baptist Church, 1970), 29.
- ¹⁶ P. S. Fall, "Historical", *The Gospel Advocate*, August 4, 1886, p. 482.
- ¹⁷ May, *The First Baptist Church*, 32.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 35.
- ¹⁹ James E. Tull, *Shapers of Baptist Thought, Alexander Campbell* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University, 1984), 118.
- ²⁰ Ashby, *Influence*, 130.
- ²¹ Ashby, p.146 (Franklin Baptist Association Minutes, 1829).
- ²² James D. Murch, *Christians Only* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962), 81.
- ²³ Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and its People* (Nashville: Broadman Press 1972), 150.
- ²⁴ Garrison, W. E. and DeGroot, A. T., *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 325.
- ²⁵ Jesse C. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention, A Sesquicentennial History* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Press, 1994), 403.
- ²⁶ Gregory S. Holt, *The Influence of Alexander Campbell on the Life and Work of J. R. Graves, Founder of the Landmark Baptist Movement* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Emmanuel School of Religion, M. Div. Thesis, 1993), 3.
- ²⁷ Fletcher, p. 48.

**The Construction of Denominational Identity by Negation:
The Separation of the Stone-Campbell Movements
from the Baptists and Presbyterians**

Karen-Marie Yust*

Jesse Fletcher's paper brings to mind something my mother said to me over twenty years ago when I first told her that I had decided to attend services at a Disciples of Christ congregation rather than at the Southern Baptist churches of my upbringing. Raised a Disciple herself, although that fact was not something I had been privy to before, she observed, "Disciples are just Southern Baptists without the 'don'ts'." Although her statement vastly oversimplifies the comparison one might make between any two denominational traditions, it also highlights a central point in both Fletcher's and Williams' papers: that the differences between the early Campbell and Stone movements and their cradle Presbyterian and Baptist denominations neither were nor are as great as historians and contemporary church leaders might proclaim. The resulting development of several denominational groups out of what were at first congenial associations demonstrates the ways in which denominational identity is often constructed in large part through the negation of another tradition's theological claims and practices. In the case of the Stone movement's separation from the Synod of Kentucky, this negation involved repudiating the Presbyterian understanding of the doctrine of predestination. The Campbell movement's separation from the Baptists proceeded from the rejection of practices related to baptism, communion, creedal confessions, missionary endeavors, and pastoral leadership.

Fletcher's assertion that "restoration trumped unity" deserves underscoring. As Williams demonstrates, Barton Stone and his followers perceived themselves as defenders of scriptural claims that should take theological precedence over Presbyterian doctrine. One could argue that Stone did not set out to challenge the doctrine of predestination; instead, in his personal study of the scriptures, he encountered theological claims that seemed to him incompatible with the doctrinal interpretations of a later Christian community. Williams' paper reminds us of how difficult it is to accurately ascribe cause and effect in relation to an historical figure's understandings and practices, but it is certainly possible to imagine a restorationist like Stone being unsettled first by tensions within the biblical text and then carrying the questions that had developed in his mind into his encounters with Presbyterian doctrine. Witnessing in the revivals additional tensions between the living gospel as it was being inscribed in the lives of converts and the doctrinal claims of his tradition may have served to reinforce the questions being generated by his study of Mark, Ephesians, Romans, Hebrews, and James.

Of course, such a sympathetic restorationist argument does not preclude the possibility that Stone first experienced some doubts about the doctrine of predestination because of a philosophical and ethical bias toward

*Karen-Marie Yust teaches Christian education and spiritual formation at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

human freedom and personal choice as essential elements of theology and religious anthropology. In that case, his attempts to undercut the doctrine of predestination through the use of scripture might be styled less as restorationist and more as a theological defense of the post-Enlightenment celebration of human intelligence and autonomy. Williams' suggestion that Stone's seemingly contradictory accounts of the development of his personal theology might be explained by different audiences and authorial intentions also opens the door to wondering about the particular commitments that may have engendered Stone's unease with the doctrine of predestination. After all, his argument that faith as gift from God "is the testimony of Jesus, or the gospel" is not easily reconciled with the litany of faith among the people of Israel offered in Hebrews 11. References to the "elect" in the apocalyptic teachings of Jesus (Mark 13 and Matthew 24) as well as some of the epistles can certainly be interpreted as lending authoritative biblical support to the official Presbyterian position. Might Stone's contrary doctrine of faith be more about promulgating a wider cultural claim about the primacy of human freedom and the superiority of individual interpretations to communal creations of theology than about recalling Presbyterians to a clear-cut biblical faith? The evidence we have leaves this option open and introduces yet another element – that of promoting a cultural philosophy – into the question of what precipitated the separation of the Springfield Presbytery from the Synod of Kentucky.

Similarly, Fletcher's attention to the discord between Campbell and the Baptists over baptismal practices also illustrates the ways in which the growing cultural emphasis on autonomy and individualism were affecting debates over Christian rituals. Admittedly, the Beaver Resolutions/Anathema present the Campbellite position from his opponents' perspective, but the picture they paint is generally accurate with regard to Campbell's emphasis on the individual's personal assessment and acceptance of the gospel as the basis for baptism and admission to the Christian community. The role of the community as interpreters and conservators of the biblical tradition is minimized when candidates for baptism are no longer required to submit their conversion narrative and personal statement of faith to communal examination. One could argue that this shift was a harbinger of the contemporary American emphasis on congregations as places of support for personal fulfillment rather than as contexts of enculturation in the body of Christ. In elevating personal interpretation and response and diminishing the role of tradition, Campbell inadvertently privileged the congregational structure of a collective over that of a communion. His inability to see the practical theological benefits as well as the pitfalls of congregational examination upset the balance between the conservative and prophetic functions of communal life necessary for Christian unity.

It is important to note that both Stone and Campbell upheld the importance of church discipline in general. They expected the Church to educate, order, exhort, and even excommunicate church members in the quest for a perfect and unified body of Christ. Their ecclesiology often hinged on a series of "if, then" propositions: if scripture taught certain principles (e.g. "freedom"), then rational common sense required that Christians advocate other principles (e.g. "orderliness") considered contiguous with the first principle, and so on down

a chain of reasonable conclusions. So their disputes with their Presbyterian and Baptist colleagues focused on the appropriate areas and modes in which church authority should be exercised rather than on the necessity of some form of ecclesial authority. On matters that they deemed scripturally mandated and reasonably clear to intelligent persons, they eschewed the mediation of communal authority even as they used that authority themselves to insist on a particular canon of scripturally mandated and reasonable interpretations and practices. The Lockean philosophy undergirding their theology permitted them to say, in concert with the signers of the American Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident." That other intelligent and reasonable persons might not agree was philosophically unthinkable at one level; the reasonableness of the person who does not see what is "self-evident" becomes questionable, not the truth itself. Hence Williams' report that Stone and his colleagues based their withdrawal from the authority of the Synod of Kentucky on the basis that "'human opinions,' rather than the Bible" and its self-evident truths were creating an unreasonable standard of judgment.

In contemporary Disciples congregations – and indeed in mainstream American Protestant churches of many types – the adherence to "self-evident" truth remains but the source of truth has shifted from reliance on the biblical narrative to primary concern for affective experience. This is certainly not what Campbell and Stone imagined when they advocated the reasonableness of persons and of revelation as the stepping stones of an orthodox practical theology. Their common emphasis on the centrality of Christ as revealed in scripture tempered their belief in the right of individual interpretation in matters not explicitly revealed in scripture. They would hardly bless the individual and collective "human opinions" of a biblically-illiterate community of faith whose espoused commitment to unity serves to preclude rigorous study of the scriptures or lively theological discussion of difficult issues such as homosexuality and war. I found Williams' discussion of Stone's reflections on revival practices intriguing in part because of what he says Stone chose to emphasize: the convert's "knowledge of gospel truth." Stone made sense of the affective exercises of the revivals in part by tying their power to the biblical message conveyed in preaching and testimonies. In a sense, Stone was witnessing and assessing the validity of the converts' conversion narratives in an informal way, testing their experiences against his interpretation of the "self-evident" truths of scripture. His mode of evaluating the validity of revival experiences could have become a model for the examination of baptismal candidates consistent with the theological commitments of the Reformers. Had such a model been developed, contemporary Disciples might be better able to speak of actively nurturing a biblically-responsible and critically theological communal identity while continuing to encourage personal responsibility for "putting on Christ" in Christian discipleship.

It's worth noting that many contemporary Disciples congregations do in fact have an informal examination system in place for typical baptismal candidates in the form of the "pastor's class" for older elementary and middle school children. While we rarely expect children to pass an actual test of their biblical knowledge or even articulate a comprehensive theology, we frequently ask them to share ("testify") to the meaning of their confession of faith for them.

A child who is reluctant to take this step, whether from shyness or genuine theological uncertainty, is generally considered unready to be baptized. However, adult converts are rarely asked to do more than assent to a simple confession of faith before the congregation; it is presumed that adults “know” what they are doing without needing to demonstrate their reasoning. This is the presumption that Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone made as well, but the context in which they lived was more likely to promote greater acquaintance with the Christian scriptures and engagement in theological reflection than we can expect from our contemporary setting. I wonder if Campbell would have been so quick to champion a simple confession of faith if he did not anticipate that most congregants would come to conversion as persons already exposed to and formed by the Christian narrative and principles. His strong emphasis on the importance of teaching as the means by which persons would encounter the gospel – an emphasis Stone shared – lead me to think that the realities of contemporary multiculturalism, interfaith dialogue, religious voyeurism, and “Sheilaism” (the religion of “me” generations) would cause a twenty-first century Campbell to reconsider what the church needed to know about its members’ theology.

Perhaps in part because of the biblical illiteracy common to our era and the lack of emphasis on theological reflection among the laity, contemporary Christian identity in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) legacy of the Stone-Campbell movements is less determined by the negation of other denomination’s practices and more by the simple dream of unity achieved through non-offensiveness. I suspect even Stone, with his greater regard than Campbell for unity despite differences in practice, would struggle to recognize in the loosely-held theological commitments of today’s Disciples congregants the “solemn, heart-penetrating, bold and free” testimonies of the revival converts he observed and praised. Campbell would have reason to fire up the presses for a new version of *The Christian Baptist*, with its objective of “the eviction of truth and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice.” What may be needed by contemporary Disciples is a season of defining their identity in negation of their own theological lethargy. A renewal of the vigorous theological debate that characterized the relationships of Stone and Campbell and their followers with the Presbyterians and Baptists, far from reenacting the separation of Christian from Christian, just might be the means by which our collections of persons pursuing their own spiritual paths become unified bodies of Christ.

DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Peter M. Morgan, President (morganpm@aol.com)

Founding Editor Claude E. Spencer

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— From the Editor's Desk

May 9, 2003 the Disciples of Christ Historical Society's Kirkpatrick Seminar for Historians of the Stone-Campbell Movement was held on the campus of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary as part of the Spring Meeting of the American Society of Church History. Appropriate to the meeting's location at a Presbyterian seminary and also to the two-hundredth anniversary in September 2003 of the separation of Barton Stone and four Presbyterian colleagues from the jurisdiction (though not the communion, they insisted!) of the Synod of Kentucky, the theme of the Kirkpatrick Seminar was Separation and Reunion in the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Seminar papers addressing the separation of Barton Stone and his colleagues from the Synod of Kentucky and the severing of ties between the Campbells and the Baptists were published in the fall issue of *Discipliana*. This issue focuses on the theme of reunion. Douglas Foster's seminar paper, "Efforts at Repairing the Breach: Twentieth Century Dialogues of the Churches of the Stone-Campbell Movement with Baptists and Presbyterians" begins with early understandings of unity and schism in the Stone-Campbell Movement and a brief look at nineteenth century efforts at reunion by the Stone-Campbell Movement and Baptists. Foster then examines a series of significant twentieth century efforts by the churches known as Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ to facilitate reunion with Baptists and Presbyterians. He also discusses noteworthy efforts at reunion by Churches of Christ and Baptists. Nadia Lahutsky's "The Union of Christians and Disciples in 1832 and COCU/CUIC" compares the nineteenth century union that brought followers of Stone and Campbell together to the forty-year process that began with the Consultation on Church Union and has become Churches Uniting in Christ.

These two papers support the thesis that seeking reunion, like union itself, is hard work. They also disclose something of the vision, hope and joy that drive Christians to manifest the unity of Christ's church.

— D. Newell Williams

— From the President's Desk

We have another crown jewel to add to our treasury at the Historical Society. We are a treasury of documents and artifacts of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

The new crown jewel is an original of the earliest published edition of Alexander Campbell's Sermon on the Law. Campbell preached this famous sermon in 1816. The front of the pamphlet informs us it was published that same year. Some thought that Campbell's published version forty years later in the Millennial Harbinger may have been a reconstruction from memory. Now we know that a published version was recorded close in time to the spoken event.

Attention to the document came to us when a dealer in antiquities inquired about background information on this piece that had come into his possession. Director Sara Harwell checked and found there are no copies of this historic document in the Library of Congress, the American Antiquarian Society or Harvard College Library. This item is extremely rare.

This historically priceless version - possibly Alexander Campbell's first published work - is now safely preserved in the treasure chest where it belongs, the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The addition of this crown jewel is possible through the generous gifts of Dale and Mary Ann Brown and Lester McAllister.

— Peter M. Morgan

**EFFORTS AT REPAIRING THE BREACH:
TWENTIETH CENTURY DIALOGUES OF THE CHURCHES OF THE
STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT
WITH BAPTISTS AND PRESBYTERIANS**

Douglas A. Foster*

The Stone-Campbell Movement began in early nineteenth-century America with a call to Christian believers of all professions to break down the barriers that separated them and work and worship together in every location. "We will that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the body of Christ at large," wrote Barton Stone and the other leaders of the Springfield Presbytery in 1804. "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one" insisted Presbyterian Thomas Campbell in his call for unity in the *Declaration and Address* of 1809.

There is profound irony in the story of this movement begun to effect the unity of all believers that itself became separated from most other Christians, and has even suffered major schism in its own ranks. This irony is the burden of all the heirs of the Stone-Campbell Movement today. Whether due to rejection of confessional requirements and hierarchical church structures or shifts in baptismal theology, most of the early leaders and many members of this American religious movement separated from or were pushed out of their previous denominational affiliations, especially Presbyterian and Baptist churches.

Yet the burning desire for Christian unity was still part of the DNA of this Movement. True, like much of Protestantism, there were plenty of members quite content to remain separate from other believers, and some developed the not uncommon attitude that we would all be united if everyone would just see the truth—as we have. Yet there were others who in the spirit of Philip Melancthon or George Calixtus could not abandon the plea for unity that had so profoundly shaped and motivated the Movement's early leaders. This paper is a survey of efforts over the past two hundred years to repair the breaches that were created by the separations of the Stone and Campbell movements from their Presbyterian roots in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and the Campbell reformers from the Baptists in the 1830s.

Let me start with three caveats. First, such a discussion of reunion efforts may give the impression that everyone supported them. That was never the case. Some, often many, remained convinced that the divisions were justified and that efforts at reunion were efforts at compromise of truth and potential destruction of the church. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these efforts is that they continued to occur despite opposition or apathy.

Second, as already indicated, the Stone-Campbell Movement itself divided into three major streams in the twentieth century. Thus to speak of Stone-Campbell Movement efforts at reunion in the twentieth century one must ask, which part of the Stone-Campbell Movement are you talking about? Churches of Christ, sometimes known as a cappella Churches of Christ, had become a separate identifiable body by the early 1900s due to differences over a range of

*Douglas A. Foster is Professor of Church History and Director of the Center for Restoration Studies at Abilene Christian University.

hermeneutical, theological, social and sectional issues. The Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, often known as “independent” Christian Churches, were distinguishable even before the 1968 restructure of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). That second division reflected, in many ways, the fundamentalist-modernist controversy in American Christianity. The independent Christian Churches have not been involved as a separate body in unity efforts with Baptists or Presbyterians.

Third, because of the radically congregational polity of the Stone-Campbell Movement for much of its existence, and of two of its three streams still today, unity or reunion talks must be understood—from the Stone-Campbell side at least—as talks between leaders who, while deeply committed to pursuing unity, were not empowered to make decisions for the whole movement. In fact, no representative organization existed to grant such power. That began to change with the creation of the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ in the twentieth century and the 1968 restructuring of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). That stream of the movement now has mechanisms to appoint “official” representatives. Yet ultimately even among Disciples no church can be compelled to agree or comply with statements or decisions made in the name of the body.

Early Understandings of Unity and Schism in the SCM

Despite separations from Presbyterians and Baptists in the early history of the Movement, its chief leaders clearly did not understand the separations as a repudiation of the Christian identity of their former associates. Furthermore, they tended to see the schisms almost as a temporary regrouping so that they could better understand each other and further the process of reform and unity. When Barton W. Stone and his fellow Presbyterian ministers separated from the Synod of Kentucky and the PCUSA, in 1803, they wrote an extensive “Apology” to explain their actions. Regarding their relationship with the members of their former Synod they said:

We do not desire, nor do we consider ourselves to be separated from the Presbyterian church, as Christians, whether ministers or people; we still wish to continue united to them in the bonds of love: we will admit to communion as formerly, and desire to be admitted. It is not our design to form a party. We have only withdrawn from the jurisdiction of those bodies with which we stood connected, because we plainly perceived that, while that connection subsisted, we could not enjoy the liberty of reading, studying, and explaining the word of God for ourselves, without constant altercation and strife of words to no profit.

We pass no uncharitable censures on those reverend bodies for their strict adherence to their standards; but as we are accountable to God for ourselves, so we must act for ourselves as in the sight of God;¹

In the painful separation of the Campbell Reformers from the Baptist Associations, especially in the 1830s, there was never a renunciation of Baptists as Christians. Alexander Campbell certainly denounced Baptist leaders who spearheaded the effort to exclude the Reformers, but the Campbells always considered Baptists to be their sisters and brothers in Christ. In an 1844 letter to fellow minister Samuel R. Jones, Thomas Campbell wrote:

I am much gratified with the account of your labors, and of their success,

especially among our baptist (sic) brethren, between whom and us there never should have been any difference: nor indeed would there, had it not been for a few proud partizans (sic) in the Redstone Association, of which once we were all members. . . . we have always considered and treated them as our Brethren, and, as far as I am concerned, always hope to do so. I would humbly advise you to treat them with all Christian respect as brethren; and of course, do anything within your power to build up and edify their societies. The first Christian duty to fellow creatures is to love the brethren for Christ's sake, as he has loved us. And by this shall all know that we are his disciples; if we manifest this love to one another. (John 13: 34, 35)²

Alexander Campbell's biographer, Robert Richardson, wrote in the March 1866 *Millennial Harbinger* that:

. . . in spite of misunderstandings and the efforts of a few to create differences, there have constantly been more or less intercommunion and fraternal intercourse. At no time have we separated ourselves or denied fellowship to a Baptist brother, or refused to receive as a member anyone accredited by letter from a Baptist Church. We have, in reality, ever claimed the Baptists as our brethren.³

Yet the reality was that they were not united with the Baptists or the Presbyterians. The churches of the Stone and Campbell movements themselves united to form a new body in 1832 separate from and competing with other Christian bodies for the hearts and minds of people. What would they do about it?

19th Century Efforts at Reunion with Baptists

When Alexander Campbell and other leaders adopted the practice of adult immersion, it immediately created a point of commonality with the Baptist Churches and a sense of solidarity that was powerful enough to transcend their differences even after the 1830s. Barely had the Reformers separated from their former Baptist Associations when in April 1841, leaders of the Stone-Campbell Movement, including Alexander Campbell, convened a unity conference in Lexington, Kentucky in response to conversations with Baptist leaders in that state who had proposed union between the groups. As the meeting approached, however, Baptist leader William F. Broaddus publicly warned Kentucky Baptists not to attend the meeting. Only one Baptist preacher, James Fishback, participated in the discussions. Perhaps the wounds of the separation of the previous decade were still too fresh for many. No visible progress in relations between the two bodies could then be seen. The Baptists themselves were rapidly moving toward events that within three years would divide them sectionally into Northern and Southern conventions.⁴

In a remarkable turn of events, the same William F. Broaddus who had blocked the 1841 attempt at dialogue in Kentucky was among Baptist leaders in Virginia who twenty-five years later initiated another meeting in Richmond. The meeting was confined to a group of thirty-two invited leaders from the two churches in that state. At the end of the four-day meeting, April 24-27, 1866, the participants concluded that their differences, especially concerning baptism, made further reunion moves premature.

Yet William F. Broaddus insisted that the groups had "developed by this interview, an agreement of views as to the great facts and truths and duties of

the Gospel, far more extensive and practically identical, than many of our brethren had supposed to exist; . . .”⁵ Jeremiah B. Jeter, famous for his harsh criticism of the Stone-Campbell Movement in his 1855 book *Campbellism Examined*, declared that as a result of the meeting all had realized “that on some points, on which we were supposed to differ, we were in agreement; that on other points, on which we differed, the differences were not as great as had generally been supposed; . . .” He went on to insist that by continued discussion and “reasonable concessions,” he believed, “gradual assimilation could occur.”⁶

On the Stone-Campbell side, W. K. Pendleton, then editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* was even stronger in his assessment of the dialogue. The aim of the meeting had been nothing less than to bring the union of the two bodies. Even after their inability to complete that task immediately, he insisted that he would hold the Baptists “in our fellowship of labor and love in the Kingdom of Christ.” However much they differed, those points could never be a barrier to their essential unity. He urged both groups to allow freedom of communion with the other, allowing members to pass freely from one to the other “without the charge of heresy or the proscription of ecclesiastical excision. May the Father, who knoweth his children, make us also to know and acknowledge one another.”⁷

Alexander Campbell had died only a month before the April 1866 event. According to Robert Richardson, his physician and biographer, when he informed Campbell of the upcoming union meeting:

He expressed great satisfaction in hearing of it. “There was never any sufficient reason,” said he, “for a separation between us and the Baptists. We ought to have remained one people, and to have labored together to restore the primitive faith and practice.”⁸

Particularly in the last decade of the nineteenth century informal discussions concerning the possibility of union of Baptists and Stone-Campbell churches continued in several places.⁹ In Bland County, VA, in 1895, there was even a “small but successful adventure in complete fellowship among several Baptist and Disciple churches” that sparked a series of letters, articles, and editorials in Disciples papers discussing the thesis that “Baptist churches are churches of Christ.” But this was an era of growing tension within the Movement itself. The conflicts that led to the emergence of Churches of Christ surely diverted energy from such pursuits and may have been exacerbated by the talks.

20th Century Efforts at Reunion Between Disciples and Baptists

Nevertheless, in the twentieth century the churches that became known as Christian Churches or Disciples of Christ continued serious and promising talks with the Northern Baptists. The union discussions of the 1890s flowered in the first decade of the twentieth century. The groups conducted local conferences, speaker exchanges, and editorial discussions, with official congresses meeting biannually after 1911. In 1928 the groups created a joint commission which submitted a report calling for union at each group’s 1929 assembly. The Disciples adopted the report unanimously, but the Baptist Convention referred it to a special committee for study. In 1930 the Baptists rejected the recommendations of the Joint Committee, citing the Disciples teaching of baptismal regeneration as the barrier to unity. Disciples had

consistently denied teaching baptismal regeneration, but some Baptist leaders insisted that they really did hold the doctrine even though they would not admit it.¹⁰

There were, however, other reasons that made Northern Baptists reluctant to move positively on union with the Disciples, including fear of jeopardizing relations with Southern Baptists and pushing congregations into the Southern Baptist fold. The Disciples Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity, now known as the Council on Christian Unity, then began a series of informal meetings to maintain contacts. Out of those less formal meetings grow some rather amazing cooperative efforts. In the early 1940s the two groups produced a joint hymnal, Sunday School literature, and devotional and family magazines. In 1944 the Disciples International Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention once again appointed delegates to joint committees to promote cooperation between the ministers of both churches.

The most promising period of negotiations occurred between 1947 and 1952. In 1947 both committees received official status from their respective assemblies and were authorized to pursue serious union talks. The Joint Commission on Baptist-Disciple Relations began meeting in December 1947 and actively promoted unity discussions in publications and meetings. In 1949 the Commission prepared a timetable for moving toward union, including joint conventions in 1952, the preparation and presentation of a "Basis for Union" in 1954, and a vote in 1955. In 1952 the two groups held joint conventions in Chicago, meeting separately during the day and together at night. A joint communion service scheduled for the third evening almost turned into a disaster when some of the Baptist delegates insisted that communion was a function of a local congregation, not a convention. The matter was finally solved by holding the communion service under the sponsorship of the Evanston First Baptist Church, with the Disciples delegates considered "guests" of the congregation.

This incident, along with theological tensions over baptism with the American Baptist Convention and the fear of losing dissident congregations to the Southern Baptist Convention, led the Baptist section of the Joint Commission to recommend that it be dissolved following the 1952 conventions. Any future talks with Disciples, said the delegates, could be carried on through the Convention's standing Committee on Relations with Other Religious Bodies. When the Disciples part of the Joint Commission heard of the dissolution of the Baptist section, they recommended the same for theirs, assigning any further talks to the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity.¹¹ This move marked the end of bilateral union efforts between Disciples and Baptists. It is a remarkable story that reflects all the currents of American Christianity in the first half of the twentieth century, from the fundamentalist-modernist controversy to the flowering of the Ecumenical Movement.

20th Century Efforts at Reunion Between Churches of Christ and Baptists

In the late twentieth century a few individual leaders in Churches of Christ began to take steps to initiate conversation with Baptist leaders, mostly in Southern Baptist Convention churches since the areas of numerical strength for the two bodies largely coincided. As early as the 1960s a few progressive ministers in Churches of Christ had informal breakfast meetings with Baptist

counterparts, sometimes growing out of acquaintances made through local ministerial associations.

On March 20-21, 1975, Dr. Leroy Garrett, editor of the journal *Restoration Review* that circulated widely in all parts of the Stone-Campbell Movement, participated with two Baptist professors at Baylor University, Drs. C. W. Christian and James Leo Garrett, in what was advertised as a "Church of Christ/Baptist Dialogue." In Leroy Garrett's report of the meeting he said "... there was some mutual embarrassment in that the Baptists often rebaptize Church of Christ folk who go to them, while we often reimmerge Baptists who come to us." He went on to comment that since the Baptists seemed to be educating a significant percentage of the professors in colleges operated by Churches of Christ in their seminaries at Ft. Worth, Louisville, and New Orleans, "It is surely something less than heresy to talk of enjoying fellowship with them."¹²

In the 1980s, J. Harold Thomas, then minister of the College Church of Christ in Conway, Arkansas, held a series of unity meetings that involved speakers from various church bodies. In 1985 Thomas invited Professor Dale Moody of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville to be the main speaker. Moody said it was his first direct contact with people from Churches of Christ. He prepared for the event by reading Leroy Garrett's then-recent history, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches*. According to Garrett, Moody said that he agreed with Alexander Campbell on everything except the Holy Spirit and the millennium (Campbell was a postmillennialist)—even on the issue of baptism. Garrett went on to say that the occasion provided "close meaningful fellowship with a brother Baptist. All the Church of Christ people there thought that way about it."¹³

All of this activity, however, was largely isolated and individual in nature. However, a new effort of a national character would begin by the end of the decade. In the late 1980s, Gary Leazer—then Director of the Inter-faith Witness Department of the SBC Home Mission Board—and I—then teaching at Lipscomb University in Nashville, met and began pursuing the possibility of a formal Southern Baptist—Churches of Christ Conversation. The SBC had one other such effort, the Conversation (the term insisted on by the SBC) with the Roman Catholic Church begun in 1971 when the Home Mission Board took over talks started four years earlier by Wake Forest University.¹⁴ The proposed Southern Baptist—Churches of Christ Conversation would be structured in much the same way as the Baptist—Catholic talks—each team would consist of seven members, drawn from academics and ministers, with the Conversation meeting once a year for serious consideration of a mutually-agreed-upon theological topic. The two groups shared much historically and theologically, though the rivalry between them had been fierce at times.

After a couple of years of work with SBC leadership, the Home Mission Board approved the meetings, and the two teams were constituted. The first meeting took place in January 1992 in Nashville, Tennessee, on the campus of Lipscomb University. It had been planned largely as a get-acquainted meeting. In the evening introduction section, each member of the Conversation told personal stories of relations with people and churches of the other group. The planned one-hour session soon stretched to three and paved the way for substantive and frank discussions based on the mutual trust and respect that had

been created. The next day formal papers detailed how we perceived each other as churches, followed by frank descriptions of the current shape of each body. There had been no guarantee that the Conversation would be extended beyond this first meeting, but at the end of the two days all were committed to continuing the effort. Interestingly, both bodies were reluctant to publicize the meetings. The Southern Baptist Convention was still in organizational flux following the fundamentalist/conservative takeover of the denomination's structures and seemingly nervous about such "ecumenical" activities. Churches of Christ had no overarching structures other than the educational institutions and congregations that supported the members of the team; yet all knew that there were people who would have strongly opposed the meetings if widely known. So we planned to continue the meetings the last weekend of January, but keep them low-key and unpublicized.

In January 1993 the Conversation met again in Nashville on the campus of Belmont University, a Baptist school. After the discussions the previous year the group had decided this meeting's focus would be on hermeneutics, how each group approached biblical interpretation. The meetings continued to alternate between the Lipscomb and Belmont campuses, and for 1994, the group decided to tackle what almost everyone considered the most difficult theological issue between the two bodies—baptism. Two major historical-theological studies were prepared, and formal responses made. The Conversation spent the entire weekend discussing, questioning, and clarifying the issue. Much like the sentiments of the Virginia meeting in 1866, at the end the members of the Conversation were convinced that there was much less that divided us on this seemingly intractable issue than we had thought.

The fourth meeting in 1995 dealt with our understandings of the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion and the Christian life. And the fifth, held at Pepperdine University in 1996, centered on our respective ecclesiologies.

But problems beyond the control of the members of the Conversation began to threaten its progress. The SBC's internal struggles were reflected even in the makeup of their team. Initially chosen by Gary Leazer, the SBC team had been composed of a mix of fundamentalists (or conservatives) and moderates. Leazer, himself, who had obtained initial approval for the meetings, had been removed from his position of Director of Interfaith Witness after the first two gatherings. At the Pepperdine meeting, Tal Davis, interim Director of the SBC's Interfaith Witness Department, announced that the Home Mission Board was ending the meetings as the SBC began a major restructuring. No assurances could be given that the Conversation would resume after restructure since it was unclear where Interfaith Witness would reside if it still existed.

The news fell like a bombshell on the participants, particularly the Southern Baptist representatives. Several voiced a strong sentiment that we should continue meeting even if not sanctioned and financed by the SBC. The staff from the Home Mission Board who were present could not endorse such a move, nor could they forbid it. One of the ironies of the meeting was the presentation on Southern Baptist ecclesiology by Belmont University professor Marty Bell who had described Southern Baptist polity as a "rope of sand."

Paul Gritz, church historian at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and I, began discussing possibilities for continued

meetings sponsored by our respective academic institutions, Southwestern and Abilene Christian University. Gritz suggested the meetings be billed as "The Interlaced Histories Project," focusing on the shared influences that had shaped our two bodies in the United States. Two meetings took place, February 7-8, 1997, on the campus of SWBTS, and January 30-31, 1998, on the campus of Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. The first meeting examined common formational influences in the Scotch Baptists and other Scotch and Irish independent groups. The second focused on relations between the two bodies in the 20th century, including a case study on Abilene, Texas by Baptist historian Jesse Fletcher, and a history of our debates by Pepperdine professor Tom Olbricht. At the end of the 1998 meeting, Tal Davis of the North American Mission Board announced the possibility of a resumption of the Conversation now that the restructuring of the SBC was completed. The Home Mission Board was now the North American Mission Board and Interfaith Witness was now Interfaith Evangelism.

The following year Paul Gritz, Tal Davis, and Bill Gordon from Southern Baptists met with Jack Reese (Dean of ACU's College of Biblical Studies) and me at the DFW airport for a day of planning. The group created a four-year agenda of discussions centering initially around issues of the sovereignty of God and human free will. The resumption of the Conversation, with new teams from each body, was scheduled for the traditional first weekend in January, this time to meet at the North American Mission Board offices in suburban Atlanta. The papers focused on "The Eternal Security of the Believer." The combination of Superbowl Weekend in Atlanta and a massive ice storm in the East hampered the success of the meeting, preventing the arrival of some of the Baptist team, including Paige Patterson. Nevertheless, plans were being made for the following year when newly appointed Director of Interfaith Evangelism of the NAMB Rudy Gonzalez wrote a letter informing the teams that

... it is not in our agency's mandate for Interfaith staff to primarily be ecumenists. As our team name indicates, our essential mission is to do interfaith evangelism by equipping SBC congregations with the best tools for effective outreach to people caught up in non-Christian cults, sects and world religions. Thus, while the conversations between our two groups may have some benefit on a personal level for all involved, I am not convinced that these meetings fit within our clear objectives . . . ¹⁵

This ended the Southern Baptist-Churches of Christ Conversation and led to the creation of the Baptist-Churches of Christ Dialogue in Texas, that began in November 2002. Already cooperating on a number of matters dealing with theological education, the Graduate School of Theology of Abilene Christian University and Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University seemed a logical place to begin serious discussions between these two church bodies that dominate Texas Christianity. Ronnie Prevost of the Logsdon faculty and I, along with our Deans, Jack Reese and Vernon Davis, formed a committee to plan a new "dialogue" that would include faculty, students and ministers from the two bodies in Texas. At the first meeting theological presentations and discussion focused on our understandings of the authority of scripture. Yet at the conclusion of the meeting on Saturday the most pressing questions had to do with what the two groups might do together in ministry. In certain localities

the working out of that discussion has already begun. Subsequent meetings are being planned that will include reports of joint activities and ministry.

Efforts at Reunion Between Disciples of Christ and Presbyterians

There is not as much to tell about reunion efforts between Stone-Campbell Movement churches and Presbyterians. An early piece of this story, however, took place not long after Thomas Campbell had withdrawn from and been expelled by the Associate Synod in 1809. He and a group sympathetic to his ideals of unity had formed the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania in August of that year. They did not see themselves as a church, but a society promoting simple evangelical Christianity. Nevertheless, Campbell did not think it proper to work outside the bounds of some organized Christian body. In 1810 several ministers from presbyteries in the Synod of Pittsburgh, part of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, urged Campbell to apply for admission for himself and the Christian Association. When the Synod met at Washington, Pennsylvania in October, Campbell appeared and made his appeal. In the Synod's response to Campbell's request it asserted that such groups that professed "a nominal approbation to the Scriptures as the only standard of truth" in fact tended to promote divisions, degrade ministerial character, provide free admission to errors in doctrine and corruptions in discipline. They therefore could not grant the request to admit the Christian Association.¹⁶ This rebuff eventually led to the organization of the Christian Association as a church and its eventual entry into the Redstone Baptist Association.

Disciples theologian James Duke in an article on relations with Presbyterians in the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* states that "The Stoneite and Campbellite separations from Presbyterianism were so bitter that the differences—and profound incompatibility—with the Presbyterian 'sects' became part of the Movement's identity."¹⁷ The best single word to describe the interaction between Stone-Campbell Movement churches and Presbyterians for the remainder of the nineteenth century is "debates." Particularly after accepting adult immersion as biblical baptism, Alexander Campbell represented that position against Presbyterians John Walker in 1820, W. L. Maccalla in 1823, and N. L. Rice in 1843.

The old antagonisms, however, began to lessen, at least in some circles, as the twentieth century began. The Stone-Campbell Movement was approaching the centennial of the writing of Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* in 1809 which many saw as the beginning of the Movement. Leaders in the Christian Churches/Disciples began early in the century to plan a gala celebration of this milestone to take place in Pittsburgh, October 11-19. As many as 50,000 attended the Centennial, culminating in a massive celebration of the Lord's Supper by 25,000 people at Forbes Field on Sunday, October 17.¹⁸

Two significant occurrences at the Centennial reflected a new relationship with Presbyterians, again at least at some levels, in this part of the Movement. (These things also signaled a new direction for Disciples with all "mainstream" American Protestant denominations even as they themselves moved toward becoming one.)¹⁹ First, four Presbyterian churches, two PCUSA congregations and two from the United Presbyterian Church of North America (a direct descendant of the Campbells' Seceder Associate Synod) opened their doors to

the Convention, and at least forty addresses were presented in these churches during the nine days. And second, two Presbyterians addressed the Convention as fraternal delegates: James M. Barkley, Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, and J. T. McCrory of the United Presbyterian Church.²⁰

In his address, McCrory focused on the common ancestry of the bodies and the beliefs they all still held. First, he said, they both believed in Christian unity. He recounted briefly the story of the union fifty years earlier of the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church that had formed the United Presbyterian Church. Twenty-five years later the body was agitated over the question of instrumental music in worship. When the 1200 Presbyteries voted in General Assembly the result was 612 against to 620 for. Despite the difference, the church did not lose a congregation or a preacher, according to McCrory, and they were more harmonious then than ever before. (Some might have seen this as a dig at the Disciples since this very issue had been one that led to the departure of the Churches of Christ who saw instrumental music as unscriptural!) He went on to identify their common faith in the Bible, seriousness about world evangelization, and their hope in the coming of the kingdom of Christ when all would be one.²¹

Certainly this cordiality reflected a shift, both on the part of the Disciples and the Presbyterians, that had been underway in American Protestantism surrounding the events that had led to the formation of the Federal Council of Churches in 1908. Disciples had increasingly moved away from the early individualistic appeals for Christians to abandon denominational divisions and considered the emerging ecumenical options of federation and even organic union/corporate merger. Disciples endorsement of federation had come six years earlier when J. H. Garrison asked Elias B. Sanford, secretary of the Federal Council's predecessor National Federation of Churches, to speak to the Disciples convention in Omaha. When a resolution in favor of the principle of federation was introduced, the editor of the *Christian Standard* suggested that its adoption would imply "recognition of the denominations." Garrison responded that it would recognize the existence of denominationalism, and anticipate its elimination by promoting the spirit of cooperation. Garrison argued that association with other bodies in the Federal Council could be a vehicle for promotion of the Disciples' unique plea for unity.²²

The Disciples, the Northern Baptists, and four Presbyterian denominations including the Presbyterian Church USA, the PCUS (Southern Presbyterians), the United Presbyterian Church, and the Welsh Presbyterian Church were all charter members of this early cooperative organization.

The initiative for the first major attempt to move beyond federation to a multilateral union of denominations came from the 1918 General Assembly of the PCUSA. It called for a convention of the "National Bodies of the Evangelical Communion of America" for the purpose of formulating a "Plan of Organic Union."²³ Nineteen communions participated in the initial meeting including the Disciples and the PCUSA.²⁴ Delegates at the second meeting in Philadelphia devised a plan for "The United Churches of Christ in America," and the American Council on Organic Union was established to promote it. Unlike the Federal Council, the stated goal of the "Philadelphia Plan" as it was called was eventual organic union with a progressive surrender of denominational matters to the

Council. Peter Ainslie of the APCU saw the Philadelphia Plan as an imperfect but positive step toward unity,²⁵ but no church body ever approved it, and the PCUSA which had initiated the action was the first to end it.²⁶

The Disciples and Congregational Christian Churches (now part of the UCC) initiated the second major attempt to move beyond federation to a multilateral union of denominations with the Conference on Church Union which met at Greenwich, Connecticut in December 1949. Eight bodies were represented including Disciples, the PCUSA, and the southern PCUS. An American Conference on Church Union was organized which developed a plan of union. Disciple Charles C. Morrison presented the initial draft of the plan to the Conference.²⁷ The "Greenwich Plan" provided that local churches would be free to determine their own modes of worship, baptism, and Communion. Administrators exercising the function of bishops would be located at the presbytery level, with regional synods and a national council. Although the denominations could maintain their identities for a while, they would be expected to fade away. The plan was revised in 1953 and 1958, but never reached a form delegates considered satisfactory to present to their denominational assemblies and constituencies. Much ecumenical attention was diverted to the World Council of Churches and the incipient National Council, leaving the "Greenwich Plan" to fade away as had the "Philadelphia Plan" almost forty years before.

Both Disciples and Presbyterians had significant roles in the creation of the World Council of Churches.²⁸ Carl Taylor, in his 1954 thesis, articulated the feeling of most pro-World Council Disciples when he stated that they sought "organization on a high level which will enable us to unite in great causes but will allow us to retain our uniqueness and individuality as separate denominations," precisely what the World Council of Churches offered.²⁹

Disciples viewed the National Council of Churches in the same light and gave both World and National Councils significant economic support. Both Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches entered the National Council of Churches in 1950.

The most hopeful and long-lasting of the multilateral efforts for unity in which Presbyterians, Disciples, and Baptists have participated is the Consultation on Church Union, COCU, now Churches Uniting in Christ, CUIC.

Conclusion

Barriers created by separation, mutual condemnation, distrust, and even simple unfamiliarity are not easily broken down. Some are convinced the barriers should be there and oppose any action to remove them. In the case of the Stone-Campbell Movement, only the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has the kind of structure that allows for participation in the modern ecumenical movement. There are no provisions for the involvement of bodies with the kind of radical congregational polity of Churches of Christ and independent Christian Churches in the National Council of Churches, for example. Activity to repair breaches by these groups must be done largely at the level of individual initiative.

But it is happening. Internal unity talks have taken place in the Restoration Forums meeting yearly from 1984, and the Stone-Campbell Dialogue begun in 1999. Disciples continue work in the NCC and WCC as well as CUIC. Independent Christian Churches carried on a dialogue with the Church of God

(Anderson, Indiana) from 1989 to 1996 that resulted in a “Consensus Statement of Faith” and a strong call to conservative Christians to be seriously involved in ecumenism.³⁰ The Baptist-Churches of Christ Dialogue in Texas has a strong future. Repairing breaches is slow and hard work, but that work will continue in this Movement and beyond.

NOTES

¹Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M’Nemar, Barton W. Stone, John Thompson, *An Abstract of an Apology, for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky, Being a Compendious View of the Gospel and a Few Remarks on the Confession of Faith* (Lexington, KY 1804), 173-4.

²Thomas Campbell, Bethany, Virginia, to [Samuel Riddle] Jones, Chandlersville, Muskingum County, Ohio, January 17, 1844, Thomas Campbell papers, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee.

³Robert Richardson, “Union of Christians,” *Millennial Harbinger* 37 (March 1866):97-8.

⁴Alexander Campbell, “Elder William F. Broaddus of Lexington, and the Union Meeting,” *Millennial Harbinger* (June 1841): 260-7.

⁵“Convention of Baptists and Disciples,” *Millennial Harbinger* (May 1866): 224-5.

⁶*Ibid.*, 228.

⁷W. K. P[endleton], “Convention of Baptists and Disciples,” *Millennial Harbinger* (May 1866): 228-31.

⁸Richardson; see also, Joseph King, “A Memorial Sermon on the Occasion of the Death of Alexander Campbell,” *Millennial Harbinger* 37 (May 1866): 206.

⁹W. E. Garrison, *Christian Unity and Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1955), 166. See also W.E. Garrison and A. T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948) 559-60.

¹⁰Garrison and DeGroot, 561.

¹¹Rector, Franklin E., “Baptist-Disciple Conversations Toward Unity,” in *Institutionalism and Church Unity*, eds. Nils Ehrenstrom and Walter G. Muelder (New York: Association Press, 1963), pp. 253-274; Garrison, *Christian Unity and Disciples of Christ*, pp. 166-168; A. T. DeGroot, “Three Fourths of a Loaf: A Historical Study of the Movements Looking Toward the Union of Baptists and Disciples of Christ,” *The Chronicle: A Baptist Historical Quarterly* (April 1948):6-7.

¹²Leroy Garrett, “Drama on Both Sides of the Border,” *Restoration Quarterly* 17 (May 1975):96-97.

¹³Leroy Garrett, Denton, Texas, to Douglas Foster, Abilene Texas, April 9, 2003, Personal papers of the Author, Abilene Christian University; Leroy Garrett, “Back to Back Conferences on Freedom,” *Restoration Review* 26 (February 1985):28-29.

¹⁴This Conversation was inactive during part of the 1980s, reconvened officially in 1995, then was officially suspended in 2002 by leaders of the SBC’s North American Mission Board.

¹⁵Rudy Gonzalez, Alpharetta, Georgia, to Douglas Foster, Abilene, Texas,

September 11, 2000, personal files of Douglas A. Foster, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas.

¹⁶Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, 1861; reprint ed., Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, n.d.) I, 327.

¹⁷James Duke, "Presbyterians, Presbyterianism," in *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

¹⁸*Centennial Convention Report: One Hundredth Anniversary of the Disciples of Christ* (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, [1910]) 492-5.

¹⁹See Ronald E. Osborn, "The Irony of the Twentieth-Century Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): Making it to the Mainline Just at the Time of Its Disestablishment," *Mid-Stream* 28 (July 1989): 293-312.

²⁰*Centennial Convention Report*, pp. 487-90.

²¹*Centennial Convention Report*, pp. 488-9.

²²J. H. Garrison, "Church Federation. What Is It and What Should be Our Attitude Toward It?" *The Christian-Evangelist* 40 (28 May 1903):449.

²³*Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: Office of the General Assembly, 1918), p. 154. 130th Gen. Assembly, New Ser. vol 18, August 1918.

²⁴H. C. Armstrong, "The Union of Protestants," *World Call* 1 (February 1919):27-28.

²⁵Russell Errett, "Philadelphia Plan for Union," *Christian Standard* 56 (23 October 1920):1403-7; Peter Ainslie, "The Union of Evangelical Protestantism," *Christian Union Quarterly* 9 (April 1920):9-10.

²⁶Paul A. Crow, Jr., "The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Ecumenical Movement," in *The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): An Interpretative Examination in the Cultural Context*, ed. George G. Beazley (n.p.: The Bethany Press, 1973), 275-76; H. C. Armstrong, "The Union of Protestants," *World Call* 1 (February 1919):27-28.

²⁷Garrison, *Christian Unity and Disciples of Christ*, pp. 168-169.

²⁸Samuel Macrea Cavert, *Church Cooperation and Unity in America A Historical Review: 1900-1970* (New York: Association Press, 1970), pp. 34-38. Rachel Henderlite, "Presbyterian Ecumenicity: A Heritage and an Opportunity," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 57 (Summer 1979):162; "Contemplating Christian Union," *Christian Evangelist* 76 (16 June 1938):668. The PCUS also endorsed the concept of a World Council but at its 1938 Assembly expressed concern that the Council maintain strict autonomy of constituent churches. *PCUS Digest*, pp. 473-75.

²⁹Carl Richard Taylor, "The Contributions of the Disciples of Christ and Their Periodical Literature to the Cause of Christian Union (Thesis, College of the Bible, 1954), pp. 210-211; Wilson, "Unity and Restoration," p. 137.

³⁰Barry Callen and James North, *Coming Together in Christ: Pioneering a New Testament Way to Christian Unity* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1997).

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**THE UNION OF CHRISTIANS AND DISCIPLES IN 1832
AND COCU/CUIC
Nadia M. Lahutsky***

Introduction

On the last day of December in 1831 in Lexington, KY, a group gathered at "the Christian Church on Hill Street" to listen to each other and to consider their common concerns. These were representatives of two distinct groups. The "Christians," aligned with the work of Barton W. Stone and strongest in Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee, and the "Disciples," oriented to the ideas and writings of Alexander Campbell, who had their numerical strength in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Kentucky. Both groups professed a commitment to Christian unity, though the Disciples were better known to most of their contemporaries more for sniping at other Christian groups. Here they were, shaking hands with each other, promising that their congregations in each particular place would begin to live as one community. Their work that day was to begin what Paul A. Crow, Jr., would call a "nineteenth-century united church."¹ This story I will try to tell in the first part of this paper.

At the start of the second millennium, January 18-20, 2002 in Memphis, TN, in a weekend of workshops on topics of ecumenical concern, worship celebrating the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and continuing commitment to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, nine American denominations met to celebrate their intention to live out the common faith and mission they had discovered over the last forty years. Thus was launched Churches Uniting in Christ, the most recent form of the venerable and somewhat bruised body which had begun its life as Consultation on Church Union.² The second part of this paper will be a look at initial developments leading up to CUIC. A brief concluding section will identify elements of comparison or contrast between these two episodes in American religious history.

The Nineteenth-Century United Church

Barton W. Stone had been profoundly affected by the Cane Ridge Revival of 1801 in which Presbyterians and Methodists and Baptists came together for preaching and a sacramental meeting and went away filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. He and others came out of that event with, among other things, a new sense about the limitations of Christian denominations. The subsequent departure of him and some of his associates from the Synod of Kentucky in 1803 and the creation and then rather rapid dissolution of the Springfield Presbytery testify to the concerns that drove Stone. These especially meant an uneasiness over the Westminster Confession as the standard for theology. He and his followers shared a preference for teachings that come from Scripture, not human bodies. They proposed that churches authorize to the ministry men through whom they could hear Christ speak (not the Confession).³

*Nadia Lahutsky is Associate Professor of Religion at Texas Christian University.

Finally, Stone's churches eschewed what they called party names and the evils of sectarianism or denominationalism.⁴ Of course, these Christians (their preferred name) did not see the ways in which they may also have contributed to sectarian strife. They were, after all, only returning to the one true source for Christian faith, the Scriptures, and by staking everything on the Scriptures, they thought they could escape the denominationalism that plagued everyone else. They believed that, in the words of Richard Hughes, "by embracing primitive Christianity, they could escape the molding power of history, culture, and denominational tradition and proceed to affirm nothing more and nothing less than nondenominational Christianity."⁵ At the root of Stone's efforts seems to have been a concern for Christian freedom. Stone's followers may have seen themselves bringing into its churchly fullness the promise of liberty recently brought forth in this new country.⁶ Such a position would see danger in systematizing scriptural truths, lest one be engaged in setting up a new orthodoxy. Certainly, they had, all around them, seen this phenomenon at work. They knew how not to become creators of a new orthodoxy; had they not, after all, dissolved their own Springfield Presbytery for just that reason? Restore the gospel to its uncluttered scriptural form and one could discover Christianity before denominational differences. Then, Christian unity could follow. This program they promoted to all who would listen.

The followers of Stone could also see kindred spirits when they encountered them. One group of kindred spirits turned out to be the "Campbellites," as they were known to nearly everyone else. These folks had, similarly, sloughed off the yoke of ecclesiastical authority. Theirs was also an unhappy experience, also with Presbyterians in Pennsylvania.⁷ Using a common sense philosophy and a Lockean epistemology and demonstrating an exhaustion with sectarian differences (beginning especially with those imported to the New World from the Old), both Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander had, independently of each other, decided they could no longer maintain commitment to the Old Light Antiburgher Seceder version of Presbyterianism which had been their church home. Leaving the Presbyterians proved rather easy. Having lost his 1809 appeal to the Associate Synod, Thomas Campbell returned the fifty dollars advanced to him two years earlier.⁸ The son, not yet a part of the ministry, had fewer entanglements. Finding a way forward turned out to be a bit more difficult. The establishment of the Christian Association (of Washington County, PA) in 1811 marked, in effect, the establishment of a new church. The "discovery" in 1812 of the New Testament form of baptism led the Campbells to consider carrying on their work to "reestablish New Testament Christianity" not as one of the "sects" but among the Baptists, specifically, the Redstone Baptist Association. This was to be a long and rather stormy relationship. Beginning in 1815, the Campbells and others became increasingly an identifiable group with a distinctive mission known to many as "New Testament Baptists" or, simply, "Reformers." At the recently established Brush Run Church, they practiced a weekly Lord's Supper and admitted members on profession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, Son of the Living God, without requiring testimony to an experience of conversion or agreement with the Philadelphia Confession, as did the other Redstone congregations. These would remain continuing points of tension. More tension was generated because many Redstone Baptists hadn't imagined themselves

quite so greatly in need of being reformed.

Alexander Campbell had become the primary spokesman for this group, expanding greatly the extent of his influence through the monthly publication of the *Christian Baptist*, beginning in 1823. Strident, anti-clerical, sarcastic and iconoclastic, Campbell took aim at virtually anyone who disagreed with him. Baptist churches were becoming increasingly impatient with the Reformers, especially an independently wealthy and iconoclastic one with his own periodical to use as a bully pulpit. By 1830 most of the Baptist associations in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Ohio had voted the Reformers out of the associations. The Mahoning (OH) Association, Campbell's new home, dissolved itself in August 1830.¹⁰ Alexander Campbell would mark the break by ceasing the *Christian Baptist* and beginning publication of the *Millennial Harbinger*.

The time was right for another move as these two groups found each other. Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone had met personally in 1824, when Campbell, on a preaching tour of Kentucky, stopped at Georgetown to visit Stone at home. It was, apparently, a cordial visit, prompting Stone to see in the other man no "distinctive feature between the doctrine he preached and that which we had preached for many years, except on baptism for remission of sins."¹¹ Almost no distinctive feature: Stone thought Campbell a bit too understated on the role of the Holy Spirit. This difference would not go away and, in fact, others would emerge. But, in a touching comment, Stone wrote, "I will not say there are no faults in brother Campbell; but that there are fewer, perhaps, in him, than any man I know on earth; and over these few my love would throw a veil and hide them forever."¹²

Perhaps Stone was remembering those strong feelings when in an 1827 article in his *Christian Messenger* he praised Campbell and pointed out the similarities between the two men and the two churches, especially a concern for Christian unity. It was a first public overture to the other man. Campbell's reply gives the impression of someone learning to dance with a new partner. He may have been willing to speak well of Stone,¹³ but not before revealing that many Baptists had warned him against close association with Stone, whose views they saw as being too close to Unitarianism for comfort.¹⁴

After that, Stone published several pieces in his *Christian Messenger* in which he discussed two additional issues that careful readers would recognize as differences: ordination and the terms of communion. The Reformers made ordination to the ministry a matter for the local church and they required those who would receive communion be immersed. In Stone's churches, however, it was the ministry, as successors to the apostles, who authorized ministers and they did not make immersion a qualification for communion, inviting to the table the pious unimmersed. Stone, however, must have been convinced that the differences were manageable.

Stone made a second overture in September 1829. Again writing in the *Christian Messenger*, he reported on a conversation he had overheard querying why the Christians and the Reformers remained apart. The "New Testament Baptists" had acted appropriately in rejecting sectarian names, in turning to the New Testament and in not binding members to dogmas as terms of fellowship. He concluded: "We have nothing in us to prevent a union, and if they have nothing in them in opposition to it, we are in spirit one. . . . May God strengthen

the cords of Christian union.”¹⁵ If Campbell himself replied to this extension of hand and heart, it must have been in private. In the final issues of the *Christian Baptist* he printed various articles from different “voices” raising questions about some of the disputed issues. It’s too bad that some Unitarians in New England were calling themselves Christian, as it ruined this good name, etc.¹⁶

In a year Alexander Campbell would be exiting his *Christian Baptist* phase and his association with the Baptists and the time seemed ripe, again, for another round of overtures between the principal spokesmen for the two groups. It is not clear who initiated the meeting in November 1830 of Stone, Campbell, and other Reformers and Christians at the home of B. A. Hicks near Lexington, KY.¹⁷ Perhaps a first action came from the others present. Stone may have voiced the fears that he had published that same month, likely shared by others, that if a union did not occur between them, all their opponents would rise up and announce to the world that the basis of union—the Bible alone—was, in fact, insufficient.¹⁸

There seems to have been a hiatus in public discussion of the question, until Stone tried one more time. In an August 1831 article he pointed out that the Reformers’ goal, the “unity of all Christians in the spirit and truth of the New Testament” was, to Stone, “the very same that we have constantly preached and defended for nearly thirty years.”¹⁹ Of course, there were a few differences. Stone was concerned, among other things, that Campbell’s “peculiar views” of the necessity of immersion as a term of fellowship made him look sectarian and could work, like a creed, to bar many Christians from union.

This time, Campbell noticed and replied directly to Stone’s concerns. The pages of the August *Millennial Harbinger* carried both Stone’s article and Campbell’s reply. Was this a discussion of “union in form,” a call for some kind of general convention and the drafting of “articles of agreement” and would such be at all possible?²⁰ He raised his own objections, defending the terms of communion as not an opinion, but a clear command of the Lord. Furthermore, he bristled at Stone’s chronology and its implications. To be sure, the Christians had “proclaimed some of the basic ideas which the Disciples held, such as the rejection of creeds as authoritative; but this is only the work of a pioneer: it is clearing the forest, girdling the trees, and burning the brush.”²¹ That sounds like hard enough work! But perhaps it seems hard only for someone not carrying the burden Campbell was of restoring the ancient order of things! Campbell differentiated between it and what he called “the anti-work” of tearing down creeds, councils and sectarianism. This work, apparently, Stone had done but not the setting up of “the ancient order of things.” It was, as Mark Toulouse has described it, a child’s argument over who was first with the new (old) idea.²²

The two men would continue to lob words back and forth on the necessity of immersion, the benefits and drawbacks of the name *Christian* and, for that matter, *Disciple*. Subsequent events suggest that other persons in both movements may have been not only reading these pieces but doing something about them.

Exchanges between Stone and Campbell in late 1831 bear a harsher tone of voice, and sound increasingly less fraternal. Stone sounds offended that Campbell would take issue with the call for union by complaining that “the articles of confederation” were not included with the call. One wonders what

Stone was thinking when he wrote, "I am aware of the deceptibility of the human mind, and of its strong propensity to make for ourselves a great name."²³ Perhaps he tried to smooth things over by saying he had not meant to imply Campbell had learned his views from Stone. "It is hoped, he received them from a higher source, the Bible. Can bro C. think it degrading to him and his brethren, that we first taught many things which they now teach? I cannot believe it."²⁴

Campbell's reply was swift. Yes, he had been displeased with some insinuations and here just arrived is another one—that he's seeking a name for himself. "But in asking for *bread* I did not expect a *stone*."²⁵ The more these two defended the use of different names, chronological priority, and their ways of responding to the bad things said of the other by third parties, the worse matters became.

This writer was surprised, even a bit mystified, in reading through this increasingly heated exchange during 1831 only to arrive at the end of the year, when an act signaling union would take place. To expect increasing respect and affection was, clearly, a mistake. The written record may reflect the tension generated as both Stone and Campbell realized that they may have been about to get what they had been praying for (and working toward) for years.

Available evidence seems to point to the influence of John T. Johnson. In his story, all the circumstances come together. As a Baptist he had been influenced by Campbell but then unable to persuade the rest of his congregation; he had in February 1831 helped to organize a Disciple congregation. Fortuitously, he lived in Georgetown, KY, and had opportunity to get to know Stone. The two became close friends and, by the end of 1831, Johnson was invited to share editorial responsibilities for the *Christian Messenger*. It was a logical extension of the fact that in October their two congregations—one Christian and one Reformer—had begun worshipping together.

Out of Georgetown came the fruit of an "informal and private conference,"²⁶ the idea to secure funding for two preachers who would "ride steadily" throughout the north of Kentucky and labor for the master and the churches. This idea was put out, as such, in the November *Messenger*.²⁷ This Georgetown group planned meetings for Christmas and New Year's. These meetings are the closest thing to any official and formal union activity between the Christians and the Reformers.

No official records were kept of these two meetings. A report of the meetings is included in the biography of John Smith and some brief mention is given in the *Christian Messenger*.²⁸ Stone and Johnson described, in quite general terms, the experience of the congregations in Georgetown and how that experience of being together led to the four-day meeting in Georgetown over Christmas and another one in Lexington over New Year's. At that second meeting, held at the Christian Church on Hill Street, John Smith was selected to speak for the Reformers and Stone for the Christians. Smith built up to this claim: "while there is but one faith, there may be ten thousand opinions; and hence, if Christians are ever to be one, they must be one in faith, and not in opinion. . . . Let us, then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of *lights*, but let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need."²⁹ Stone's reply echoed this concern, calling for all speculation to be left out of the

pulpit while coming together under scriptural principles. The two men stretched out their hands to each other and invited all present to do the same. The report goes on to say that “elders and teachers hastened forward, and joined their hand and hearts in joyful accord.” Later, “on Lord’s Day, they broke the loaf together, and in that sweet and solemn communion, again pledged to each other their brotherly love.”³⁰ The *Christian Messenger* reported on the meeting. “A great many Elders, Teachers and Brethren of both descriptions, assembled together, and worshipped together in one spirit, and with one accord. Never did we witness more love, union, and harmony, than was manifested at these meetings. Since the last meeting we have heard of the good effects. The spirit of union is spreading like fire in dry stubble.” In this announcement Stone and Johnson put aside scoffing questions as to differing opinions and party identities and they announced the choice of John Rogers and John Smith to ride about the churches of north Kentucky to increase and edify all the churches, and unify Christians and Reformers.

They seem to have done it. At least, at this point, they had set it in motion: they had brought together two groups previously known by different names and they had done this without drafting and voting on anything like “articles of confederation.” There was no general meeting. No polling of all the congregations. There was a handshake, or, rather, many handshakes and then the promise to work toward a life together.

The progress of the union can be glimpsed in the pages of the *Christian Messenger* and the *Millennial Harbinger* with their inclusion of reports on local church life. Some occasional mention is made in Campbell’s organ. He noted with approval, in March 1832, the now “conjoint editorship” of the *Christian Messenger*, reprinted Stone and Johnson’s account of the recent union meeting,³² and indicated his pleasure at the selection of Rogers and Smith to promote the union. In April Campbell included a report from “HCC” on the problems Lexington was having in making the union real. They couldn’t agree on the question of having an ordained minister administer the Lord’s Supper. Campbell’s monthly church notes consisted of reports sent in from here and there, usually about the number of people recently immersed and, sometimes, the good news about some especially prominent convert. There are relatively few announcements about “union activities.”

Stone, on the other hand, was quite generous in devoting space in the *Christian Messenger* to news about union activities. The descriptions are tantalizingly sketchy. At the most, there is reference to some especially moving preaching and an appeal after which members of the congregation came forward “to enroll.” These stories contained references to both Christians and Disciples, coming together, enrolling, not under a constitution, but committing to live together in the future.³³

This 1832 Union was driven by energy, vision and hope. The energy came from John Rogers and John Smith who, undergirded by that \$300.00 per quarter—each—rode their horses around the region of northern Kentucky, helping to cement the relationships. The vision came courtesy of Stone and Campbell who with passion, if not unanimity, called for the removal of human barriers in the Christian community and the establishment of simple New Testament Christianity. That they had varying emphases within the one call

would work in the future to undo this union, but for a time the vision was itself powerful enough to hold persons of different opinions in place around one table. The hope that drove the union expressed by both Stone and Campbell was, I think, the conviction based on faith that the church was already one.

Churches Uniting in Christ—A Long Road

On December 4, 1960, preaching at Grace Cathedral (Episcopal) in San Francisco, Eugene Carson Blake proposed serious discussions between the United Presbyterian Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church along with the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to seek a united church, in his words, “truly catholic, and truly reformed.”³⁴ (The phrase, “truly evangelical” would be added later.) Include in this group those denominations already in dialogue efforts with any one of the denominations listed and the list grows to include the Disciples of Christ and the Evangelical United Brethren. In 1962 the Consultation on Church Union was formed to try to carry out Blake’s appeal. Add the three historically African-American churches that joined later and the International Council of Community Churches, factor in the unions that have taken place since 1962 (EUB’s with Methodist to make UMC, the PCUS with UPC to make PCUSA) and COCU was launched.³⁵ The intention was clearly to work for a united church “in which the institutional structures of the member churches would be merged into one.”³⁶ A proposal for union was presented in 1968. The churches did not favorably receive it and the search began for a different model of unity.

One model of Christian unity is organic unity, that is, the complete integration of all aspects of church life from local congregations to the functional executives of all structures beyond the local congregation.³⁷ This proposed creation of a kind of super-church fell on rocky ground, perhaps because of the failure to imagine a move from concrete differences to some kind of proposed generic sameness. It was, after all, 1968, a year in which U.S. cities were erupting into flames and bloodshed and the world was witnessing a growing escalation of violence in Vietnam. One can hardly imagine people in the pews willingly giving up their unique ecclesial identities; furthermore, what would be done with all those soon to be redundant church bureaucrats. The proposal, even the amended 1970 Plan, was quite prescriptive about many items. It had a set of procedures for “the settlement of ministers,” a means for filling vacancies in the position of ordained ministers in a parish, laying out the role of the “district committee on ministerial relations” as well as that of the various bishops involved and the parish committee. It furthermore states, “A minimum salary is to be assured for every ordained minister of the uniting churches who elects at the time of union to become a full-time minister in the united church.”³⁸ How did local church boards respond to what they must have seen as a demand?

This paper will avoid narrating the shifts and bends of the Consultation on Church Union 1968-1998, but will instead look at the “Recommendation to the Churches for a New Relationship, Churches Uniting in Christ,” (approved 1999), identifying its main characteristics and the implications of those characteristics.³⁹ This text has its basis in the 1984 document, *The COCU Consensus: In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting* and the 1988 *Churches in Covenant Communion: The Church of Christ Uniting*. These two texts, in turn, owe much to the then

recently completed convergence document *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* coming in 1982 out of the Faith and Order unit of the World Council of Churches.

Inasmuch as the ecumenical direction was not to be toward a unified church, on the model of organic union, then a significant task of the period after 1980 would be identifying and clarifying the nature of what was being called covenantal communion. This task resulted in the three above-mentioned documents.

These foundational documents were evaluated over the 1990s by the constituent churches. The 17th COCU Plenary (New Orleans 1988) asked each church to take specific action regarding *Churches in Covenant Communion*. These three actions were:

- 1) to approve the text,
- 2) to declare its willingness to enter into a relationship of covenant communion with the member churches,
- 3) to begin to identify for itself such steps and procedures as may be necessary to prepare for the reconciliation of ordained ministries and for entering into covenant communion.⁴⁰

Thus did the conversations proceed in the various member communions of COCU. Developments within COCU had been a part of larger conversations within many of the communions for several decades. Kept alive by a few strong advocates and also, perhaps, by a few vigorous opponents of the various proposals, they might have seemed like “white noise” to many church members and pastors. Nonetheless, the proposal was getting more concrete, perhaps because less specific, that is to say, less static and more progressive.

Some approvals came quickly—ICC in 1989, CME in 1994, DoC in 1995, UCC, UMC, AME, AMEZ in 1996.

However, Presbyterians had trouble approving it, especially the sections on ministry. Curiously, while the specific proposals for Presbyterian participation in the reconciling of ordained ministries were being rejected at the presbytery level, the subsequent General Assembly (1997) approved, by a large majority, continued support for and participation in the Consultation.⁴¹

On the other end of the spectrum of ecclesiological concerns, the Episcopal Church was unable to come to a favorable recommendation of the proposal contained in CCC. This communion’s response to the three questions posed by the 1988 Plenary is, by far, the longest. This report, in summary, declined to approve the COCU Consensus, but stopped far short of withdrawing from cooperation with the participating communions.

Thus, when the 18th Plenary of the Consultation on Church Union met in St. Louis (January 1999), there were seven enthusiastic affirmations of CCC and “two apparent demurs.”⁴² A newly constituted Theology Commission determined that there was no previously set number of communions required for the inauguration of a uniting church and that only a Plenary of the Consultation could act definitively. However, they preferred to find a way that could carry forward all nine participants. Their recommendations made their way into the final Report of the Plenary. In 1999 The Consultation on Church Union voted to disband itself when its member churches would reconstitute themselves as

Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), effective January 2002.

The emerging covenantal relationship would be expressed through a variety of visible marks. These are given here using CUIC language, from the 18th Plenary.

4.1 Mutual recognition of each other as authentic expressions of the one Church of Jesus Christ.

4.2 Mutual recognition of members in one Baptism.

4.3 Mutual recognition of ordained ministry. Such recognition is seen as part of an effort to realize mutual reconciliation of ministry by 2007.

4.4 Mutual recognition that each affirms the apostolic faith of Scripture and Tradition which is expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and that each seeks to give witness to the apostolic faith in its life and mission.

4.5 Provision for the celebration of the Eucharist together with intentional regularity. . . .

4.6 Engagement together in Christ's mission on a regular and intentional basis, especially a shared mission to combat racism. . . .

4.7 Intentional commitment to promote unity with wholeness and to oppose all marginalization and exclusion in church and society based on such things as race, age, gender, forms of disability, sexual orientation, and class.

4.8 An ongoing process of theological dialogue. Such dialogue will specifically attempt:

1. to deepen Churches Uniting in Christ's understanding of racism in order to make an even more compelling case against it;

2. to clarify theological issues identified by the members of Churches Uniting in Christ in order to strengthen shared witness to the apostolic faith;

3. to provide a foundation for the mutual reconciliation of ordained ministry by the members of Churches Uniting in Christ (section 5).

4.9 Appropriate structures of accountability and appropriate means for consultation and decision making. . . .⁴³

The basis of the COCU-CUIC covenant most explicitly would not be structural or organic union. Rather, the proposed reality is a unity in diversity among churches, a communion of communions, all of which, however different some aspects of their ecclesial life may be, recognize their existence as part of a larger existence, the one community in Christ. The intention is that these member communions intertwine their lives, moving beyond merely coexisting with each other, into being a "binding community that actively embodies the love of Christ which ties them to one another."⁴⁴

The January 1999 Plenary meeting of COCU received the work of its Theology Commission, especially its wrestling with the thorny issues surrounding ministry. The conclusion was to seek a way to continue forward together, by moving toward mutual recognition of ministries, rather than reconciliation of ministries, which would still be envisioned in the future.⁴⁵ They declined to back away from seeing the church's "missional work" as benefiting from the proposed structure of governance in the church, which may themselves be subject to revision as time and need allow. Yet, "if we continue to hold that particular versions of the offices of ministry must be the norm for all member churches, then the way ahead is difficult indeed."⁴⁶

The Theology Commission took the next logical step and argued that if

the member communions are to “discover ways to become church together” then there will have to be structures of connection and accountability. This covenanting community does not exist “*alone in the mind*. It is an ecclesial life, together in worship and mission, sharing and living the gospel with the community. Church unity must be embodied in tangible form.”⁴⁷ How can these communions in each local place enter into worship and mission appropriate to their localities without some structure to order activities? Hence the Covenanting Councils as described in CCC. These Councils have drawn the most significant amount of critical comment.⁴⁸ The thought of funding and staffing yet another office and scheduling another round of meetings must be more than some persons could bear. Still, the Theology Commission’s concern is well taken, as they wondered how an emerging ecclesial reality could both embody the Christian message and act effectively in the service of justice without structures of some sort.

By the time of the inaugural moment in January 2002, when the proposal had been transformed from a covenant with reconciled ministries to a covenant to be in the process of working toward reconciling ministries, all nine bodies could be claimed as on board. There seemed to be some relief at being done with being part of a consultation. As Jean Caffey Lyles, long-time observer of the American Christian scene put it, “The choice of ‘Uniting’ rather than ‘United’ suggests the unfinished, fluid state of the new relationship.”⁴⁹ The dialogue, also, continues in a fluid state. The Episcopal decision to remain in the fluid, merging, body (having balked at the merged one described earlier) as well as the Presbyterian hesitancy is being faced in a series of Episcopal-Presbyterian discussions on ministry (sessions for January and June 2003). The fluidity of the CUIC model may be illustrated in the fact that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has become a “partner in dialogue and mission,” a step just short of full membership.

In what is no doubt its most ambitious move, the approved text of the 18th Plenary called for ongoing theological dialogue. It signaled three issues, as already mentioned. The first is “to deepen CUIC’s understanding of racism in order to make an even more compelling case against it.”⁵⁰ A distinguishing feature of COCU, now CUIC, has been the full participation of three historically African-American denominations, whose willingness to move forward in the process has long been tied to their ability to trust that the other communions remain open to being fully transformed by repentance of the sin of enjoying white skin privilege and committed to working to dismantle the system that has supported racism and undergirded the historically largely white denominations. Substantial progress on the matter of racial justice would alone be sufficient to justify COCU-CUIC’s long existence.

The second quite ambitious task calls for dialogue “to provide a foundation for the mutual reconciliation of ordained ministry by the members of Churches Uniting in Christ” (Text 4.8.3). A subsequent paragraph makes clear that the “full reconciliation of ministries, as well as resolution of any remaining challenges, is a goal we seek to accomplish and proclaim by the time of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2007.”⁵¹ These words were written in 1999; the calendar is nearing the halfway mark but work on the issues is not half done.

Several observations come to mind regarding these developments.

COCU - CUIC has been driven over the last forty years by several

engines. The first has been the vision of Christian unity embraced and nurtured by its member communions, a vision broader than only that seen in North American Protestantism, stretching around the globe. There has been a disproportionate number of leaders who have come from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). They really are disproportionate to the relative size of the participating communions (as is also true for many regional and national councils and the World Council of Churches). While there may be other explanations for their presence, it surely is at least partly true that their origin in the Stone-Campbell Movement, with its passion for the unity of the church, has moved contemporary Disciples to seek opportunities once again to "sink into union with the body of Christ."⁵²

A second engine driving COCU-CUIC has been the energy generated by a period of serious ecumenical progress. The euphoria produced by the very fact of Vatican II and its effect on all of the churches surely spilled over to COCU participants. The "ecclesiastical cold war" had ended, on at least a few of its fronts. Roman Catholics were participating in and offering leadership to all manner of ecumenical activities. The energy of Vatican II didn't wane; it morphed into the World Council of Churches where it served Faith and Order in the development of the extraordinary convergence document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*.⁵³ Did the Faith and Order churches use up all their energy in responding to BEM? Well, maybe not all of it. But they certainly used a lot. Many of those participating churches (also COCU bodies) were entering into or initiating bilateral dialogues. More energy would be consumed in these efforts. Developments internal to the Roman Catholic Church, such as the silencing of various theologians in the 1980s and the cutting off of discussion on various topics in the 1990s, not to mention the Congregation for the Faith's 1991 negative response to the work of ARCIC, further drained the energy. Perhaps COCU fired up a new generator in reaching its 18th Plenary and proposing the transformation to CUIC.

The third engine that drove the process by which COCU lived and continued into becoming CUIC was the hope of its member communions. This was/has been/is the hope that the Church is bigger and more faithful than the churches that each of us have experienced. This is the hope that it is not by human effort alone that unity is experienced. E. C. Blake recalled this in selecting as the ascription for his sermon: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen." (Romans 15:13)⁵⁴

Vision, energy and hope have driven the long COCU dialogue efforts. Will they be present to sustain and drive Churches Uniting in Christ? The proposal itself is rooted in one main thing. It requires the nine members to be intentional about the process of actually living together, especially in Section 7 of *Report of the Plenary*, "Implications for Local and Regional Life." These are very practical suggestions having to do with theological education, congregational life, worship, youth work, regular shared Eucharists. The report recommends the presence of representative persons from CUIC churches at all ordinations, baptisms, installation services, and key decision-making groups and calls for pulpit exchanges and educational programs that enrich members' understanding of other member churches and of CUIC itself. Several of the

suggestions call for intentional shared work on the common project to combat racism. And, lastly, the report calls for “participation by delegated members in the life of the congregation of a partner church.” All of these activities require intentional effort.⁵⁵

This consensus statement that is the basis for CUIC puts a heavy burden on that second word of its name, the participle uniting, which suggests ongoing activity and continuing effort. Nothing is yet attained. Indeed, the member communions will be living toward a state of being united. Or they will be avoiding the steps that lead to this change. They can avoid embracing a new reality. In his presentation to the 18th Plenary, David W. A. Taylor (retired PCUSA minister and General Secretary of COCU, 1988-93) offered these sober words. He was focusing on the proposal’s goal to develop a form of church union both truly catholic and truly reformed. “Any failure on our part, or on the part of the churches we represent, to understand adequately what is at stake here will result (I believe) in the failure of this vision or (what is perhaps worse) its nominal acceptance as a mere pious ecumenical gesture.”⁵⁶

Some Comparison Comments: 1832 & 2002

1. The 1832 union of the Stone and the Campbell movements proceeded on a number of handshakes, beginning with that between John Smith and Barton Stone. All of the persons gathered at the Lexington meeting were described as rushing forward to shake hands with and embrace each other. There was no list of “articles of confederation” and no scripted plan.

COCU-CUIC, on the other hand, has a quite extensive document (the *Report of the 18th Plenary*) that serves as the guide in this process of making real the uniting. In fact, in the fluid situation that is this “uniting process,” the only thing worse than having a written text as a guide is, for some persons, not having every last item specified.⁵⁷

2. The 1832 union had a geographic cohesiveness to it, the main strength of the Stone movement overlapping but extending beyond the areas of strength of the Campbell movement. This has to be a characteristic that CUIC can claim also. Surely there are no localities in which one CUIC member church couldn’t find another one. Although, no doubt, there are places in which activities involving Disciples congregations may be hard to work out and other locales where none of the African-American communions is strong enough to want to reach out.

3. The 1832 union was mission-driven. The desire to restore the New Testament church and a plan for doing so gripped the leaders of the Stone and Campbell movements, and even if they had differing perspectives on a number of matters, they shared this one thing needful: the simple gospel message free of any mere human opinions made into requirements. They were extraordinarily successful. Tucker and McAllister estimate that 10,000 Christians and 12,000 Disciples united in the 1830s and that in 30 years they had grown to 190,000.⁵⁸ This nine-fold growth was definitely not natural increase, but the result of establishing and growing new congregations.

CUIC is also mission-driven, but in a very different manner. As original COCU discussions proceeded, having been joined by the three historically African-American denominations, member participants in the discussions could

not ignore the question of race. Church unity could not be achieved without attending to the unity of the human family in this country and the legacy of American slavery and the long acquiescence of the churches with racism and the color divide in American life had to be faced. Thus COCU rightly proposed the "Call to Christian Commitment and Action to Combat Racism" that accompanied the *Report of the 18th Plenary*. This call to action is quite explicit: "It implies that our prophetic witness against racism and all the powers of oppression is a primary test of the faithfulness of these churches."⁵⁹ Member churches commit themselves to support nine strategic efforts, among them the articulation of a compelling theological case against racism, careful development of social ethics arguments to buttress, e.g., arguments in support of affirmative action, cooperating on anti-racism projects already in place in the churches, using Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations to further public discussion of the need for changes, worship and Christian education efforts that support change, and, above all, personal and corporate self-examination. This common witness, borne out of the realities of life in these United States, is already under fire from COCU-CUIC opposition as detracting from mission as evangelism.⁶⁰ When the 1832 union was being lived out, individuals made prophetic witness against the sin of slavery, but there was, sadly, no corporate witness. Can the participating churches in CUIC bear the weight of the task they have laid before themselves?

NOTES

¹Paul A. Crow, Jr., "The Anatomy of a Nineteenth-century United Church," Lexington: Lexington Theological Seminary Sesquicentennial Lectures, 1982.

²CUIC inauguration event, 3 February 2003, http://www.eden.edu/cuic/unity/cuic_inauguration_event.htm.

³*The Works of Elder B. W. Stone to which is added a few Discourses and Sermons, Vol. 1*, Edited by Elder James M. Mathes (Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltstach, Keys & Co., 1859), 22-24.

⁴Richard L. Harrison, *From Camp Meeting to Church: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kentucky*, (Kentucky: Christian Board of Publication, 1982), 10-17.

⁵Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Order: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 98.

⁶Ibid, 99.

⁷This story has been told in many places, such as William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1975), 104-119.

⁸Tucker and McAllister, 110.

⁹D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography*, (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000), 164.

¹⁰Tucker and McAllister, 141-5.

¹¹John Rogers, *The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself*, in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, Hoke S. Dickinson, ed., (Cane Ridge, Kentucky: 1972), 75

¹²Ibid. 76.

¹³ Crow's reading, 24.

¹⁴ Williams, *Stone*, 168-73.

¹⁵ CM 3 (1829), 261-62.

¹⁶ CB (January 1830), 139.

¹⁷ Williams, *Stone*, 185-86.

¹⁸ CM 5 (November 1831), 251.

¹⁹ CM 4 (August 1830), 200.

²⁰ MH 1 (August 1830), 370-74.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Mark G. Toulouse, *Joined In Discipleship: The Maturing of an American Religious Movement*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1992) 82.

²³ CM 5 (November 1831), 249.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁵ MH 2 (December 1831), 557.

²⁶ Williams, *Stone*, 191.

²⁷ CM 5 (November 1831), 257-58.

²⁸ John Augustus Williams, *The Life of Elder John Smith* (1870); CM 6 (January 1832), 6-8.

²⁹ Williams, *Smith*, 454.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 455.

³¹ Williams, *Stone*, 193, draws the reader's attention to Campbell's earlier query.

³² *Millennial Harbinger* 3 (March 1832) 137-9.

³³ Quite a number of examples can be drawn from just two volumes. Stone and Johnson published in the pages of the *Christian Messenger* reports on union activities or interest from Rush City, Indiana (January 1832) 29-30, Mount Sterling, Kentucky (March 1832) 87, McNary Co., Tennessee (May 1832) 157-8, Scipio, Ohio (July 1832) 222, Pendleton Co., Kentucky and Wadesboro, Kentucky (August 1832) 248, Spencer, Indiana (August 1833) 247, Fayette, Mississippi (October 1833) 318.

³⁴ The Blake Sermon is reprinted in *Mid-Stream* 37 (July/October 1998) 285-97.

³⁵ The nine communions that have made up the membership of the Consultation on Church Union are: African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church.

³⁶ "Consultation on Church Union," *Mid-Stream* 39 (July 2000):69.

³⁷ Crow contrasts organic union to both the cooperation of individuals in voluntary associations and a federative action by denominational bodies. "Anatomy," 8-9.

³⁸ *A Plan of Union for the Churches of Christ Uniting*, (Princeton, NJ: COCU, 1970) 62-63.

³⁹ "Recommendation to the Churches for a New Relationship, Churches Uniting in Christ," excerpts of the 18th Plenary Report, as published in *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000).

⁴⁰ For additional detail on the steps between 1972 and 1999, see Daniell

C. Hamby, "The Murmur of a Dove's Song: A Brief History of the Consultation on Church Union," part of the Preparatory Papers for the 18th Plenary, *Mid-Stream* 37 (July/October 1998), 402.

⁴¹ Hamby, 387-406.

⁴² Hamby, 404.

⁴³ This is taken directly from the "Report of the Eighteenth Plenary of the Consultation on Church Union," in "Digest of the 18th Plenary," published as *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000), 108-111.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 111.

⁴⁵ "Theology Commission *Report to the Executive Committee*," contained in Preparatory Papers for the 18th Plenary, *Mid-Stream* 39 (July/October 1998), 373-85.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 384.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ The 1995 Response from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) put their concern this way: "Can we be sure that the 'covenanting councils' will not become another layer of bureaucracy?" From the Digest of the 18th Plenary Session, COCU, *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000), 15.

⁴⁹ Jean Caffey Lyles, "Unity Journey Energized," *Christian Century* 119 (January 30-February 6, 2002), 8.

⁵⁰ "Report of the Plenary," 4.8.1, published in *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000).

⁵¹ "Report of the 18th Plenary of the Consultation on Church Union," in *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000), 112.

⁵² From the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery."

⁵³ Adopted at the Lima, Peru, meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, 1982.

⁵⁴ Sermon contained in *Mid-Stream* 37 (July/October 1999), 296.

⁵⁵ This material is all from *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000) 114-115.

⁵⁶ Taylor, "The Life and History of the Consultation," in *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000) 83.

⁵⁷ See *Theology Matters* 5 (Nov./Dec. 1999) 6, shows how this fear plays out. In a "Q&A on CUiC," the author shows how CUiC will indeed affect local congregations by referring to the passages that put CUiC representatives at baptisms and in decision-making groups. These representatives (described here as having neither voice nor vote in the meeting) are then described as being in a position to appear as an authority and exercise undue influence on a session meeting. Additional fears emerge. The regional and national bodies laid out in the document are undefined, especially as to whether there will be equal numbers from each denomination, whether bishops will participate, and if there will be parity between elders and clergy for Presbyterians. These fears, voiced by Presbyterians for Faith, Family and Ministry, are shared by the various so-called renewal movements in the member communions. See also the critique from Disciples Heritage Fellowship, Doug Harvey, "Cut to the CUiC?"

⁵⁸ Tucker and McAllister, 154-55.

⁵⁹ "Call to Christian Commitment," printed in *Mid-Stream* 39 (January/April 2000), 119-23.

⁶⁰ See *Theology Matters*.

Dale Fiers: Twentieth Century Disciple

by

D. Duane Cummins

Many call A. Dale Fiers the most significant figure in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of the twentieth century. Raised in a devout family--his mother was ordained--in Kankakee, Illinois, and West Palm Beach, Florida, Fiers went on to have major impact not only on his denomination but on American Protestantism in general, particularly its approach to such social issues as missionary work and civil rights.

Dale Fiers served as executive secretary of the International Convention of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), president of the United Christian Missionary Society, administrative secretary of the Commission on Restructure, and was the first general minister and president of the church.

In this biography, commissioned by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, D. Duane Cummins crafts a picture of a remarkable church leader and chronicles a history of the way a significant religious body dealt with the ambivalences of its own existence, how missionary work developed into less paternalistic relationships, as well as how a church struggled between attempts to minister on the local scene and throughout the world.

D. Duane Cummins was previously president of Bethany College, interim president of Brite Divinity School at TCU and is visiting scholar in history at Johns Hopkins University. A meticulous researcher and careful historian, he is the author or coauthor of eleven books and numerous published articles.

Copies of this hardback volume are available from the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1101 19th Avenue S., Nashville, TN 37212. The price is \$20 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling. Please send check or money order, payable to DCHS with your shipping address.