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*Disciples of Christ Historical Society*

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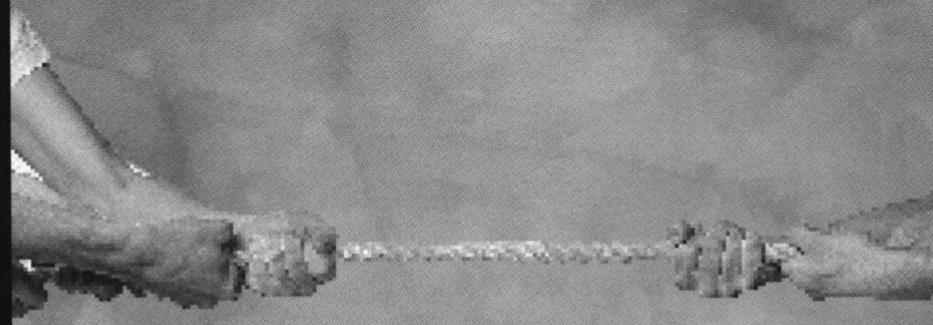
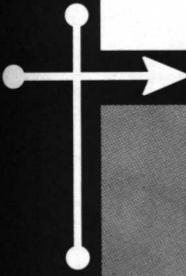
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# Discipliana

*a journal of Stone-Campbell history*

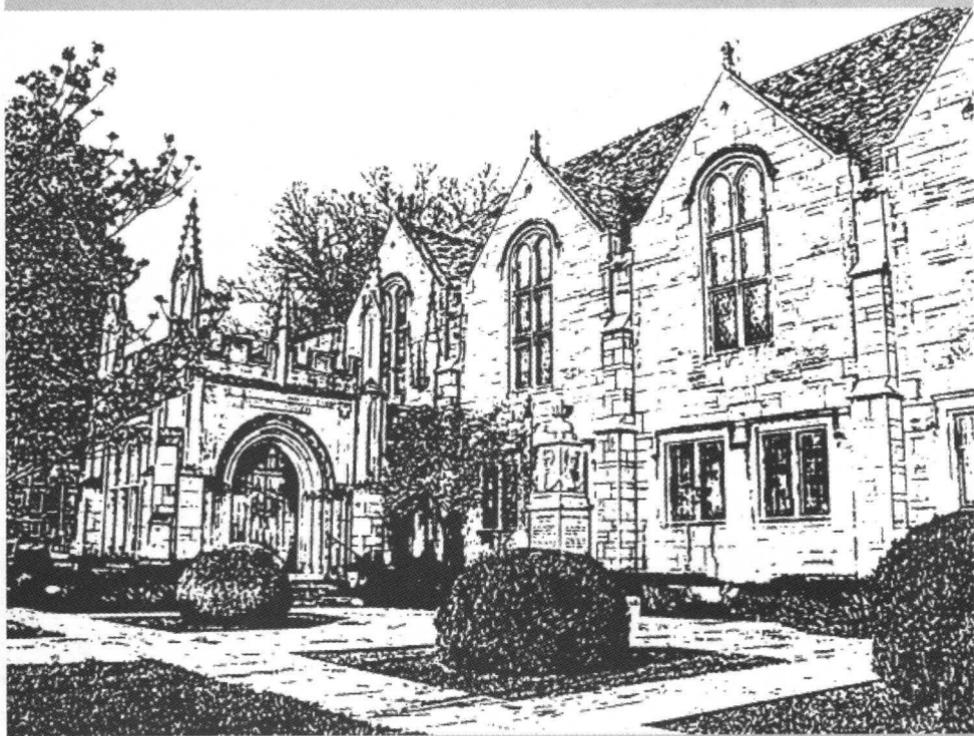
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Such Christians?

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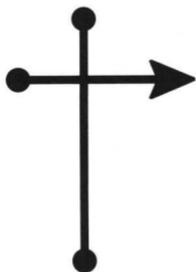
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*Our historic building has not yet been made accessible to the handicapped.*

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# Discipliana

*a journal of Stone-Campbell history*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3     The President's Desk
- 7     *Richard Phillips*  
      WHOEVER HEARD OF SUCH  
      CHRISTIANS?
- 24    Did You Know?



# Discipliana

*a journal of Stone-Campbell history*

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## THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

**M**ission. It is a word that stirs up our deepest emotions and our strongest desires.

On a personal level, each of us wants to complete the specific work that we have laid out for the short-term and for a lifetime. The proverbial 'man on a mission' conjures the image of one so dedicated to a singular calling that nothing, and no one, will deter him from completing the task and reaching his goal. The mission becomes the all-consuming focus of his life and the last drop of his energy is poured into its fulfillment.

The power of the word is compounded when we move from the personal to the general; from the individual to the corporate. As Christians we understand that the many always supercedes the one. And it is so with mission. *Our* mission together always takes its place at the head of the table, while *my* mission must of necessity move to the foot. This is not to imply that the

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*Our mission together always takes its place at the head of the table, while my mission must of necessity move to the foot.*

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individual has less value, or that personal objectives are somehow unworthy of

endeavor. It is to assert, however, that a biblical model and ethic require that a goal set by any one person must, when the Spirit directs, be suppressed in favor of a goal taken up by the whole group.

It is easy to see this distinction when one considers the Great Commission given to all disciples by the risen Christ. "Go," he commands us, "baptize and teach and encourage others to follow me" (MT 28:18-20). Christ did not, and does not, separate us into enclaves of individuals, or even of small groups, but rather speaks to all his Church, for all time, at once. The mission he gives to us becomes the overarching *raison d'être*



for all Christians everywhere. And it is our 'reason to be' in all times, regardless of items that may arise on a given calendar that momentarily capture our attention.

Since the Great Commission is stated generally, so that it applies universally, it serves as the foundation for all particular mission, when undertaken as a solitary venture, or for a grouping of missions, when launched in a plurality. We are unable to classify an activity as 'Christian mission' that does not find its genesis in the command given by Christ. May worthy activities be performed that are not especially Christian in nature?

Certainly. But, if we are to involve the Gospel in an enterprise, and if the mission is to carry a sacramental label that includes the imprimatur of the risen Christ, then it is requisite that the enterprise be grounded in the commission given to us personally

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*The story is the authentic mission  
articulated in our world, and retained  
for the one to come.*

---

by Jesus.  
In  
this we  
appreciate  
that a careful  
vetting must

be employed when choosing which mission, or missions, to initiate. And attention must continue to be given to insure that the mission, as it unfolds, remains within its given Christian parameters, and that it remains a viable contribution to the cause for which it was begun. Simply because a specific mission was started does not of necessity mean that it should be continued, or even completed. As circumstances evolve it is possible that what started as a creditable project no longer meets needs or goals as they currently exist. This is why such care must be given at every juncture, because a mission should not be abandoned whimsically, or due to a change in vogue, but can be altered or cancelled when it is clear from prayerful observation that it has ceased to function in its original, or subsequent, formation.

It is also clear that it is possible, even desirable, to class individual missions, so that the ones that have the most lasting value for the cause of Christ receive the majority of our interest and priority in our stewardship. Those examples of mission which are more universal in nature would, then, be graded higher than those of more local character. And those which serve the



cause for a longer period of time would, generally speaking, take precedence over those which appear on the scene briefly. This logical approach to choosing and continuing mission secures those endeavors which tend to lean toward eternity, while those trapped within space-time are allowed to conclude.

From the preceding, it arises that those missions which convey the essence of Christ's Church forward to subsequent generations would be classed among the universal, or eternal, ventures (or organizations), and those which serve only the time and place of residence would be categorized otherwise. It can be proposed, too, that the essence is defined as the biography of Jesus Christ, his teachings and life-affirming principles expressed, and the stories which have given evidence to his divine activity across the ages. Since the biography, teachings, and principles are set and unchanging, the expansion of the substantive core of Christianity turns upon the stories. It is the preservation of these stories, then, which becomes the primary mission and highest calling of each Christian, and of the Church in totality, so that the Gospel is transported from this generation, to the next, and onto the next.

With these premises in mind, one finds that it is not too bold to assert that the ultimate mission is safeguarding the story and dispatching its message throughout the earth, both now and in the future. That is to say, the story is the authentic mission articulated in our world, and retained for the one to come.

— *Glenn Thomas Carson*



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Disciples of Christ Historical Society does not use the terms “restoration” or “movement” in referring to the Stone-Campbell heritage. We recognize, of course, that these are terms that have been in use for many years and, so, we offer this essay providing background on how the terms have been used in tandem.



# WHOEVER HEARD OF SUCH CHRISTIANS?

—Richard Phillips

The Stone-Campbell heritage had its origin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. For much of the early part of that century, it was referred to either as “the current reformation,” or, “the reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,” to distinguish it from that of Luther and Calvin in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But many of us who came to maturity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century knew it only, or primarily, as the “Restoration Movement.”

The issue to be explored here is when and why the change came. Somewhere between 1850 and 1920 “Restoration Movement” became widely accepted. This paper will investigate the steps which resulted in the change, and how it came about.

## I. Preliminary Observations

- a. Our beginnings were during the late Enlightenment, when Newton, Bacon, and others had made great strides in advancing the natural sciences. Such scientific investigation was just beginning to be applied to literature in general and Biblical studies in particular.
- b. Late Enlightenment optimism due to scientific advances, and the rise of democratic governments in the USA and France, as well as industrial advances, led to a widespread view that the perfection of human society, and the Christian Millennium were rapidly approaching.
- c. Wesleyan and other revivals in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in England and America brought about significant increases in religious fervor and lay concerns for salvation. An increasing awareness of the non-European world was beginning to foster the explosion

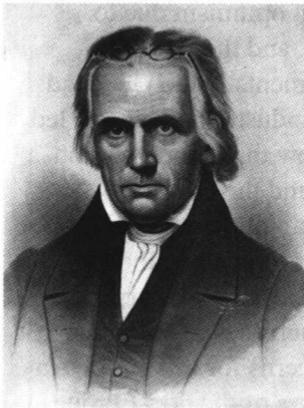


of Christianity through mission work. This explosion was also tied in popular thought as a precursor to the Millennium.

- d. Increases in travel and publication, and the mixing of people of various religious backgrounds in such places as the American frontier led to the awareness of differences in theologies, and sectarian rivalries, which many increasingly believed to be hindrances to the propagation of the Christian message.
- e. In the search for the origin of the term “Restoration Movement” one should not expect to find a “smoking gun,” like a resolution passed by some juridical body. Ours was a grass roots emphasis, and origins will be found in trends, shades of meaning, and developing emphases. But, the origin and use of the term is discoverable..

## II. Thomas Campbell and the “Declaration and Address”

Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), a minister who had emigrated from Northern Ireland to America in 1807, found his peers in the Seceder Presbyterians too sectarian, and withdrew from that body. He had long been concerned for preaching the Christian message to all. In withdrawing, he formed a “Christian



*Thomas Campbell*

Association of Washington, PA,” to be composed of similarly-concerned Christians of various groups. “Tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit,” the “Declaration and Address”<sup>1</sup> which defined this organization proposed a three-fold analysis and remedy for the situation:

- a. It is the task of the church to preach the Christian message to the whole world.
- b. But a divided church fighting among its parts will have neither the



resources nor energy to accomplish the task. So the church must unite.

- c. Such union can come only on the basis of commonly agreed upon authority, which Thomas Campbell thought the Christian Scriptures could provide. Human creeds, confessions of faith, etc. were to be abandoned, and union could come on the simple terms set forth in Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

### III. Early Developments

The eldest son of Thomas, Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), soon became the primary leader, and in 1823 began publication of a monthly called *The Christian Baptist*. To emphasize reliance on Scripture rather than human creeds, he published therein thirty-two articles on the theme “The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.” The series dealt with the ordinances, officers, nomenclature, and discipline proper to the church.

In the winter of 1821-22, Alexander Campbell met Walter Scott (1796-1861) in Pittsburgh.<sup>3</sup> The friendship ripened into theological agreement: it was apparently Scott who suggested the name *The Christian Baptist* for Campbell’s first monthly, and in 1827 it was a committee at New Lisbon, OH, headed by A. Campbell which proposed Scott be employed as evangelist for the Mahoning Baptist Association. The careers of the Campbells and Scott were intertwined for the rest of their lives. There were, however, differences of personality and attitude evident. The work of Walter Scott displays a greater emphasis on restoration which came to characterize much of the later Campbell-Stone heritage.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, A. Campbell and Scott agreed on much. But their emphases often differed, and these differences foreshadowed and developed into later grounds for division.

Campbell maintained his father’s overarching concern for the unity of the church, and world conversion.<sup>5</sup> He desired an “express command or approved precedent” for every article of faith and item of practice.<sup>6</sup> He spoke of “the attempt. . .to restore primitive Christianity”<sup>7</sup> as a “twenty year struggle”, which was not complete, to “correct our diction and purify our speech



according to the Bible alone.”<sup>8</sup> And yet Campbell viewed the New Testament more as a “collection of writings” of some thirty-five different authors than as an entity, the whole of which Scott could more easily refer to as “the Word of God” without further qualification.<sup>9</sup> Scott could list quotations praising “The Bible” from various authors with an emphasis uncharacteristic of Campbell.<sup>10</sup> Campbell took a larger perspective than Scott. For example, he could speak of a Biblical idea from the perspective

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*“Christians who have not been  
baptized for the remission of their  
sins...Whoever heard of such  
Christians in God’s Word?”*

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of a whole  
book, or  
even books,  
while Scott  
seemed  
more  
limited to  
specific

texts as prescriptive. Both men opposed slavery. But Campbell’s approach was broader; he supported Henry Clay’s gradual program for emancipation with indemnification of owners, and education in trades, but refused to make such a religious obligation, fearful it would split the churches. Scott more narrowly refused to consider eliminating slavery a moral obligation, calling slavery a political evil, with which legislatures must deal.<sup>11</sup> Campbell in his 1837 “Lunenburg letters” could look beyond the “letter of the law,” in stating, “I cannot, therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion . . . and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy without their own knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven.”<sup>12</sup> Campbell stressed the ideal, but was willing to acknowledge the actual. Scott differed: In response to a similar question about “Christians who have not been baptized for the remission of their sins” Scott’s response was “Strange! Whoever heard of such Christians in God’s Word?”<sup>13</sup>

Both men spoke of “the current reformation.”<sup>14</sup> However, Scott made a distinction which Campbell did not emphasize at all. Scott believed he had completed “restoring the ancient Gospel” in 1827, when, in effect he first preached what later came to be called his “Five Finger Exercise”.<sup>15</sup> Scott did



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acknowledge that the “restoration of the ancient order of things” was an uncompleted, ongoing task. It is likely that the subtle distinction was lost on many. Alexander Campbell’s “Reformation and Restoration” article is a thinly disguised attempt to refute Scott’s claim as it was perceived by too many for Campbell’s satisfaction: “. . .nor would we hold up to the world as a model of the christian institution *restored*, any community which has only been immersed upon the confession of the primitive faith, which is not organized according to the christian constitution and continuing steadfast [in the requirements of Acts 2:42]”<sup>16</sup> Campbell forcefully asserted that the church was not restored until not only external forms, but internal morality and discipline were fully realized.

Scott was an evangelistic preacher, given to literal application of Scripture, confining himself to the letter of the “Word of God,” and the Gospel he had “restored.” His writings are frequently “death-bed preacher stories,” and exaltations of “the Word of God,” which for Scott equaled the Bible. Scott was the more popularly understood preacher, and his simple message was widely received. And therein lies both a “blessing and a curse.” The very “populist” nature of his message created the precondition for the later rise of what has come to be called “pattern restorationism”: the assumption that a painstaking detail in restoring primitive church structure may be equated to fulfilling the will of God.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast, Campbell was a theologian, Biblical scholar, national leader, and entrepreneur of considerable wealth. His interests were much broader than those of Scott. Scott was predominantly occupied with defenses of his role in “restoring the ancient gospel”, and prophecy. Campbell’s subjects were not only Biblical teachings, but he dealt with (in the 1831 *Millennial Harbinger* alone, for example) the increasing need for cooperation among local churches, showed an awareness of ranking Biblical scholars and their work, as well as the contributions of major theologians of past centuries, wrote against slavery, began to structure the union with Stone’s “Christians,” etc.

In summary, there are definite indications, of 1) differences of attitude and emphasis between Campbell and Scott; 2) a



tendency in Scott to be more confined to simplistic presentations of basic facts, and 3) Scott's preoccupation with narrowly Biblical subjects: all preconditions of the later conservative attitudes which coalesced into a constituency which came to prefer the term "Restoration Movement."

#### IV. Tendencies of Reform Movements

Reform movements are generally founded by creative thinkers who are not satisfied with existing forms, attitudes, and structures. They innovate, stimulate, and challenge. Some

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*Reform movements are generally founded by creative thinkers who are not satisfied with existing forms, attitudes, and structures.*

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follow reformers, while others reject the reform and maintain their old ways,

hardened in their prejudices. In turn, second and third generation followers of reformers, less flexible and creative, harden in opposition. This pattern is reflected in the development of the Pharisees of the New Testament from the Macabbean revolt. It is reflected in the Didache, a second century document which misunderstood completely Jesus' comment about the need to go beyond the "righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." It is reflected in the rigidity of the Augsburg Confession which developed in Lutheranism, and the rigid theology which provoked a pietistic reaction. Calvin's creativity hardened into the repressiveness of the Synod of Dort (1618-19).

And therefore it should be no surprise that we find such tendencies also in the later generations of the "Reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century." Scott and Campbell remained close, and Campbell's notice of Scott's death (23 April 1861) spoke of him as "the most outstanding laborer for 'progress of the current reformation' next to Thomas Campbell."<sup>18</sup> But there was not one single use of the term "restoration movement" in Campbell's major work.<sup>1</sup>



## V. The Beginnings of Division

There could be by definition in the grassroots “Reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” no authoritative creed or organizational structure binding the constituency together. So it was inevitable that when the culture began to move beyond Locke and “Common Sense” rationalism, and the leadership of Alexander Campbell began to wane, diverse tendencies began to appear. Some wished to preserve Campbell’s early formulations, especially from *The Christian Baptist*, while others wished to apply the Campbellian methodology of openness to developing cultural and scientific trends.

Division was first expressed with Robert Richardson’s writings in the 1856 and 1857 *Harbinger* titled “Faith and Philosophy.” Richardson believed Campbell’s Lockianism unduly limited the work of the Holy Spirit, and fostered faith in a dogmatic system, rather than in the person of Christ himself.<sup>20</sup> Richardson spoke of “individual growth in spirituality” and “progress in a holy life of self-denying obedience and conformity to the example of Christ.”<sup>21</sup> He still spoke of “the present reformation movement” (not “Restoration”), and rejected preaching which is “doctrinal” but does not produce personal faith in Christ.”<sup>22</sup>

Unfortunately, Richardson’s views came to be linked with those of W. S. Russell of Jacksonville, Illinois shortly after. Russell had been a student of Richardson at Bethany, and shared his views. In 1859, a Baptist pastor (Eddy) in Bloomington, IL, published an article in a Baptist journal announcing that Russell, C. L. Loos of the Bethany faculty, and Pres. Patrick Murphy of Abingdon College had all adopted Baptist views of pre-faith conversion by the regenerating Holy Spirit. Tolbert Fanning entered the fray in vigorous opposition. Prof. Loos published a vigorous denial, and Murphy a vague and tepid one.<sup>23</sup>

Cultural values and attitudes were changing. Victorian romanticism was replacing Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Biblical criticism was developing. Reactions were varied. Accounts differ in dating, but shortly after the Civil War, J. W. McGarvey, head of Bible at Kentucky University was fired by “liberals”.<sup>24</sup> Another indication concerns the founding of the *Christian Standard*. One contemporary source reports that the



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founding was to counteract the influence of Benjamin Franklin's conservative *American Christian Review*.<sup>25</sup> And J. H. Garrison, editor of *The Christian Evangelist*, led many of the "progressive" forces. Like Richardson, Garrison uses "spiritual" for less rigid and legalistic views. He said the *Standard* "stood for progress, for Christian liberty; . . . and for a more spiritual conception of Christianity" (in opposition to Moses Lard's and McGarvey's *Apostolic Times*).<sup>26</sup> Garrison maintained a strong emphasis on Christian unity, but that was based on a "faith in a person," and not on doctrinal agreement like the "Restoration of the ancient Gospel," or "Ancient Order."

## VI. Restoration Views: The Beginning

A. T. DeGroot has reminded us that "restoration" is the focus of nearly every reform movement: the critical issue is the type of "restoration" envisioned; whether it be of piety, or economic sharing, or rejection of "worldliness," or doctrine, etc.<sup>27</sup> Those of the more conservative persuasions of the Stone-Campbell heritage have by using "restoration," generally meant the content of doctrinal belief, but even more the organizational forms and worship patterns of the early church: hence the term "pattern restoration" is most descriptive. Scott's was a primary expression of this view.<sup>28</sup> He was among the first to contrast "reformation" and "restoration," and claimed that his cause was a plea "not for reformation only, but an entire and unqualified restoration of everything warranted by the holy scripture."<sup>29</sup> William Robinson has asserted that the early leaders held a Christianity of loyalty to and trust in a Person, rather than by obedience to legal codes, but were driven by opposition to assert that the way to unity was by "restoring the New Testament pattern of the church."<sup>30</sup>

Selected leaders and periodicals illustrate a tendency which began to develop in the 1850s-1860s, but was much more explicit later.<sup>31</sup> "Pattern restorationism" emerged as the dominant conservative view opposed to the "progressive" or "spiritual" ideas of "liberal" advocates. How different the "primitive" church was from late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century "pattern restorationism" can be seen from even a causal reading of such



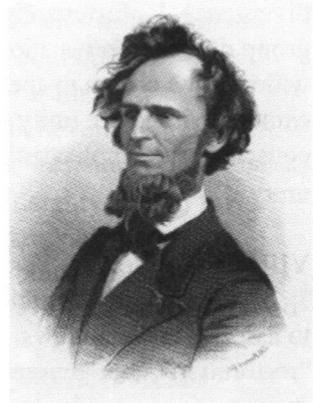
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early documents as the letters of Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch; the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermas, and Irenaeus of Lyons.

## VII. Restorationist Views: Bases and Early Leaders

In contrast to the views of Richardson, Errett, and Garrison were the views of conservatives such as Milligan, McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb.

Robert Milligan (1814-1875) taught at Indiana Univ. in math and science and then taught math at Bethany College and became coeditor of the *Millennial Harbinger*. Later he became president of Kentucky University and later led the College of the Bible. His classic *The Scheme of Redemption* was broader in scope than Scott's works, and treated the whole of creation, fall, and redemption.<sup>32</sup> Although he was not current in developing Biblical scholarship, he attempted to relate Genesis 1-3 to the developing science of his day, and spent much effort on types and prophecy. He had little awareness of the development of the New Testament canon, but concluded that "the twenty seven Canonical Books of the New Testament are the only proper successors of the Apostles now on earth."<sup>33</sup> He read the Bible through his early scientific training, seeing differing customs of officer selection in different New Testament churches, but cited Newton's uniformitarianism in physics as a model for reconciling differences.<sup>34</sup> Although he replaced the early slogan "No creed but Christ" with his "The Bible is the only proper creed of the church,"<sup>35</sup> he was not a rigid pattern restorationist, for he characterized the New Testament as 1) a "book of motives" 2) containing some general laws and regulations 3) illustrated by authoritative examples, and 4) specific laws and ordinances as necessary.<sup>36</sup> He listed qualities desirable for a preaching minister without any awareness he



*Robert Milligan*



was introducing an office not strictly sanctioned by the New Testament, and thought instrumental music should not be used in churches not because of any specific Biblical prohibition, but because such caused division and antagonism.<sup>37</sup>

Moses Lard (1818-1880) was valedictorian of his Bethany College class; his career was largely spent in Missouri and Kentucky as editor and preacher. To quote from Thomas Olbricht in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone Campbell Movement*: “In his crucial 1863 article titled “The Reformation for which We Are Pleading—What Is it?” Lard declared that the reformation

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*Unfortunately, as always,  
the antagonisms of each group  
drove the other more deeply into  
its own attitudes and widened the  
chasm as the years passed.*

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(1) must rest in the expressed will of Christ, (2) be both doctrinal and practical,

and (3) constitute a complete return to primitive Christianity in doctrine, practice, and spirit. Among restorationists, Lard occupied moderate positions, approving mission societies but opposing creeds, open communion, instrumental music, and a settled paid ministry.”<sup>38</sup> Fanning and Lipscomb were more dedicated “pattern restorationists.”

Thus we have in the 1850-1870 period the start of a divergence. Unfortunately, as always, the antagonisms of each group drove the other more deeply into its own attitudes and widened the chasm as the years passed. The more “liberal” side came to emphasize unity and reject “pattern restorationism;” conservatives emphasized restorationism as a prerequisite of unity.<sup>39</sup>

#### VIII. The Divergent Positions Further Harden

A comparison of articles in opposing journals is valuable to assess differing views. The *Christian-Evangelist* used “restoration”, but generally not with the same content as conservatives used it. In an 1896 article, “Things to be Restored,” J. J. Haley listed 1) The “Good Confession” of Matthew 16:16; 2) “Spirituality of faith and worship” of



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the early disciples, and 3) the unselfishness and humility of Christ.<sup>40</sup> Eighteen years later the same author also used the same “R” word, but his content was even more “liberal”. Haley emphasized the “spirit” as over against doctrinal content; repeatedly inveighed against legalism; held there to be no finality in any religious conceptions; noted that Disciples were evolving toward the better, castigated J. W. McGarvey as too legalistic; explicitly rejected “immersion for the remission of sins” as dogmatic and legalistic, and commented that a “mutual recognition of each other as Christians and each other’s churches as Churches of Christ would create Christian Unity.”<sup>41</sup> F. M. Cummings noted, “It is possible to restore the facts, doctrines, and organic relations, but that does not restore primitive Christianity.”<sup>42</sup> He held the essential thing to be restored is the passion and feeling of hungering after God and love of one another.

In contrast, M. E. Harlan advocated a traditional view of restoration.<sup>43</sup> And F. M. Green argued, Scott-like, for restoring “the Christ as Son of God,” and expressed a high view of the incarnation. On the same page, B. B. Tyler noted that “liberalism is not popular with the people” and does not produce growing churches.<sup>44</sup>

By contrast, *Christian Standard* articles almost unanimously took a conservative view. An 1879 article held there have always been restorers (including Luther) but the difference is that “we are restorers as individuals,” for “all denominational organizations are bad”.<sup>45</sup> A 1913 article held that the “Restoration movement” passed tests of “truth” and “results” that “its contention was for the unity of believers through the restoration of the Christianity of the New Testament,” and that its adherents must excel in 1) Liberty, 2) Liberality, and 3) Love.<sup>46</sup> Generally, the *Christian-Evangelist* moderately expressed the “progressive” cause, with some exceptions; the *Christian Standard* increasingly advocated early 19<sup>th</sup> century concepts and traditions.

Both the *Christian Standard* and the *Gospel Advocate* (as the voice of the non-instrument Churches of Christ) emphasized Restorationist views in succeeding years. The *Standard* contained at least 43 articles promoting and reporting



a “Restoration Congress” in 1919, and another 68 concerning “Restoration Congresses” and “rallies” 1919-20. It noted 17 other such congresses 1922-1948, and contained 170 other articles about various “Restoration Rallies” 1920-1948.<sup>47</sup> Clearly the term “Restoration” had become an identifying catchword. P. H. Welshimer’s tract “Facts Concerning the New Testament Church” epitomized “pattern restorationism.”

However, the non-instrumental Churches of Christ, established in their separation much earlier, had also established a firm pattern Restorationism. The 1985 *Gospel Advocate Index* lists 8.5 columns of articles on “Restoration;” 3 columns on “union,” and 13.5 on “unity,” most of which advocate unity as coming only after strict “restoration.”<sup>48</sup>

And so we conclude: 1) From the 1800s “reformation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” or “the current reformation” was used almost exclusively up until 1860-1870. 2) About 1860-1870, “Restoration movement,” derived from an intense devotion to “pattern restoration” in opposition to “liberals” came to be a name emphasized by non-instrumental Churches of Christ and the later emerging “Christian Churches/Churches of Christ,” formerly called “Independents”.<sup>49</sup> Others increasingly referred to themselves as “Disciples of Christ,” slightly modifying Campbell’s preference as a title.



**Richard Phillips, Ph.D. was professor of Bible at Milligan College for 25 years and is now enjoying retirement.**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address*. (Centennial Edition) Pittsburgh, PA: Centennial Bureau, 1908, p. 3. Originally printed by Brown and Sample, Washington, PA.

<sup>2</sup> He stated, “. . .the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament church. . . as the Old



Testament was for the worship, discipline and government of the Old Testament church. . ." Ibid., p. 16. Alexander Campbell essentially repeated this analysis in his Christianity Restored Rosemead CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1959 (first published by the author at Bethany, VA, 1835), pp. 103-104. A. T. DeGroot, Disciples Thought: A History Ft. Worth, TX: Texas Christian University, 1965, p. 209, has commented that the Campbells originally and naively presupposed that the New Testament contained exact details and blueprints of church organization and doctrine.

<sup>3</sup> William Baxter, Life of Elder Walter Scott Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., n. d., p. 64. Scott was a Scotch Baptist and graduate of the University of Edinburgh who had emigrated to America in 1818.

<sup>4</sup> The "Restoration" emphasis on "the Bible alone" fitted the situation of many on the frontier, whose religious life was primarily Bible reading and a "do-it-yourself" approach. It fitted the rejection of old European traditions and making a new start characteristic of American society. It confirmed that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." And it brought to culmination the long held Reformation slogan "ad fontes," (back to the source) by attempting a return to original Christianity.

<sup>5</sup> Christianity Restored, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 7. The "express command" language is from the Declaration and Address.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 7

<sup>9</sup> For Campbell, "inspiration" was of supernatural subjects, not knowable by humankind, and a reminder of things already known which left the authors free to use their own words and phrases. Authors' concepts of language/expressions differed widely. Ibid., pp. 17-18. Campbell further emphasized the necessity of "the character and circumstances" of the people to whom the New Testament epistles were addressed. The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, commonly styled The New Testament [often called The Living Oracles] with prefaces, various emendations, and An Appendix by Alexander Campbell. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1954; first published Bethany, VA, 1826, p. xxix. Scott, by contrast, had a habit of memorizing a chapter of Scripture before breakfast each day; he had much more of a tendency, like modern evangelicals, to treat Scripture as an end in itself. Baxter, op. cit., p. 250.

<sup>10</sup> The Evangelist, ed. by Walter Scott. Cincinnati: Printed and Published by the Editor, Vol. I, 1832, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> The Evangelist, 1835, p. 40ff.

<sup>12</sup> "Any Christians Among Protestant Parties," Millennial Harbinger (Hereinafter MH) ed. by Alexander Campbell. Bethany VA: Printed and Published by A. Campbell, 1837, p. 413.

<sup>13</sup> The Evangelist, 1833, p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Such was Campbell's frequently employed term; he also used "reformation of the nineteenth century." Scott also used the term; e. g., "the present reformation" in answer to a letter from William H. Strong; The Christian Evangelist, 1835, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Scott makes this claim, including the specific claim that he had gone beyond



the work of both Stone and Campbell so repeatedly that one wonders if he felt a bit slighted or eclipsed by the other leaders. See The Evangelist, 1832, p. 18 and p. 94. See also The Evangelist, 1833, p. 16 and p. 88. See also his comparison of his own work with that of Stone and Campbell on pp. 91 and 92. And see also Baxter, op. cit., p. 344 where Moses E. Lard is quoted as saying to Scott, “You are the man who first taught me the Gospel,” and on pp. 320 and 321 a letter to Scott from Adamson Bentley which refers to Scott as ‘the restorer of the ancient gospel.’”

<sup>16</sup> “Reformation and Restoration. A New Year’s Gift for 1385 (sic)” MH, 1835, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> The pattern of this later development is likely already present in a query of the Youngstown church’s query to the Mahoning Association in 1825, and in the mention of Scott’s convert Samuel Church who, “by the time he was 40, had read the New Testament 150 times, and the Old Testament half that.” Baxter’s Life of Scott, pp. 97 and 71 respectively. It is not so much that Scott’s own faith was so limited, but circumstances forced him to concentrate on initial aspects of obedience to the Christian message, and many hearers were at a level where they assumed this was the totality of the Gospel.

<sup>18</sup> As quoted in Baxter, op. cit., p. 448.

<sup>19</sup> Mr. John Mark Wade, ass’t. librarian at Emmanuel School of Religion, ran a search of PDF files of all the Millennial Harbingers on Jan. 19, 2010, and reported there is no use of the phrase “Restoration Movement” in any of them, which encompass 1830-1870.

<sup>20</sup> See Paul Blowers excellent article on Richardson in The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia, Ed. by Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony Dunnivant and D. Newell Williams. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004 pp. 649-652, esp. p. 651. Richardson’s articles were opposed by Tolbert Fanning in the Gospel Advocate who called proponents of the new doctrine “infidels.” Finally, Campbell openly opposed Richardson’s views (1857 MH, pp. 573-580), so undercutting Richardson that Richardson resigned from a 30 year association (1857 MH, p. 703). For a complete account of the incident, see Cloyd Goodnight and Dwight E. Stevenson, Home to Bethphage: A Biography of Robert Richardson, St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1949, pp. 168-187.

<sup>21</sup> MH, 1856, pp. 151 and 153 respectively.

<sup>22</sup> MH, 1856, pp. 155, 156, 264. Richardson contrasted “spiritual” with “legalistic.” He severely undercut Campbellian Lockian doctrine, perhaps unwittingly, when he stated “. . . it is nowhere propounded in the Holy Scriptures, and it is not in the power of its advocates to show that Christ or the apostles have anywhere announced “facts” as the ultimate object and terminus of the Christian faith, or that they have ever propounded such a philosophy as this, that it consists in a simple conviction of the historic truth of “facts.” MH, 1857, p. 397.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Franklin and J. A. Headington, The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin. St. Louis: John Burns, Publisher, 1879, pp. 354-360 and 384-386 for account of the incident.

<sup>24</sup> I here adopt the account in Ibid. pp. 395-397. This work dates the McGarvey debacle in 1873; others as early as 1866. This account states that the Board



and Regent of Kentucky University tried to force McGarvey out, and were unsuccessful in preferring charges at a hearing. Later, the Regent simply fired McGarvey in what he claimed an illegitimate procedure. McGarvey then, with Robert Milligan and W. T. Moore, founded the “College of the Bible” as separate from the Kentucky University. The account states that (p. 395) “The Regent and a majority of the Board adopted “liberal” or “progressive” views, and attempted to modify the University accordingly.” Can this account, if accurate, be in part responsible for McGarvey’s later vehement criticism of “liberal” views through his “Biblical Criticism” column in the Christian Standard?

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 318. The authors state that Errett “had shrewdness enough to combine all the elements of opposition to the Review.” Whether the accusation is accurate or not, it is certain that 1) Errett was a champion of the “liberal” or “progressive” attitudes, and 2) the Review championed the “conservative” cause.

<sup>26</sup> J. H. Garrison, Memories and Experiences St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1926, pp. 61, 69-70. On p. 59, he records, after describing a church which refused to support his work because he would not oppose instrumental music in worship, that he was to “to please for a broader and more spiritual interpretation of the Bible. . . .”

<sup>27</sup> A. T. DeGroot, The Restoration Principle. St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960, p. 133: “. . . the understanding of what the Founder wanted to be kept fresh, to be made central in his way of living, has been as varied as the personalities of the restoration leaders themselves.”

<sup>28</sup> Walter Scott, The Gospel Restored, A Discourse of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ, in which the Facts, Principles, Duties, and Privileges of Christianity are arranged, defined and discussed, and the Gospel in its various parts shewn to be adapted to the nature and necessities of man in his present condition. Cincinnati: O. H. Donogh, 1836, p. 572-573. Scott’s work consisted almost exclusively of treatment of the “plan of salvation;” he did not treat of the two great commandments, e. g. but claimed his work touched on all the “great landmarks of the True Gospel of Christ.”

<sup>29</sup> The Evangelist, Vol I (1832), p. 20. D. Duane Cummins comments that Scott “popularized the term ‘restoration’ with its unfortunate connotation of sectarian legalism.” The Disciples: A Struggle for Reformation St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2009, p. 77.

<sup>30</sup> Robinson’s 1924 work, as quoted in DeGroot, The Restoration Principle, p. 148.

<sup>31</sup> These all seem to share the first, or “legalistic distortion of Disciple Spirituality” set forth in D. Newell Williams’ most helpful analysis delivered July 30-August 1, 2009 at the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and available through the DCHS.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Milligan, The Scheme of Redemption, St. Louis: Bethany Press, 16<sup>th</sup> ed., 1962. First published in 1868.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 353. He was saturated with “common sense” philosophical attitudes, and asserted both that “every honest man can understand what God has said in Scripture” (p. 484-485) and division in the church may be attributed simply to a failure to follow the Bible (p. 497).



<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 482

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 349

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 366 and 387 respectively. Milligan also published a series on “Permanent Christian Ministry” in the 1856 Millennial Harbinger.

<sup>38</sup> “Moses Lard,” Encyclopedia of the Stone Campbell Movement, p. 451.

<sup>39</sup> M. Eugene Boring, Disciples and the Bible: A History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997, has commented (pp. 363-365) that restoration and unity have been found incompatible. Perhaps it would be better to learn from DeGroot (See Section V), and hold that extreme “pattern restoration” became untenable when Biblical criticism developed and Lockian rationalism was abandoned. Other forms of restorationism might be found acceptable. On the other side, Mark Weedman has argued that Isaac Errett in his “Our Position” document of the early 1870s appears to emphasize the unity theme, but only within the context of that Lockian rationalism. Perhaps this development of Errett’s thought from his more “liberal” stance of the 1860s in part accounts for the emergence of the Christian Standard as the voice of conservatives. But perhaps he was not as liberal as might be thought, judging from the motto of the Standard from the beginning, which speaks of “the restoration of primitive Christianity, its doctrine, its ordinance, and its fruits.” See Weedman’s unpublished manuscript, “Assessing The Declaration and Address: Hermeneutics vs. Unity in Early Stone-Campbell Movement Theology” delivered at the Johnson Bible College conference celebrating the bicentennial of that “Declaration and Address” Sept. 17-19, 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Christian-Evangelist, 1896, p.. 643.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 1914, p. 719. The article, nodding toward both groups, was titled: “History and Teachings of the Disciples of Christ: The Restoration Movement Up to Date”.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 1900, p. 394.

<sup>43</sup> “Reformation and Restoration,” Ibid., 1901, p. 362.

<sup>44</sup> Green, “How Much of New Testament Christianity Should Be Restored?” and “B. B. Tyler’s Letter,” Ibid., 1901, p. 396.

<sup>45</sup> C. J. Kimball, “Reformation or Restoration. . . Which?” Christian Standard 1879, p. 50.

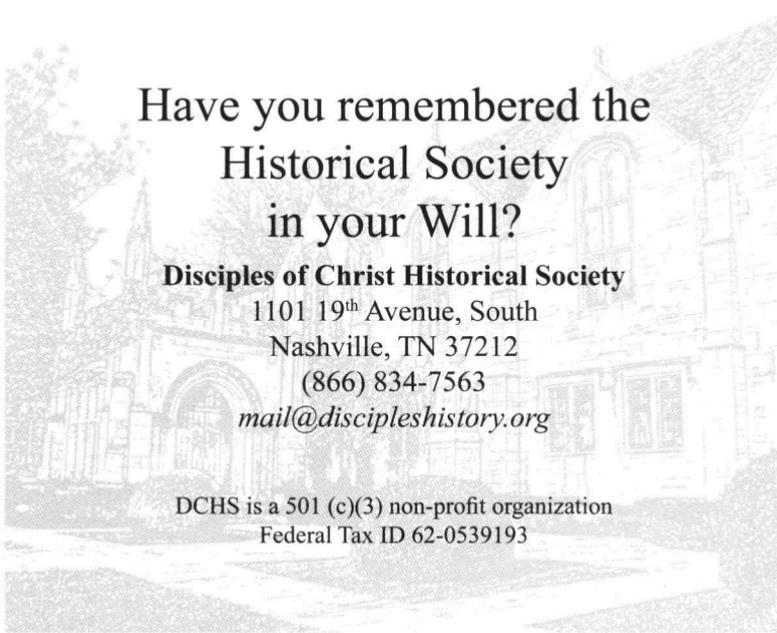
<sup>46</sup> Author unlisted, “The Test of the Restoration Movement,” Ibid., 1913, p. 1954.

<sup>47</sup> “Restoration” entries, The Christian Standard Index, 1866-1966, Vol. V. Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1972

<sup>48</sup> Gospel Advocate Index, Compiled by Jack L. Ray. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985.

<sup>49</sup> To confirm this judgment and the popularity of the term, there was a “Restoration Bible College” (short-lived) established in San Antonio by “Independents” shortly after WW II. The Restoration Herald,” organ of the Christian Restoration Association, came into existence to oppose organizational developments of the liberal wing about 1920. Non-instrumental advocates have established a Restoration Quarterly published at Abilene, Texas.





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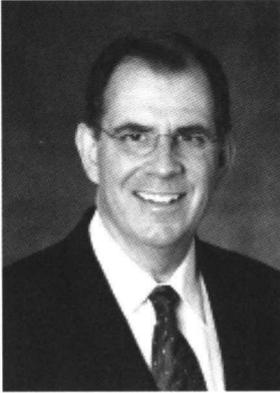
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the Evelyn and Harold Watkins Reading Room), the new Williams Conference Room will be a welcoming space at the Historical Society. To make your contribution toward this worthy goal, contact DCHS president Glenn Thomas Carson at [mail@discipleshistory.org](mailto:mail@discipleshistory.org).

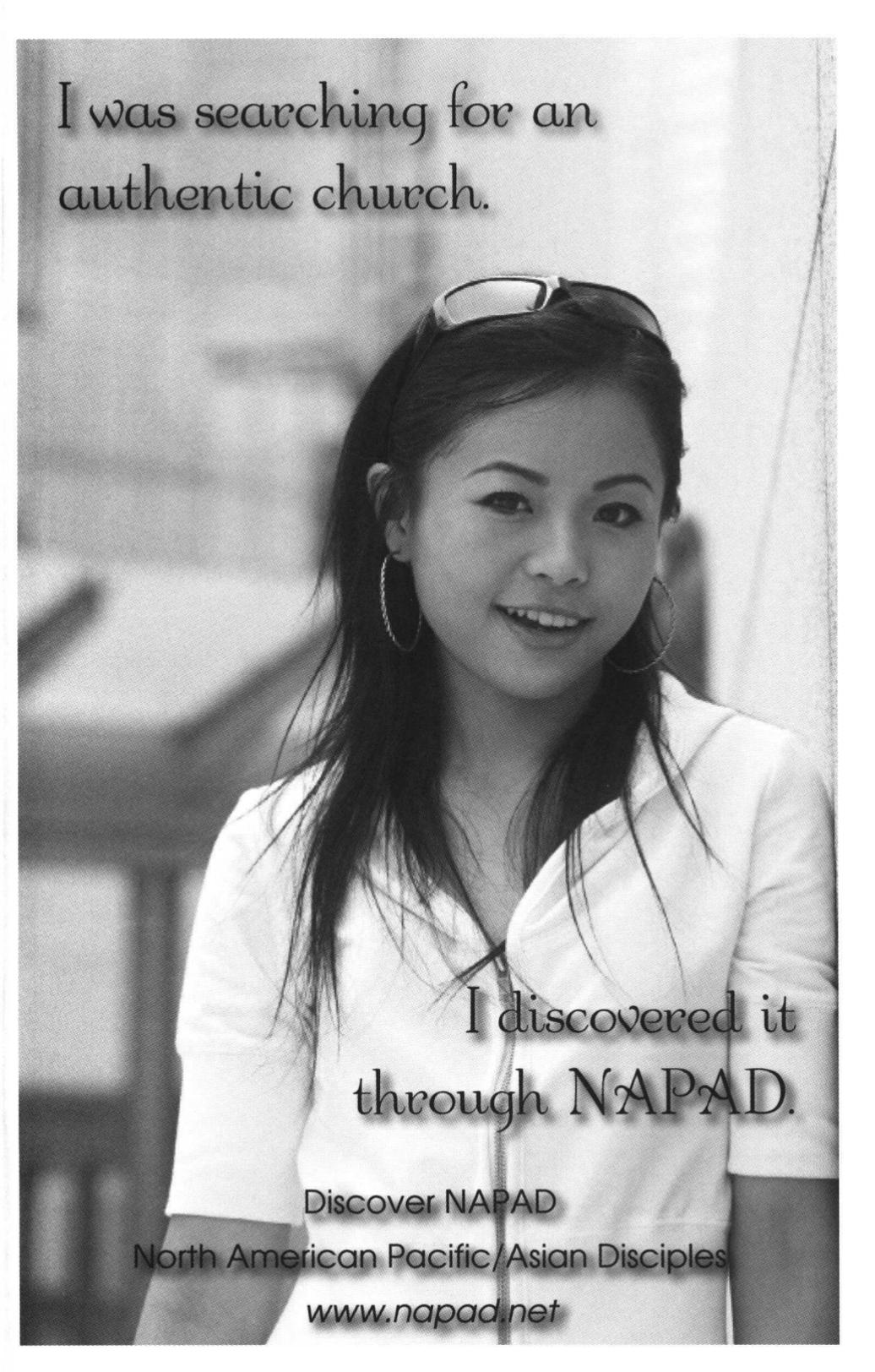
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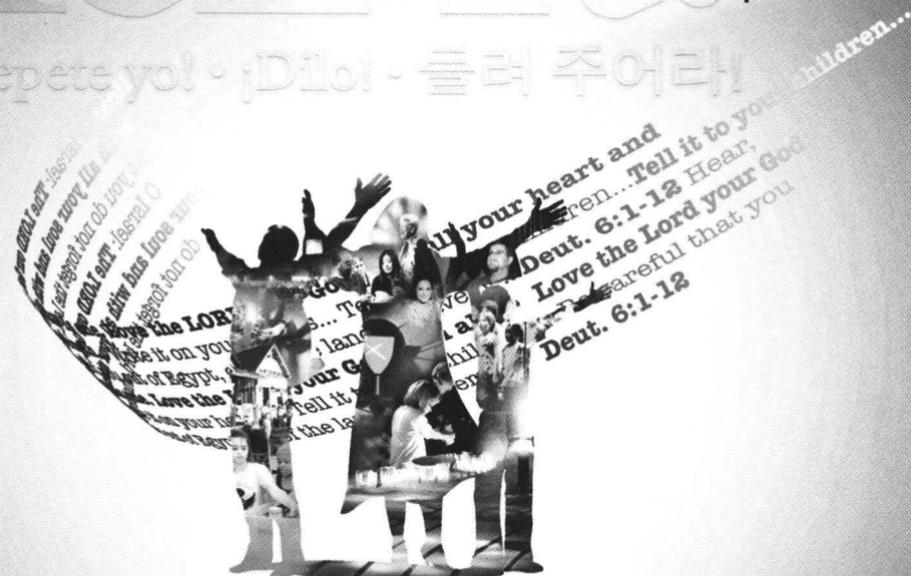
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a journal of Stone-Campbell history

Volume 70 • Number 2 • Fall 2011

## A Holy Sameness

The *Declaration and Address*:  
Lingering Influences Afflicting Disciples

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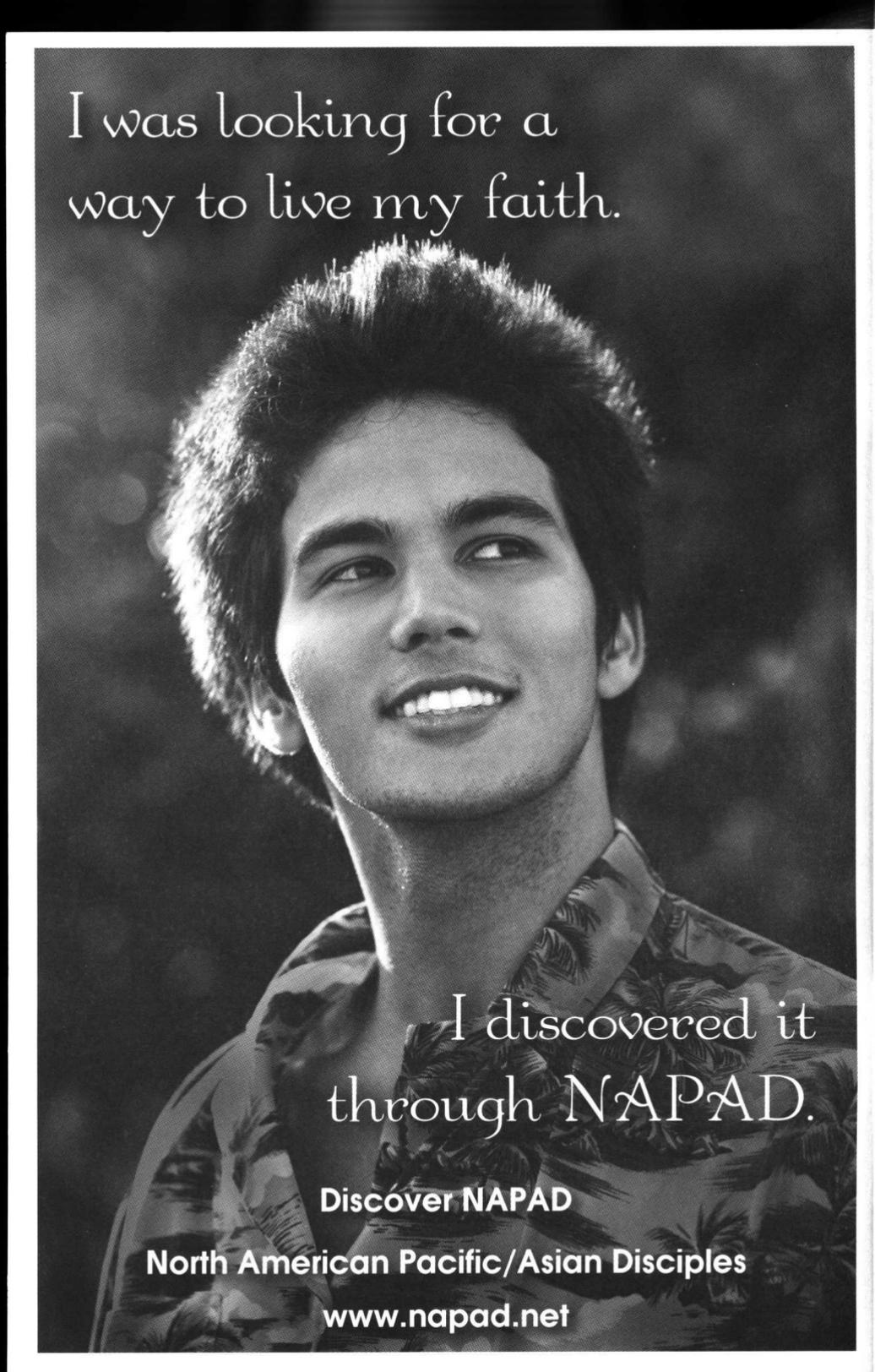
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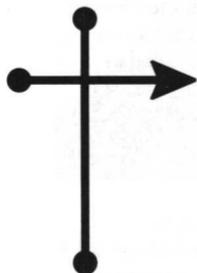
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 The President's Desk

6 *Mark Toulouse*

### A HOLY SAMENESS

*The Declaration and Address: Lingering*

*Influences Afflicting Disciples*

19 *Dyron Daugherty*

### CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN INDIA

Two Profiles

24 Did You Know?



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## THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The rising tides of history are often met by a resistant shore. That is, that while emerging circumstances seem to guarantee a certain outcome, the results that actually appear can be quite different.

This is true of history in general and our history as Christians in particular. Hundreds of times in our history the doom of our faith was apparent. It was all over when Jesus died. Paul's imprisonment was the end. The invasion of the barbarian tribes, and the fall of Rome, meant death. The medieval cultural struggle between western Christianity and eastern Islam spelled 'finished.' The split between the eastern and western Church would bring a conclusion. The rift between Roman Catholics and Protestants was the last nail.

Except it wasn't.

In our American story, the war we fought among ourselves should have been the end of the dream of liberty, and the end of the nation itself. Every marker along the way pointed toward

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*When we place  
faith alongside history  
it always means that things  
are never what they seem.*

---

dissolution. Many of the churches had already split north and south prior to the

outbreak of war, having failed in their attempts to address the sin of slavery. Yet again providence answered differently and an ebb tide began to rise once more.

When we place *faith* alongside *history* it always means that things are never what they seem. Just when it seems that there is no hope, there is a new tide that washes in an energy and a purpose that brings hope to life once again. The shores may resist for a time, but the tide always wins.

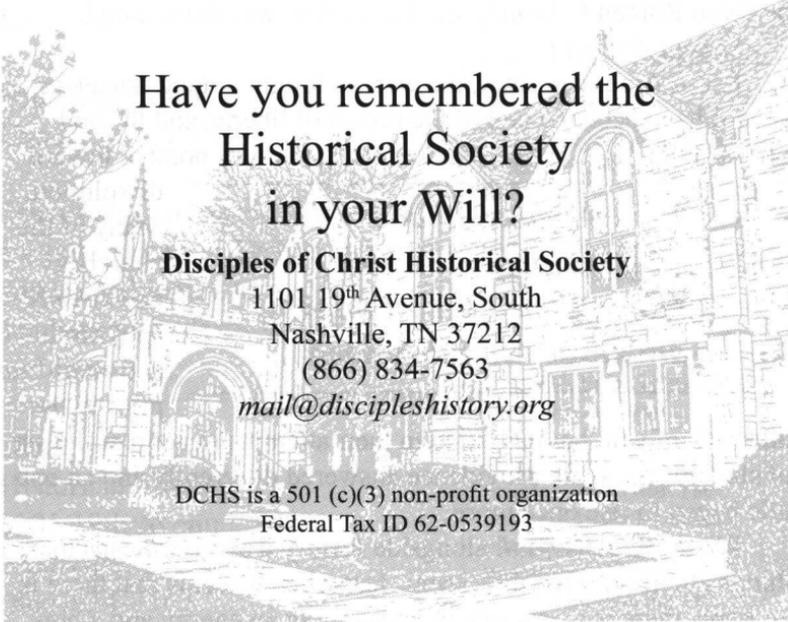
That is why our history is so deeply felt by so many millions of people. We cherish the history, but we also know it is the story of our faith.



We know, too, that we are not only residents of history, but its keepers. It is a responsibility that many of us take seriously and, in fact, are dedicating our all to the task. As the temporary keepers, we understand that many came before us to safeguard the story. And we realize, or at least we hope, that many stand ready to take up the cause when our time is done.

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# “A HOLY SAMENESS”

The *Declaration and Address*:  
Lingering Influences Afflicting Disciples  
—Mark Toulouse

## Overview

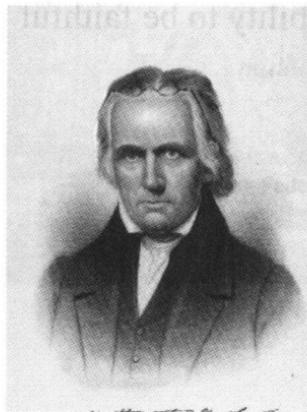
In this article Mark Toulouse explores how Thomas Campbell’s life in America influenced the themes in the *Declaration and Address* and what those influences mean now. Toulouse focuses on early theological ideas in the *Declaration* that “afflicted the Stone-Campbell heritage in the last two centuries, challenging its ability to be faithful to the gospel.”



Many essays have been written that connect Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* to contexts outside of North America, especially to the theology of the magisterial Reformation, to ideas popular in Northern Ireland and in Scottish thought and rhetoric, and to the British empiricist tradition.<sup>1</sup> It is only natural that Campbell's text reflects the prominent themes found in his ministry before he arrived in America. Yet, the *Declaration and Address* also demonstrates that Thomas Campbell had soaked up the American environment in his two short years in Pennsylvania. This also seems natural, given the fact that he arrived only eighteen years after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Though there are many strengths associated with the *Declaration and Address*, I will concentrate on some of the early theological assumptions found in this document, many rooted in America, that have afflicted the Stone-Campbell heritage in the last two centuries, challenging its ability to be faithful to the gospel.

### **The *Declaration and Address* in its American Context**

Sidney Mead, an historian who captured the essence of emerging denominationalism, argued that there were three religious ideas "prevailing during the Revolutionary epoch in which the denominations began to take shape." He defined these three ideas as follows: "The idea of pure and normative beginnings to which return was possible; the idea that the intervening history was largely that of aberrations and corruptions which was better ignored; and the idea of building anew in the American wilderness on the true and ancient foundations."<sup>2</sup>



*Thomas Campbell*

The *Declaration and Address* represents all three ideas. One could describe them as the heart and soul of the Disciples reformation, that notion historians have referred to as the "restoration" of the primitive church. In many respects, the Disciples were set firmly on the path of becoming a quintessential American church through this document. The first notion of "pure and normative beginnings to which return was possible" is affirmed in the early sentences of Campbell's document



where he emphasizes the need “to adopt and recommend such measures . . . as would restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole Church of God.”<sup>3</sup> If something is to be restored, there is clearly the assumption that it used to exist and that return to it was possible.

Thomas Campbell’s belief that there existed a normative “simple original form of Christianity” that “intervening history”

corrupted is clearly expressed in rather anti-historical ways. He argues that the

---

*If something is to be restored,  
there is clearly the assumption  
that it used to exist and that  
return to it was possible.*

---

contemporary church can “take up things just as the apostles left them; that thus disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages, we may stand with evidence upon the same ground on which the Church stood at the beginning.”<sup>4</sup> The way to Christian unity, he argued, was to direct Christian “attention to first principles, clearing the way before them by removing the stumbling-blocks – the rubbish of ages, which has been thrown upon it.”<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Mead’s notice of a third idea widely articulated in Revolutionary circles, “the idea of building anew in the American wilderness on the true and ancient foundations” is also found within Campbell’s *Declaration*. The “reformation” could happen “in this happy country” because Divine Providence has “happily exempted” the US “from the baneful influence of a civil establishment of any peculiar form of Christianity.”<sup>6</sup> American Christians must understand that “where much is given, much also will be required.” “Can the Lord expect, or require” Campbell asked, “anything less from a people in such unhampered circumstances – from a people so liberally furnished with all means and mercies, than a thorough reformation in all things, civil and religious, according to his word?” Elsewhere in the text, Campbell asked his readers, “Why should we deem it a thing incredible that the Church of Christ, in this highly favored country, should resume that original unity, peace, and purity which belong to its constitution, and constitute its glory?”<sup>7</sup> The promise of America was also, of course, bound up with its commitment to the freedom of religion: “Resume that precious, that dear-bought liberty, wherewith Christ has made his people



free; a liberty from subjection to any authority but his own, in matters of religion.”<sup>8</sup>

The Disciples commitment to the restoration of primitive Christianity found an early connection to American confidence that our nation both deserved and enjoyed God’s blessing. Campbell’s central theological assumption in this document is that God is in control of history and God’s providence has smiled on the United States.

Is it not the day of the Lord’s vengeance upon the anti-christian world – the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion? Surely, then, the time to favor her is come; even the set time. And is it not said that Zion shall be built in troublous times? . . . Should *we* not, then, be excited by these considerations to concur with all our might, to help forward this good work; that what yet remains to be done, may be fully accomplished.”<sup>9</sup>

Elsewhere, echoing his confidence in the providence of God and God’s special mission for American Christians, Campbell proclaims, “Duty then is ours, but events belong to God.”<sup>10</sup> Carl Flynn has stressed that, for Thomas Campbell, God created “the historical events that led to the establishment of the United States of America.” He understood “himself as one obediently falling in behind this historical leading of God.”<sup>11</sup> Campbell’s confidence in the special connection between God and America found fertile soil in Disciples history and provided a legacy from which the Disciples of Christ have had difficulty freeing themselves.

Such theological ideas clearly have eschatological roots. Hans Rollman is correct in arguing that the forms of apocalypticism associated with the Second Great Awakening, both in the US and in Ireland and England, are evident in Campbell’s document. Rollman correctly points out that the *Declaration* is not much interested in how the Old World will fare in the millennium. Rather his focus is on the US as Campbell invoked “European hierarchies . . . as a contrast and incentive for evangelical action in America.”<sup>12</sup> The elder Campbell’s apocalyptic understanding of the church is seriously anti-Catholic. American Christians, Campbell argued, are out “from under the direct influence of the anti-christian hierarchy; and, at the same time, [exempted] from any formal connection with the devoted nations that have given their strength and power



unto the beast.” Phrases like the “anti-christian hierarchy” and “the beast” are clear references to the Roman Catholic Church. The “vials of [God’s] wrath,” Campbell declared, will be “poured out upon them.”<sup>13</sup>

At one point near the end of the “Address,” Campbell even goes so far as to connect Catholicism with “the bonds of Antichrist.”<sup>14</sup> This strong anti-Catholicism obviously connected with Northern Ireland, but also with the developing United States. Its

prominence increased over the decades, particularly as a result of massive Catholic

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*This cultural atmosphere created a new American religious landscape, one contributing to the decline of the established churches...*

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immigration from 1815 to 1860, making Catholics the largest denomination in the US by 1850. Disciples struggled with anti-Catholicism well into the 1970s.

Campbell’s theological approach reflected many of the assumptions found on the American frontier. Christians in the United States enjoyed a long love affair with democracy. Over against the authority of the British tradition, Americans sought freedom from the authority of powerful institutions. In the words of Nathan Hatch, the four decades following independence were those of the “real American Revolution,” the time of a major “shift away from the Enlightenment and classical republicanism toward vulgar democracy and materialistic individualism.”<sup>15</sup> This kind of atmosphere fed Campbell’s anti-historical leanings and boosted his confidence that wisdom resided in the common sense of the common folk.

This cultural atmosphere created a new American religious landscape, one contributing to decline of the established churches, such as the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians, and to the rise of new democratic churches, the Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, preached a sermon in 1783 predicting the absolute dominance of American religion by the Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, and the Presbyterians.<sup>16</sup> Stiles predicted that, by 1860, there would be 7 million Congregationalists. When 1860 arrived, there were only about 250,000. By 1850, Presbyterians were around 350,000



in number and Episcopalians were somewhere around 100,000 strong.<sup>17</sup> Stiles could not have been more wrong. Instead, the top three were Roman Catholics (approaching 2 million), Methodists (roughly 1.3 million), and Baptists (just under 1 million).<sup>18</sup> By 1860, Disciples were about 192,000 strong, having surpassed the Episcopalians and threatening to overtake both the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians. Growth on the frontier made it hard for the established churches to keep up. The more democratic churches quickly ordained people, educated or not, and sent them out to minister to growing populations.

By 1880, when James Garfield, a Disciples lay minister, was elected President of the United States, there were nearly 400,000 Disciples. By the turn of the century, Disciples had exceeded one million in numbers. In many ways, the tremendous growth of Disciples resulted from the way this indigenous faith-group resonated with all the popular themes operating in American culture. The 19<sup>th</sup> century democratic atmosphere of US culture definitely favored Disciples, Methodists, and Baptists. In a manner not unlike the confusion between faith and culture so evident in that century, over these past two hundred years, members of the Stone-Campbell tradition have often found it difficult to distinguish between the God they worship as Christians and the God so readily affirmed and so differently defined by both politics and the popular culture in this country.

### **The Distinction between Essentials and Inferences in the Bible**

The resistance to religious authorities and institutions in this new country, and its accompanying tendency to celebrate individual autonomy, suited well Campbell's emphasis on the individual's responsibility to read the Bible for herself or himself. From the first sentence of this document, Campbell argued that "it is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our



*James Garfield*



measures directly and immediately from the Divine standard.” “Every man,” Campbell wrote, “must be allowed to judge for himself, . . . must bear his own judgment – must give account of himself to God.” These were, in the common vernacular of the day, natural rights, what Campbell referred to as “the rights and liberties of [Christ’s] subjects.” But where the Bible was concerned, Campbell believed all individuals were “under an equal obligation to be bound by it, and it alone; and not by any human interpretation of it.”<sup>19</sup> This meant the individual was not entirely free, because each person must, when it came to the essentials of the Bible, see the same thing.

Campbell’s theology of inspiration, of revelation, included his assumption that anything considered essential in the Bible needed no human interpretation. It spoke clearly enough to interpret itself. In the Appendix, he argued that Christians should “profess and practice neither more nor less than what we read in the Bible – than what is expressly revealed and enjoined therein . . . for the Bible exhibits but one and the self-same thing to all.”<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, Campbell claimed this self-interpreting character of the Bible represented the key to unity: “the Scriptures exhibit but one and the self-same subject-matter of profession and practice, at all times and in all places, and that, therefore, to say as it declares, and to do as it prescribes in all its holy precepts . . . would unite the Christian Church in a holy sameness of profession and practice throughout the whole world.”<sup>21</sup>

Since not everything in the Bible was equally essential, Campbell did allow for deduction or inference. In other words, some level of interpretation does take place when one reads the Bible. But the inferences or deductions associated with interpretation can never be binding. The Bible revealed two levels: the level of expressed declaration and that of inference or deduction. The declaration may always “be clearly understood, even where the latter is but imperfectly if at all perceived.” No inference, deduction, or opinion can be established as a “rule of faith or duty to our brother.”<sup>22</sup> Campbell made this a major theme in the *Declaration and Address* because he believed divisions in the church were caused by human authorities using opinions, inferences, or deductions as conditions of Christian fellowship. Doing a quick word search in the *Declaration and Address* reveals 41 usages of



the word “opinion,” as in “private opinions,” “human opinions,” or “deceptive opinions,” and an additional 14 instances of either “inferences” or “deductions.” His prolific use of these words reveals his hope to be absolutely clear about the threat to the faith of the church that is found in human opinions. “Hence,” wrote Campbell, “it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church’s confession.”<sup>23</sup>

I want to make three points about the theological assumptions associated with Campbell’s emphasis on the difference between essentials and opinions (or, in the language of later Disciples, the difference between matters of faith and matters of opinion). Each in its own way has afflicted Disciples since the early nineteenth-century.

1. *The one church consists only of those who profess Christ and obey him in all things:* Thomas Campbell held a theological assumption about unity that is stated in the famous proposition 1, “That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; . . .” Yet, ironically, he made the membership of the church itself dependent not on God’s activity in Christ, but rather, in the second part of this sentence, dependent upon human action. He defined the church as “. . . consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.”<sup>24</sup> The church itself, and the unity within it, exists only where human beings obey Christ “in all things according to the Scriptures.” So unity is dependent on human action rather than divine initiative. In that regard, the one church has a very small membership, if it actually contains any members at all.

How might Campbell’s approach to unity have been different if he had claimed that both the unity and the membership of the church rest in God’s gracious act in Christ rather than upon perfect human obedience to Christ in all things? What is the difference between one church that exists with very few, or perhaps no members, and one church that exists and is filled with members, “sinners” whom God accepts “as if” they were righteous, most of whom do not yet understand fully the extent of its unity? Throughout Stone-Campbell history, all wings of this faith fam-



ily have been plagued by the claim that the church can be one if only all Christians of the world would agree with us and obey Christ the same way we obey him.

2. *Division in the church is caused by ideas.* Campbell emphasized that division among Christians solely rested in their reliance on human opinions. In doing so, he missed the insight that H. Richard Niebuhr observed in 1929 when he noted that division is never purely ideological. Niebuhr claimed that division rested in the “profound social divergences” laying behind the ideas. He is actually making a point eerily akin to the postmodern arguments of today that theological formation always rests within communities of formation; we are each formed by our own set of historical, political, economic, and cultural influences. Division in the church rests in the “failure of the churches to transcend the social conditions which fashion them.”<sup>25</sup> To deal effectively with division, the church must address more than just the differences in ideas. Leadership must attend to the social factors that influence the development of theological commitments. What does it mean when we say that the worship hour on any given Sunday morning is the most racially segregated hour in North America? Thomas Campbell’s concern to establish a clear distinction between essentials and opinions failed to see how human understanding of both actually rested in social and cultural influences that remained unaddressed by his approach to Christian unity. Congregations have been slow to understand the nature of systemic racism and its effect not only on society, but on the church itself.

Partially, Campbell’s approach rested in the theological assumption that Christians could see and understand the revelation of God clearly, affected neither by the taint of sin nor the finitude of human existence. A theology of incarnation may have enabled him to take a different approach to Christian unity and to the church, one that took social and cultural factors seriously. Had Campbell approached revelation from the perspective of incarnation, he might have emphasized that divine inspiration or revelation must always be connected in some way or another to human



finitude. The mixture of divine with human is unavoidable if one approaches revelation through a theological understanding of incarnation. If God speaks at all, it is human ears that must hear and interpret; if God indeed inspires human authors, it is human hands that do the writing in a purely human language fraught with serious limitations in its ability to communicate meaning clearly or accurately; if God speaks through the written

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*From Thomas Campbell forward, Disciples have prided themselves on a unity free of forced theological agreement on issues deemed “non-essential” in character.*

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word, it is human eyes that read it, and human minds, conditioned by all manner of their human

contexts that process its meaning. A theology of incarnation may have enabled Campbell to emphasize how divine revelation, wherever or however it might appear, must always interact with human and finite limitations affecting meaning. Disciples might have examined themselves and their social contexts a bit more critically. This leads to a third theological assumption found in the distinction between essentials and opinions.

3. *God does not much care about what is not expressly declared in the Bible.* For Campbell, faith is a higher level of knowledge than opinion because it is dependent on the credibility of the one who does the testifying. Since Christ, and the Bible, testify to the essentials that make for faith, Christians can rely faithfully upon them as the only essentials.<sup>26</sup> Everything else is non-essential or falls into the realm of human opinion. It is not of much importance either to God or human beings.

From Thomas Campbell forward, Disciples have prided themselves on a unity free of forced theological agreement on issues deemed “non-essential” in character. While conservative Disciples argued that the silence of the Bible on non-essentials mostly was prohibitive, the more moderate to progressive Disciples over the past two hundred years believed that freedom of opinion should prevail on all issues not clearly handled in



the Bible. Even though Disciples have largely stopped arguing about the binding or loosing nature of the silence of scripture, they are still plagued by the theological, ethical, and social implications of Campbell's distinction between matters of faith and matters of opinion.

For Disciples, this has translated into a crisis in Christian identity. Beyond stating a few essentials (the Good Confession, believer's baptism, weekly Supper), Disciples find it very difficult to talk in any detail about what it means to be Christian. Most everything is left to personal opinion, which is largely uninformed, even ignorant, since Disciples have not worked on a theological understanding of Christian identity as a church. It has been left to individuals, who largely leave it alone.

Further, since their history shares a theological assumption that God doesn't care about anything but the essentials, Disciples have not done a good job of connecting the gospel to the social aspects of human life. They have been deficient in their ethical responsibilities and reflections. As Harold Lunger pointed out long ago in his study of the political ethics of Alexander Campbell, "this distinction, taken together with the principle of individual interpretation, and carried over into the field of ethics, meant that for Campbell a church could take a stand as a church on a moral issue only where the Bible's commands were clear and unmitakeable" [sic]<sup>27</sup> The area of social ethics, therefore, for Campbell, "remained largely a matter of individual interpretation and judgment." As David Harrell put it, the legalism associated with the faith and opinion distinction "freed the individual Christian and restricted the activities of the church."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, Disciples, as church, have found it difficult to engage in cultural critique or to make profound contributions through an active and public voice. Whenever the church has taken a stance on a controversial issue in General Assembly, members cry "foul" and argue that this is not an appropriate way for the church to speak. Lunger pointed out that for most of Disciples history, this has meant that Disciples have left "the public issues themselves to be settled largely on the basis of economic, social, and political interests, with no effective means of bringing religious and moral influences to bear upon them."<sup>29</sup> The most obvious example of this restriction of the church's activity is in the



response of Stone-Campbell congregations to the issue of slavery. As is well known, Disciples had no united mind about it.

This lingering theological legacy continues to discourage Disciples theological reflection as a church body about the meaning of the gospel in areas where the Bible does not make a direct connection itself or, in some cases, even where the Bible does seem to make a connection, but does so using the customs and

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*It seems a fitting conclusion to lift up one of the other great theological assumptions found within the Stone-Campbell tradition: there is much value in the diversity found in God's creation.*

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mores of either ancient Judaism or early Christianity to do so. The temptation for some

Disciples is to retreat into confessional corners where they can be comfortable with the sole authority of their own reflections. Christians who want to engage the question of what it means to be Christian, however, must be willing to risk their comfort for discussion and dialogue; they should make their arguments in a context where counter-arguments are made and all who participate are held accountable to the critical analysis of ideas. While, in a postmodern context, Christians should recognize that there is no such thing as complete objectivity, they must also recognize, through conduct and presentation, what theologian Linell Cady has described as the “difference between critical inquiry and dogmatic citation.”<sup>30</sup> Christian justifications, whether from the left or the right, are not necessarily the same thing as truth.

It seems a fitting conclusion to lift up one of the other great theological assumptions found within the Stone-Campbell tradition: there is much to value in the diversity found in God's creation. Conversation with those who represent difference is nearly always beneficial. If Disciples are going to be able to learn from those discussions, they should abandon one distinction and adopt another one. Disciples should give up their notion that there actually exists a distinction between *essentials* that they can identify with absolute certainty and *opinions* that are merely personal. In its place, Disciples could adopt the post-modern distinction between their human justifications about truth



and the truth itself.<sup>31</sup> When they adopt the latter distinction in favor of the former, Disciples will be able to engage diversity in genuine discussion about Christian identity and, perhaps, actually learn something new about what it means to be Christian in today's world.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas H. Olbricht and Hans Rollman, editors, *The Quest for Christian Unity, Peace, and Purity in Thomas Campbell's Declaration and Address* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2000); see particularly, Lester, "The Form and Function of the *Declaration and Address*;" Berryhill, "Scottish Rhetoric and the *Declaration and Address*;" Casey, "The Theory of Logic and Inference in the *Declaration and Address*;" and Olbricht, "Continental Reformation Backgrounds for the *Declaration and Address*."

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Declaration and Address*, 3. All page numbers referring to the *Declaration and Address* refer to the first edition, published in 1809, and found on Hans Rollman's website at the following address: [www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/tcampbell/da/DA-1ST.htm](http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/tcampbell/da/DA-1ST.htm)

<sup>4</sup> *D&A*, 16.

<sup>5</sup> *D&A*, 19. It is not surprising that this idea is also found in John Locke, upon whom the founders relied as they thought about government's role in securing natural rights; for example, in his comments to the reader at the beginning of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke argues "it is ambition enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge. . . ."

<sup>6</sup> *D&A*, 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> *D&A*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> *D&A*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> *D&A*, 8.

<sup>10</sup> *D&A*, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Flynn, "God, Christ, and Soteriology in the *Declaration and Address*," in *The Quest for Christian Unity*, particularly pp. 325-326.

<sup>12</sup> See "Rollman, "The Eschatology of the *Declaration and Address*," in *The Quest for Christian Unity*, pp. 341-363.



<sup>13</sup> D&A, 8.

<sup>14</sup> D&A, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 23.

<sup>16</sup> Handy, "Why it Took 150 Years for Supreme Court Church-State Cases to Escalate," in Ronald C. White, Jr., and Albright G. Zimmerman, eds., *An Unsettled Area: Religion and the Bill of Rights* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 55-56.

<sup>17</sup> See Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, eds., *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, pp. 137 (Presbyterian), 98 (Congregationalists), and 100 (Episcopalians). The atlas also mentions the prediction made by Stiles, and explicitly indicates his prediction of 7 million Congregationalists; see p. 90.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 157-158, and 221.

<sup>19</sup> D&A, 3.

<sup>20</sup> D&A, 40.

<sup>21</sup> D&A, 36.

<sup>22</sup> D&A, 25-26.

<sup>23</sup> D&A, 17.

<sup>24</sup> D&A, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, especially p. 11-17.

<sup>26</sup> See Casey's discussion of Locke's notion of the relationship between faith and revelation in "The Theory of Logic and Inference in the *Declaration and Address*, 228 f.

<sup>27</sup> Harold Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), 27.

<sup>28</sup> David Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America: The Disciples of Christ and American Society to 1866* (Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), 30.

<sup>29</sup> Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell*, 270; see also 266.

<sup>30</sup> Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 64.

<sup>31</sup> On the difference between "justifications" and "truth" see Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics After Babel: The Languages of Morals and Their Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), pp. 22-32, and pp. 82-103.

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# CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN INDIA:

Two Profiles

—Dyron Daughrity

In 2003, while working on my Ph.D., I went to South India for research. I was studying Christianity in India during the colonial era. That research was the basis for my book *Bishop Stephen Neill: From Edinburgh to South India* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2008). Then, in 2005 I worked in Pune, India for several months as the Academic Coordinator for the University of Calgary's International Programs. While there I taught at the University of Pune and Union Biblical Seminary.

The culture of India, and the history of Christian missions there, are both fascinating. While there are thousands of stories to be told, here are two profiles that should whet your appetite.

## Arise Shine

In Chennai, in South India, there is a Church of Christ network that goes by the name of *Arise Shine Church of Christ Mission*. They have around sixty village churches and employ preachers in most of these. Their work is concentrated in the states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and is overseen by a group of elders. The real authority, however, is the director of the charity, a young preacher named Jasuran Roy Knight.<sup>1</sup>

The antecedents of the *Arise Shine Church of Christ Mission* go back to the 1920s when Roy's great grandfather, a Hindu, converted to the Christian faith by North American missionaries. These missionaries were not affiliated with Churches of Christ, however. The Churches of Christ influence came in the 1960s through the work of J.C. Bailey, the subject of my second profile. Bailey was a Canadian missionary who is still deeply respected by all in the *Arise Shine* network.<sup>2</sup>

The vast majority of *Arise Shine's* churches function in the vernacular, which is usually Tamil or Telugu, the languages of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Most of the members are poor, uneducated villagers who do not speak English. However, a few of their churches are English-speaking. In my interactions with Roy, I began noticing that when preaching in English or studying an English-language Bible, he and his colleagues use the Au-



thorized, or King James Version (KJV).<sup>3</sup> I thought this was odd because of the merits of using a more updated version. The KJV is difficult enough for Americans, hence its dwindling popularity in the Churches of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Indians who speak English normally do so as a second or third language after their vernacular and Hindi, and the antiquated KJV would seem even less comprehensible for them.<sup>5</sup> However, when citing the KJV, Roy speaks with unusual fluency.

After repeated conversations I came to realize that the language of the KJV was not the primary issue here; it was much

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*Visiting the Arise Shrine network  
of churches is like witnessing the  
opening of a time capsule.*

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more complex. Loyalty to the KJV is directly linked to loyalty

to the tradition that had been taught to them in the mid-twentieth century by missionaries. These American missionaries are heroic in the collective memory of this community. They propagated their faith with great confidence. Their version of Christian truth is still canonical. Visiting the *Arise Shine* network of churches is like witnessing the opening of a time capsule. This was like a Church of Christ of my grandparents in the 1950s. Their teachings and practices had not evolved or indigenized. Within 24 hours of my first arrival to South India I found myself entangled in long discussions about why instruments in the worship setting could jeopardize a person's soul, why members of the Christian Church are theologically suspect, why drinking alcohol is a sin, and why women must take no leadership role whatsoever in public worship.

I had heard these same arguments laid out in the same ways in the U.S. I recognized these teachings as a part of the most conservative strands of the Churches of Christ heritage, but to witness them being propagated boldly in twenty-first century India hinted at two things: 1) this network probably received funding from conservative Churches of Christ in the United States; and 2) loyalty to the old ways of the missionaries took precedence over cultural relevance in this ministry.

### **A Soldier of Christ**

In 1963, at the age of 59, J.C. Bailey (1903-2001) moved



to India as a missionary after many successful years working in ministry, education, and publishing.<sup>6</sup> His towering stature in the Canadian Church of Christ scene is well-known. In India as well as in Canada, J.C. Bailey is as much myth as man. From his obituary from 2001, one realizes the venerable status he held: Bailey's influence on people was powerful.... If there ever was a man whose physical appearance, manner, and movement was that of a great Army General, it was J.C. Bailey. But this tall, straight man with long strides and brisk walk ... was truly a STALWART SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.<sup>7</sup>

On April 25, 1963 J.C. Bailey arrived to Northeast India to evangelize the *Adivasi*, the aboriginal people groups, in Meghalaya and Assam. However, in June of that year he moved south to Madras and later based himself at Kakinada, in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>8</sup> Bailey worked as a missionary to India for 25 years, from 1963 to 1988. It is estimated that over 100,000 members of Churches of Christ resulted from his ministry there.<sup>9</sup> However, statistics in India are rarely taken at face value. For example, Joshua Gootam, Bailey's first convert in the state of Andhra Pradesh, who is now a preacher in the Churches of Christ, claims "there are now estimated to be more than 2 million members of the church [of Christ] in this state alone."<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the point should not be missed: prior to J.C. Bailey's arrival in 1963, there were scant traces of a *cappella* Churches of Christ in India. By the end of his ministry in that country, there were hundreds of thousands of members—and many of them could trace their origins to Bailey's work.

Bailey's great successes and conviction have not been forgotten in India. This was the great heyday of the non-instrumental Churches of Christ and Bailey's impressive work fostered extreme loyalty to him and to the teachings he brought.



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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Roy's short autobiography is available on the web at: <http://www.india-churchofchrist.com/missionary.html>. I have known Roy since 2003 and much of my information is based on personal interaction with him.

<sup>2</sup> See Roy's historical account of the mission at: <http://www.indiachurchofchrist.com/missionary.html>. The work of J.C. Bailey is discussed later in the paper.

<sup>3</sup> Roy is proficient in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, and English.

<sup>4</sup> See Bobby Ross, Jr., "Thou shalt read ... NIV?" in *The Christian Chronicle* 68:4 (April 2011), pp. 3 and 15. The *Christian Chronicle* is the flagship newspaper for the Church of Christ. In celebration of the 400 year anniversary of the KJV they conducted a survey of 1100 randomly selected C of C members. The KJV, which was dominant throughout Church of Christ history until the mid-twentieth century, has now slipped to fifth place behind the NIV (42%), NASV (17%), NKJV (10%), and ESV (10%). Only 6% of Church of Christ members now claim the KJV as their preferred version. The article states, however, that "Most black congregations still prefer the KJV."

<sup>5</sup> It should be pointed out that in Tamil Nadu there is widespread resistance to Hindi. Tamils often claim their language is Dravidian and has little connection to Hindi. Thus, the enforcement of the Hindi language is widely seen as a superimposition. As a result, English is often the second language of choice in that particular state. See the work of Eugene Irschick, especially *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Bailey's life is chronicled in his two autobiographies: 1) *Forty Years A Canadian Preacher* (Abilene, Texas: Mathew Printing, 1961); and 2) *My Appointment with Destiny* (Fort Worth, Texas: Star, 1975). The second one deals with Bailey's mission work in India. Another source for Bailey's life is a chapter entitled "J.C. Bailey" by J.B. Trotter in volume two of Ira Rice's autobiography *Pressing Toward the Mark: An Autobiography* (Memphis: privately printed, 1998), pp. 371-379. See also Bailey's obituaries in the July 2001 edition of *The Christian Chronicle*: <http://www.christianchronicle.org/article693198-Obituaries>; and the *Gospel Herald* 66:8 (August 2001). The *Gospel Herald* is a Canadian Church of Christ publication. The entire August 2001 issue is devoted to J.C. Bailey.

<sup>7</sup> Bailey's obituary: <http://www.christianchronicle.org/article693198-Obituaries>. The all-caps phrase is from the obituary.

<sup>8</sup> For the June 1963 date see Bailey, *My Appointment with Destiny*, p. 21. For the quotation see J.C. Bailey, "Evangelism in India: After 25 Years, What Then?," in the *Old Paths* Archive: <http://www.oldpaths.com/Archive/Bailey/John/Carlos/1903/Articles/after25y.html>. For the precise chronology of Bailey's ministry in India, I corresponded with Ray McMillan by phone and email. Ray McMillan is a Church of Christ missionary who currently lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, but he travels to India twice per year for extended mission trips. Ray was one of two missionaries who brought J.C. Bailey's wife, three adopted children, and cargo to India in 1963, three months after Bailey had arrived. J.C. flew from Canada to India. However, Ray flew from Winnipeg to London and



met fellow missionary David Hallett and J.C. Bailey's family there (they had traveled by ship from Montreal to London). McMillan, Hallett, and J.C.'s family then traveled by ship from London to Bombay via the Suez Canal. McMillan is still very connected to the churches established by Bailey and is one of the few people living who are acquainted with Bailey's early years in India.

<sup>9</sup> See Bailey's obituary: <http://www.christianchronicle.org/article693198~Obituaries>. The estimate comes from Bailey's co-worker Charles F. Scott.

<sup>10</sup> Email message to me from Joshua Gootam, March 24, 2011. Gootam claims to be Bailey's first convert in Andhra Pradesh and several other sources either confirm or allude to that. J.C. Bailey's son John has been a very helpful resource in this paper. He wrote to me in an email dated March 22, 2011, "Joshua Gootam was the first convert my dad made in South India. He has been a radio preacher for over 30 years and has more knowledge of my dad's work in India than anyone living."

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## DID YOU KNOW?



Did you know that the Stone-Campbell World History Project is almost finished? The follow-up to the renowned SC encyclopedia, the book has been over six years in the making. Fourteen historians from all three streams of our tradition have worked together to make this first-ever world history a reality. “This new history will tell our story in such a way that the shared past, the common interests, and the ongoing promise of Christian unity are the major themes,” says Scott Seay, managing editor of the Project. Publication of the world history is expected in 2012.

The Stone-Campbell World History Project is a joint venture of the Christian Board of Publication (Chalice Press) and Disciples of Christ Historical Society. For more information visit [www.stonecampbellhistory.com](http://www.stonecampbellhistory.com).

### *Heard it Said*

“Lester McAllister knew more about things than any person I have ever known.”

— Rev. David Caldwell  
*remembering one of the 20th century's great historians*



## Discipliana Classic

### *Historian W.E. Garrison Was Also a Sculptor*

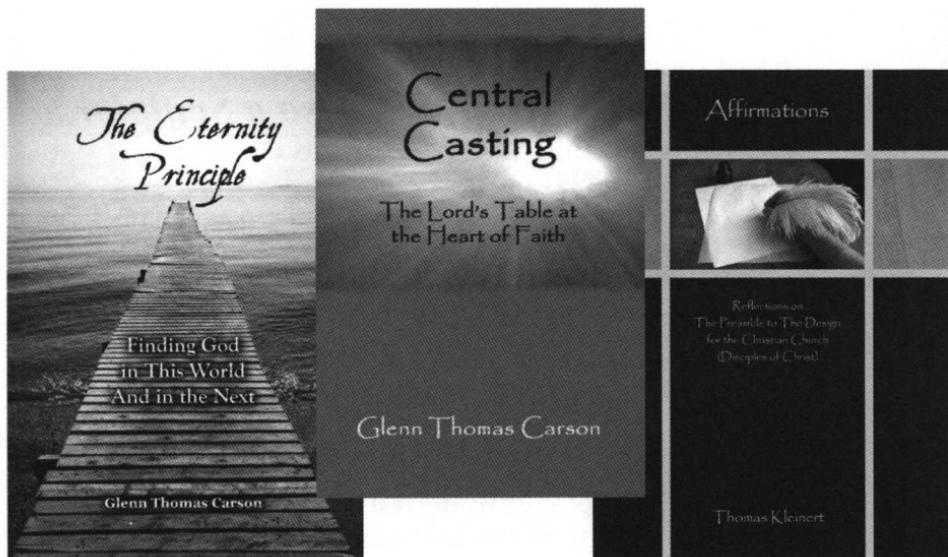


“I do some sculpture, to be sure, but I ought not to be listed among the real all-around sculptors. I saw a series of television shows recently given by a distinguished sculptor who showed and described his work in every conceivable medium from marble, granite, and bronze, to wood and terra cotta, works ranging from the miniature to the monumental, in relief and in the round. I saw the excellence as well as the variety of his work. I began

to shrink from hearing myself called a sculptor, though I cheerfully admit that my work is pretty good in one particular field. [And that is] portraiture in relief.”

—50 Years ago in *Discipliana*, May 1961

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