

"Holding fast the faithful Word . . ."



The **WORD** *and* **WORK**



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JULY, 1994

**THE STONE-CAMPBELL
REFORMATION:
ITS ROOTS AND IDEALS**

THOUGHT - PROVOKERS

from Various Restoration Movement Leaders

Barton Stone: "We may take the Bible alone . . . as the only standard of faith and practice, yet without the Spirit, union can never be effected, nor continued . . . Let every Christian begin the work of union in himself. Wait upon God, and pray for the promise of the Spirit. Rest not till you are filled with the Spirit. Then, and not till then, will you love the brethren."

Thomas Campbell: "Christianity is emphatically, supereminently —yea, transcendently, the religion of *love*."

"If we have any desire to be eternally happy, and to exist for the purpose for which we are made, let us make the contents of the Bible our study night and day, and endeavor, by prayer and meditation, to let its influence dwell upon our hearts perpetually. This is the whole business of life in this world. All else is but preparation for this; for this

(Continued inside)

alone can lead us back to God, the eternal Fountain of all being and blessedness. He is both the Author and the Object of the Bible. It comes from Him, and is graciously designed to lead us to Him"

Alexander Campbell, writes Richard Hughes, "often insisted that mere intellectual assent to gospel facts is not saving faith. The faith that saves, he urged, 'is not belief or any doctrine or truth, abstractly, but belief in Christ; *trust or confidence in Him as a person.*'"

Again, Campbell wrote, Baptism has "no abstract efficacy. Without previous faith in the blood of Christ, and deep and unfeigned repentance before God, neither immersion in water, nor any other action, can secure to us the blessings of peace and pardon."

Robert Richardson: "A sect is characterized by a marked stagnation of religious thought. The Theological system of each party surrounds it with fixed boundaries which afford no outlet to free investigation." A current writer, enlarging on Richardson's thought, says, "When people reach the point where they believe they have discovered all truth, that they have everything worked out, and that their conclusions are equivalent to 'truth,' surely they have become a sect." (Mark Nitz)

Moses Lard: "The church of the Lord Jesus Christ will never perfectly fulfil its mission in the world as long as we expect one man [our preacher] to be a spiritual jack-of-all-trades. God has ordained that we should be endowed with and should exercise various gifts given according to His own wisdom. As long as these gifts are ignored, buried, and unused, the church cannot but be poor in its spiritual life and in its testimony to the world."

Isaac Errett: "All who trust in the Son of God, and obey Him are our brethren, however wrong they may be about anything else; and those who do not trust in this divine Savior for salvation, and obey His commandments, are not our brethren, however intelligent and excellent they may be in all besides."

David Lipscomb on Matt. 7:1, "Judge not": "Judge is used in the sense of condemn. Be not too ready to condemn. Some persons are ready to put the worst construction on the actions of all and to condemn harshly and unjustly. People who so judge others will be judged in the same way. The Scriptures require us to put the best construction on the acts of our fellow-men, not to condemn them until forced to do so—that is, until no other construction can be put on their actions. [However] when the actions of persons will allow no other construction, on must apply the laws of God to them impartially."

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

THE STONE-CAMBELL REFORMATION: ITS ROOTS AND IDEALS

Alex V. Wilson

Of course there are multitudes of wonderful Christians who've never even heard of Barton Stone or Alexander Campbell, or of the crusade they helped establish--usually called the Restoration Movement. Some members of some Churches of Christ (which sprang from that movement) think theirs is the only true church and they are the only real Christians. Such an idea is so preposterous that it is unworthy of rebuttal. On the other hand there are lots of folks outside the movement (and some inside it) who think it is and always was totally legalistic, sectarian and sterile. Their attitude is, "Can any good thing come out of the Restoration Movement?" But that too is false and foolish.

I grew up in the Churches of Christ, and have ministered among them for thirty-five years now, so I've long been aware of various virtues and vices among us. But my knowledge multiplied during the past year as I prepared and taught a semester course on the history of the movement. Our main textbook had over 700 pages, and a number of other books and articles were studied too! I discovered much to admire and to thank God for, and lots to deplore and weep over. I found many heroes. Some I'd never even heard of--Archibald McLean and Peter Ainslie III. (We unearthed a fine article by Ainslie in the 1917 *Word and Work*, on Christ's return.) Others I had known about but came to appreciate to a greater extent--Isaac Errett, David Lipscomb, K.C. Moser, James D. Murch and Carl Ketcherside (Ruth and I read his exciting autobiography). Sad to say, there have been a lot of zeros too. I won't mention them now. Read Leroy Garrett's *The Stone-Campbell Movement* and reach your own conclusions.

Another little-known hero who emerged was Dr. Robert Richardson. Dale A. Jorgenson writes of the doctor's desire "that the Restoration Movement would not become a legalistic sect-among-sects." He continues, quoting another writer:

Richardson could foresee the shipwreck of the Disciples at some future time, as the faithful wrangled within a devotionless faith and a logic of mechanical literalism He labored for many years to liberate the Disciples from this benumbing literalism. He struggled to bring a spirit of tolerance and devotion into the refor-

mation when it seemed to be trending toward a hair-splitting, fellowship-breaking logic, to little seasoned by Christian love.

You too may learn more about Richardson--valuable insights from an unsung hero--this month and the next two issues as well. For we are reprinting the three chapters about him from the splendid recent book by Leonard Allen of Abilene, *Distant Voices*.

Let me whet your appetite for that book. In his introduction Dr. Allen observes, "*Seeing the past in a new light . . . can make the future look different.*" Here is his explanation: "Sometimes things happen that change the past we remember. A long-forgotten event, when recalled, recasts parts of the story. 'So that's what really happened!' we exclaim. 'My father didn't really mean all those things in the way that I remembered them,' we discover. 'There was a whole different side to the story that I never saw before.'"

Such a process may occur not only in the experience of an individual, but even of a movement:

Our memories of our Christian heritage are also selective. As the story of a religious movement is passed on, some things get dropped out and forgotten; intricate events get simplified; conflicts get enshrined and differences exaggerated. Furthermore, as with our individual memories, discovering lost parts of this past can bring clarifying perspective--and perhaps healing balm to Christian life today.

This book is an exercise in remembering . . . [so we may] recover some of the forgotten or "distant voices" from the modern history of Churches of Christ. These voices are the minority voices among Churches of Christ, that have been drowned out. Some of the voices come from people largely forgotten by the tradition; others come from major, well-known figures who held certain views now largely forgotten . . . Listening to such voices helps us glimpse a heritage that is broader, richer and more diverse than we presently may suppose. [pp. 3-5, condensed]

The students at our School of Biblical Studies enjoyed this book immensely. It is not technical nor hard. It is easy to read, yet thought-provoking. There are 175 pages of text, plus an 18 page study guide with 4-8 discussion questions per chapter. The "voices" belong to folks like Larimore, Harding, Brewer, Lipscomb, and Silena Holman, besides Stone and Campbell. We are grateful for permission from the author and publisher to run six of the twenty-two chapters, but you would benefit from reading the whole book. You may buy a copy from our office @ \$10.95 plus postage (and tax in Kentucky).

But for now, read on in this issue, being both thankful and thankful.

BARTON W. STONE, EVANGELIST AND PEACEMAKER

Sylvia Root Tester

Barton Warren Stone, born on December 24, 1772, was the last child of John and Mary Warren Stone. Soon after Barton's birth, John Stone died. In 1779, during the Revolutionary War, Mrs. Stone moved her household to Virginia.

It was not easy for a widow to maintain a household in those days. Barton was sent to school for five years, but when he was pronounced "educated" by his teacher, no further thought was given to his schooling. However, when he was seventeen, part of his father's estate was divided among all the children. Barton took his share and enrolled in the David Caldwell Academy, near Greensboro, North Carolina. He stayed three years and finished the appointed courses.

While Stone was in Greensboro, James McGready held a revival there. James McGready was a "hell-fire-and-brimstone" preacher, one of the best known of the Presbyterian evangelists.

Stone attended one meeting and then several more. McGready was a fearsome Calvinist. He believed all people were totally depraved, with no capacity for good. He taught--as many others at that time--that God chose whom He would or would not save and that individuals had no say in the matter. People must be born anew, McGready believed, but only God could decide if they would be.

Barton was convinced he was a sinner. He wished for the new birth but didn't know what to do next. He waited for an emotional experience to show that God had chosen him, but none came. Barton waited, fearing he was not chosen, for almost a year.

He happened then to hear a sermon on the topic of God's love, and it ended his difficulties. If God was love, God would accept him. In later years Barton wrote of how he felt that night. "I loved Him--I adored Him--I praised Him aloud."

To Barton Stone love was always the touchstone--God's love for him and for all people, his own love for God and for other people. He once said to a friend, "So great is my love for sinners, that, had I power, I would save them all."

Stone's statement about his love for sinners was not false boasting. His entire life bears testimony to its truth. Through him thousands were won to Christ. His very real concern for them was evident. People remembered him with deep affection--a return of the affection they had received from him.

EARLY MINISTRIES

Stone became a supply minister at Cane Ridge and Concord, Kentucky. Soon these two churches asked Stone to be their regular minister. This meant he had to face examination by the presbytery. He was worried, for by now he believed that some Presbyterian doctrines contradicted Scripture.

So when asked if he would follow the Westminster Confession, Stone answered, "As far as I see it consistent with the Word of God." No one objected to this answer, and Stone became an ordained minister on October 4, 1798.

Stone's ministry at Cane Ridge and Concord was fruitful from the beginning. Soon, fifty new people joined one church and thirty joined the other. Steadily, the churches grew.

In 1801 Barton Stone traveled to Logan County, Kentucky, to attend a revival in which McGready was a speaker. This was one of many revivals that made up the "Great Revival," later recorded with both wonder and aversion in the history books.

In those times revivals began on Saturday. People brought their own provisions. Nearby church folk supplied additional food. People slept in their wagons or on the ground. A few had tents. Once the services began, they didn't stop, continuing night and day until food ran out and people were utterly exhausted.

A puzzling phenomenon arose in those revivals. Barton Stone himself was astonished by it. People seemed to be "struck down" by what they called the Spirit of God. They would faint and lie as if dead for some time, and then rise to express tumultuous joy at being delivered from Hell. This happened to several of Stone's friends. He sat with them, observing, trying to figure out the phenomenon. Although he was not comfortable with what was happening, he finally decided, ". . . that cannot be a Satanic work which brings men to humble confession and forsaking of sin . . . fervent praise and thanksgiving."

Barton Stone returned to his churches. He reported on the revival to one church on Sunday morning and to the other that night.

Two little girls were "struck down" in the evening service. The next day Stone returned home to find people waiting for him. A revival meeting began right there and lasted into the night.

In June a five-day meeting was held at Concord. Four thousand people attended. Stone took some time off in July to marry Eliza Campbell. The two had a short honeymoon, and Stone brought his bride back to a log cabin he had built. Eliza bore him five children before she died in 1810. In 1811 Stone married her cousin, Celia Wilson Bowen. Celia bore him fourteen more children over the years.

THE CANE RIDGE REVIVAL

In August the Cane Ridge revival meeting began. It was one of the largest of the hundreds of revivals that made up the "Great Revival." Eighteen Presbyterian ministers, including Stone, organized it.

Here is what Stone wrote about the meeting:

The roads were literally crowded with wagons, carriages, horsemen and footmen moving to the solemn camp. The sight was affecting . . . there were between twenty and thirty thousand collected. Four or five preachers were frequently speaking at the same time in different parts of the encampment, without confusion. The Methodist and Baptist preachers aided in the work, and all appeared cordially united in it . . . We all engaged in singing the same songs of praise--all united in prayer--all preached the same things . . .

Stone also described, in a very orderly manner, the odd happenings at the meeting. He described seven "exercises": the "falling exercise" (described above), the "jerks," the "barks," the "dancing exercise," the "laughing exercise," the "running exercise" and the "singing exercise." All were thought to be manifestations of the Holy Spirit. To modern readers they seem more like symptoms of mass hysteria, brought on by excitement, exhaustion and the expectation that they would occur.

Throughout the meeting Stone preached, exhorted, spoke with individuals, helped people in the throes of the seven "exercises," prayed, joined in group singing and finally wore himself to exhaustion and made himself ill.

In later years people attacked Stone for his participation in these events, and Stone's friends were greatly embarrassed. Stone himself, though, did not seem embarrassed. He felt the odd happenings were excessive and even called them fanatic. But he had seen people's lives change, and he counted that for good.

RESULTS: SEPARATION WITH SOME

Several things happened as a result of the Cane Ridge revival. First, Stone freed the slaves he owned.

Second, he began his journey away from the Presbyterians. His disagreements with Presbyterian belief could no longer be ignored. Calvinist Presbyterians rallied around an antirevival theme. They attacked a good friend of Stone, named Richard McNemar. They brought formal charges against McNemar to the Transylvania Synod. So McNemar, Stone and several others drew up a paper. They protested the proceedings and withdrew from the synod. Soon they formed a separate presbytery, the Springfield Presbytery.

The Springfield Presbytery lasted nine months. In that time its members realized they had come only halfway. Either they were Presbyterian or they were not. They had gone to the Bible in their decision to reject Calvinist doctrines; they must go to the Bible in their future guidance. The Bible said nothing about presbyters; thus, it was time for the Springfield Presbytery to die. So the members drew up a will and dissolved it.

The "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" is important to people in the restoration movement. Its language was clear and direct. It stated central themes still honored in the movement. Here is part of what it said:

We will, that this body die, be dissolved and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church . . . forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

We will, that each particular church, as a body . . . choose her own preacher

We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven.

We will, that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less.

The "Last Will and Testament" was drawn up in 1804, five years before Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address."

The group to which Stone belonged took the name *Christian*, for the Bible said believers were called Christians. Stone continued to speak and preach, often daily. The fires of the "Great Revival" dimmed, its excesses wore down, and Stone was glad as anyone to see the excesses go. But he never lost his passion for revival meetings. He knew they were effective tools for winning souls.

Of the six who signed the "Last Will and Testament," only Stone and a man named David Purviance persevered. Stone's church members stuck with him, though, and soon there were more and more churches committed to the movement.

RESULTS: UNION AMONG OTHERS

The third effect the Cane Ridge revival had on Stone was to strengthen his feeling of unity with other Christians. During the revival he had felt united with Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians. He longed for unity among all Christians.

Rice Haggard, who had suggested the name *Christians* for those who adhered to the "Last Will and Testament," came from the East. There he had worked with a group that used that name. He brought Stone together with this group, led by James O'Kelly. These groups held joint meetings year after year for fellowship and evangelism. They used the term "Christian Connection" to describe their relationship.

Stone's passion for unity among Christians soon matched his love for lost sinners. Through the two avenues--saving lost souls and uniting with other believers, the "Christians" came to number about 15,000 by 1826.

STONE AND CAMPBELL

Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell had met in 1824, and each respected the work of the other. In 1826 Stone suggested uniting the two groups. But Campbell was not enthusiastic. In the first place, the Baptists with whom Campbell was still in fellowship were against such a merger. Also Campbell had heard that Stone was a unitarian, that is, that he denied the full deity of Christ. Stone's views on this subject were, in fact, fuzzy and difficult to label. But in ensuing discussions, Stone and Campbell agreed that they believed what the Scriptures said about His deity and would henceforth speak about the subject only in Scriptural terms.

There were other points of conflict, though--what name to use, whether or not baptism was essential to Christian fellowship, and what role the Holy Spirit played in conversion.

Stone kept pressing for union. He said that both groups believed in Jesus as the Son of God, both were willing to obey Jesus' commands, and this was enough for unity. Freedom of opinion should prevail in all other areas. Campbell, though, wanted these other issues ironed out before the union.

In 1831 Stone was still trying; Campbell was still reluctant. There was no hierarchy, no superstructure, in either group, and in that year others in Campbell's group (they called themselves Disciples) simply took the matter out of Campbell's hands.

A group of ministers--some Disciple and some Christian, including Stone--planned joint meetings of their congregations, held in Georgetown, Kentucky, over the Christmas weekend in 1831, and in Lexington, Kentucky, over the New Year's weekend of 1831-32.

At Lexington, a spokesman for the Disciples--John Smith--urged that the groups unite. He said,

God has but one people on the earth. He has given them but one Book, and therein exhorts and commands them to be one family. A union, such as we plead for--a union of God's people on that one Book--must, then, be practicable

Then Barton Stone, as spokesman for the Christians, rose. In closing he said,

I have not one objection to the ground laid down by him as the true scriptural basis of union among the people of God; and I am willing to give him, now and here, my hand.

The two men shook hands, the people in the audience all joined hands, and singing began. On Sunday the people celebrated the Lord's Supper together. Soon two churches at Georgetown became one church. In Lexington, complications arose, but were ironed out between the groups, and two churches there became one church also.

The united group sent out two messengers, one Disciple and the other a Christian, to spread the news of their union and encourage similar unity in other places.

Campbell acknowledged this surprising development in his journal and voiced guarded approval. Stone was later to say, "This union . . . I view as the noblest act of my life." In 1841 Stone suffered a stroke that paralyzed him. In 1844 he insisted on attending an annual meeting in Missouri. On his way home, he stopped to see his daughter Amanda. At her house, on November 9, 1844, he died.

Barton Warren Stone's most important gift to the restoration movement was the union of its two largest groups. As evangelist, he helped to build one group. As peacemaker, he helped to bring the two together.

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THE MAN ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

E. L. Jorgenson

I am no Campbellite or any other sort of "ite" I trust--though I have known for some time that partyism can easily exist in the midst of those who repudiate it, and who wear no human name. It is a member of God's one and only Church that I am, and neither time nor energy have I to build up anything less or else than that.

But if I were bound to be an "ite" of any kind, perhaps, I should choose to be a Campbellite--that is, if I could stand right alongside of Campbell, believing and practicing as he did, not as some of the sections in the "Restoration movement" now believe and practice--by which I mean to imply that there has been degeneration and decline in that movement, even as "no religious reformation maintains its purity through a hundred years."

Beginning with his *Christian Baptist* of 1823, and ceasing not until I had read his last words for the religious press in November, 1865, I have carefully examined that great man's writings--a task which, with my other duties, I have been three or four years in completing; a task however, which is no task, but a pleasure and privilege to any lover of high, enabling thought expressed in clear, clean diction.

Throughout this reading, and especially in contrast with some things that have transpired the while, I have been impressed with the excellency, the high standard and the true Christian spirit of this great man of God. Lack of space forbids the free use of quotations from him; but the reader may be assured that I am fully prepared to substantiate with such quotations, the following statements:

1. He was of a fraternal spirit. So far from believing that God had no children in denominationalism he recognized that at the outset of his work they were *all* there. "Christians only, but not the only Christians," if not expressed in these words, was a truth freely recognized by him and his coworkers. For instance, Adoniram Judson's wife, whom he addressed as "Sister," he regarded as a Christian lady of great excellence. [The Judsons were Baptist missionaries.]

D'Aubigne (the historian) he characterized as "one of the most eminent Christian men of Europe."

A Baptist preacher, Teasdale, of Washington, he characterized as "a brother of good degree and great boldness in the faith."

In these quotations, I do not mean to endorse denominationalism, for, like Campbell, I seek to call God's children out of it into a separate, independent, unsectarian stand. But his genuine fraternal spirit is refreshing alongside of the narrow sectarianism which strives to make "The Brotherhood" of "loyal" disciples, as we use the term in a limited sense, coextensive with the Church of God; and especially in contrast with the hide-bound partyism that would disfellowship all outside of certain sections of that movement.

2. This broad fraternity and fellowship on his part grew out of a true understanding of what it is that constitutes the bond of union among believers. He required no subscription to his views or interpretations in order to perfect fellowship; and the tendency to require such conformity, now so prevalent among "disciples" he would have scouted in sheer contempt. I quote:

"The only bond of union among them (New Testament churches) was faith in Him and submission to His will. No subscription to abstract propositions framed by synods." "The New Testament is our only creed, and the avowal of the One Foundation our only bond of union."

To a "German Baptist" or "Dunkard" he wrote: "Dear Brother--for such I recognize you, notwithstanding the varieties of opinion which you express on some topics, on which we might never agree. But if we should not, as not unity of opinion but unity of faith is the only true bond of Christian union, I will esteem and love you, as I do every man, of whatever name, who believes sincerely that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and hopes in his salvation."

He saw reasons which forbade "an effort on our part to make our own declaration of faith a term of communion to others." He also saw reasons for "distinguishing betwixt making a declaration of our faith for the satisfaction of others, and binding that declaration on others as a term of communion."

He was a staunch defender of the right of individual and independent examination of God's word. As he says: "Every disciple of Christ will suffer no man to judge for him while he is able to read the revelation of God in his own tongue--at least, such ought to be his determination." He was equally firm in the avowal that among those who "hold fast the Head" and those who confess the "one foundation," differences resulting thus from independent study should be no bar to Christian fellowship: "I have no idea of suppressing anything of consequence because the writer and I may differ in some points. And while I edit this work (the *Christian Baptist*) it shall be open to every decent passenger of whatever creed, who holds the Head."

3. He was far clearer on the place of baptism, the place of works and the truth about justification by faith, than many of his modern friends, as the following paragraphs from the *Millennial Harbinger* will show:

"With Martin Luther, I regard 'justification by faith, the test of a standing or a falling church'--perhaps it should have been of 'a standing or a fallen church.' Grace and faith are not incompatible in any Scriptural view of either. But grace and works are evidently incompatible. *Grace and baptism into Christ* are not incompatible, for *baptism is not a work of the subject*, but of the administrator. The subject is as *passive* in baptism as he is, or will be in his literal burial in the earth, so far as his own work is contemplated. There can be no merits in any work not performed by the subject himself. Hence, baptism is but the personal and formal confession of the faith of the subject. It is, therefore, never regarded nor denominated as a good work of the subject. *All good works have our fellow men as their objects and not ourselves. They are the radiations of philanthropy.* Hence, in its institution, Christian immersion is only a development of the grace of God. It is His solemn, silent assurance to the proper subject, of the pardon of his sins and acceptance with God, *through the sacrifice of Christ*, whose blood cleanses from all sin."

4. It is in season also to point out Campbell's great interest in prophecy, an interest which the following quotations indicate:

"Now is the time for the students of prophecy to keep their vigils, to trim their lamps and watch!" "The subject of the Millennium is one of growing importance and of stirring interest to the Christian community." "The compass and grandeur of that sublime subject (millennium) demand a concentration of mind, paramount to any other topic now in our horizon. We are glad to see a continually increasing interest in that theme." "The subject is annually growing in importance, and we feel constrained to contribute our labors to that subject." "The coming events of Apocalyptic vision are pressing upon our attention." "Whatever is taught in the Oracles of God respecting the present or future condition of the Christian profession, demands our most grave and serious consideration."

Large portions of his paper were devoted to the discussion of prophetic themes, both by himself and by contributors. The Millennium he dealt with at length, and his paper was named the "Harbinger" of that glad era.

[E. L. Jorgenson was associate editor of the W&W when he wrote this in 1917.]

Restoration or Reformation? . . .

WHAT KIND OF MOVEMENT WAS IT?

Leroy Garrett

Those who read the writings of all three of the churches emanating from the Stone-Campbell heritage, as I do, will notice that we are using the term "Restoration Movement" less and the Stone-Campbell Movement more. I don't know how much the wide-circulation of my history book that bore that title has to do with it, maybe none, but I am pleased that we are using "Restoration" less. I have argued both in this journal and in my history text that our pioneers were reformers more than restorers, and what they launched was a unity movement more than a restoration movement.

There has been considerable controversy over the thesis I set forth in my history book that restorationism is by its nature divisive, and is largely responsible for our proclivity to divide, over and over again.

In this essay I am making further observations on the subject that may serve to answer my critics and at the same time put the restoration/reformation motifs in clearer perspective.

I will seek first to give a clearer definition of restorationism, sometimes called primitivism, and practiced by such sects as Plymouth Brethren and the Mormons as well as some of our own people. It usually has these beliefs: (1) the true church apostatized and ceased to exist; (2) the many denominations that emerged are false churches that in no way represent the true church; (3) the New Testament provides an exact pattern, a kind of blue print, for the makeup of the church; (4) the true church has been restored in its pristine purity, and we are that church "in name, organization, worship and practice" or some such attending claim.

I was taught this in Church of Christ-related college by way of an illustration. Should the game of baseball become extinct for centuries, some future generation could "restore" the game by following the plan outlined in the old book, "The Game of Baseball," turned up by the spade of an archaeologist. The rules of the game, the shape of the field, the position of the players are all prescribed, so the game would be reproduced precisely as it was played centuries earlier. So it is with the church, I was taught. Even though the true New Testament church ceased to exist, it too can be "restored" by following "the rule book," the New Testament, that clearly identified the true Church of Christ in detail.

It was something of a shock when I was forced to recognize that the New Testament is not the kind of book that my teachers had led me to believe. There is far too much diversity in the New Testament to make it into a rule book or an exact pattern. If it were all as simple as a baseball manual, with all the details spelled out, there would be no disagreements such as we have in the church today. Since the New Testament is not all that simple and lends itself to varying interpretations, it is understandable that we do not see everything alike.

But *restorationism* demands conformity, with each restorationist arrogating to himself the role of an infallible interpreter. Restorationism thus has a hermeneutics [i.e., systems of interpretation] all its own, making the New Testament a collection of documents they were never intended to be. It claims what the New Testament never claims for itself: that we are to do today precisely as the primitive church did. It might be better argued that we are to do for our time what the earliest Christians did for theirs, drawing upon living principles found in the New Testament that are *more descriptive than prescriptive*.

It is necessary to make some changes as the church progresses through the centuries. Common sense and experience alike show us that there is no way to be a first century church in the twentieth century. And yet the basics of the Christian faith never change, transcending all time and all cultures. But methods and secondary doctrine will change in order to meet the challenge of our kind of world. But restorationism allows for no such diversity. Each restorationist party has its own list of "issues" that cannot change, and these are the reason for its existence as a separate "loyal church."

Restorationist hermeneutics thus assumes what cannot be proven: that the pattern for "the true church" is spelled out with such clarity that there is little place for diversity, so that a plea for unity when coupled with restoration is hardly more than a demand for conformity. In that it promotes the "loyal church" fallacy restorationism fosters more and more divisions, with each faction convinced that it is the only true church and the only faithful Christians. This is because each faction has a different interpretation on what the New Testament pattern describes.

The reformation tradition, however, holds that the church has always been in need of reform, including the New Testament churches. The church upon earth never has and never will be perfect, so renewal is an ongoing process. But that imperfect church as the Body of Christ has always existed. Just as a sick person is still a person, so the church, however ill it may become, is still the Church of Christ upon earth. The gates of Hades will never prevail against it, just as Jesus promised. Reformers are hesitant to judge a "cor-

rupt" church as no longer Christ's church, just as Paul spoke of the Corinthians as the Body of Christ in spite of their imperfections. The reformer thus calls for repentance and renewal, not for a "restored church" to displace the erring one.

While restorationism has been the dominant motif in the recent history of the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, it was the reformation motif that dominated our earlier history. The Stone-Campbell Movement, as our heritage may properly be described, was an effort to unite Christians by an appeal to certain renewal and reformatory principles and ideals. It was therefore a unity movement rather than a "Restoration Movement," a term of more recent vintage, for it was not called this in its early history.

These conclusions are supported by these considerations:

1. There are at least five founding documents of the Stone-Campbell Movement, all of which are unity documents in that they call for the unity of all Christians in one way or another. Only one of the documents, the *Declaration and Address* by Thomas Campbell, makes any reference to restoration. But Campbell was not a restorationist as above defined or he could have never written in that document what is now the most famous quotation in our history, "The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one." He wrote that in 1809 before he launched his movement and before he had his first congregation. So he had no illusion about "restoring the true church" that no longer existed. "The Church of Christ upon earth" was his testimonial that the church then existed and always had since Pentecost. In that same document Campbell refers to the "variety of opinion and practice, without any breach of Christian unity" of the apostolic church concluding that the same unity in diversity can obtain today.

2. Barton W. Stone, the founder of the movement, if only one person is named, referred to his "ardent desire for the restoration and glory of the ancient religion of Christ--the religion of love, peace, and union on earth," (*Chris. Mess.*, 1826, p. 2), a conception of restoration that is universally accepted. I have found no instances in which Stone uses the term in reference to restoring the church itself, as if it did not exist. He rather referred to his and Campbell's efforts as "this reformation." He was clearly a reformer, as he was at last described on his tombstone at Cane Ridge. He saw himself as continuing in the great tradition of Martin Luther. Unity was his constant theme, his motto being, "Let Christian unity be our polar star." One would suppose, judging by some interpreters of the movement, that Stone had said, "Let restorationism be our polar star."

3. Alexander Campbell, the most illustrious figure of the Movement, identified part of his mission as "the restoration of the ancient order," by which he particularly referred to restoring the ordinances of baptism and the Lord' Supper to the modern church. Since he recognized that the church has always existed, even though imperfect, he sought to restore the ancient order *to* the church, not the church itself. Like his father and like Stone, he believed in the indestructibility of the church. This is why he believed there were Christians in other churches, which he referred to as "other denominations," indicating his reluctance to see his own people as "the only true church" and all others as false. Campbell sometimes used restoration and reformation as synonyms, but he referred to his mission as "the New Reformation" and often wrote on "Principles of Reform." When his young colleagues, Robert Richardson and C.L. Loos, wrote their accounts of the Movement they described it as "The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century."

4. Walter Scott, another of the founding fathers, might appear on the surface to be a restorationist in the primitivism sense, for he often referred to "the Restoration" and to "the Restoration of the Ancient Gospel." But he was referring to his own "five finger exercise" in which he preached baptism for the remission of sins and baptized one William Amend in 1827, the first in history since apostolic times to be so baptized, Scott supposed. Even Alexander Campbell supported this view for a time, referring to the gospel being restored in 1827, though he later backed away from such a daring claim. And even Scott in *The Evangelist* (1833 p.16) modified the claim by explaining that it was "the practical exhibition and application of the Gospel" that was restored, not the gospel itself, which he granted had always been proclaimed by the church.

When Scott referred to the Movement in general he, like the others, called it the reformation, as in that same volume (p. 59) he refers to Alexander Campbell as "the leader in the present famous Reformation." And when he referred to his own important contribution of clarifying the place of baptism, he used restoration as the Campbells did: "The church of God on that day, had restored to it publicly and practically and a manner of handling it" (*Christian Evangelist* 1833, p. 162). Again one will notice the crucial distinction between restoring to the church that is already a reality something that is lacking and the notion of restoring the church itself as if it did not exist.

5. Even more impressive is that the great rank and file, including the workers out among the churches, consistently referred to the Movement as "this Reformation" or "the current Reformation" in their reports to the various journals. I have noted scores and scores of these. One would be hard put to find a single report that refers to

"the Restoration Movement" which is so common among us today. This term, which was not used by our pioneers, must have come out of the emphasis given to restorationism in the emergence of non-instrument Churches of Christ and the Bible college movement of independent Christian Churches.

Being realistic, I have to concede that we are probably stuck with the term "Restoration Movement." So, we should upgrade the definition of "Restoration" to mean renewal, reform, etc., as some are now doing and as I do in the name of this journal. We must, however, also concede that in the larger Christian world such a term as "Restoration Movement" will have little meaning. Campbell could meaningfully call for a "New Reformation" in his day, but with "Restoration Movement" we are talking only to ourselves. Whatever terms we use in referring to our heritage we must look for fresh ways to appeal to the values we believe to be inherent in Christian origins.

The upshot of all this is that restorationism as a mindset must go, not only because of its abuse of the New Testament with its faulty hermeneutics, but also because it is inherently divisive, spawning as it does sects and sub-sects, not only among us but in the church at large. It is imperative that we recapture the true intent of our heritage as a unity movement. Restorationism and unity are antipodal. We can't be restorationists and unitists, but we can be reformers and unitists, which is what our heritage is all about.

--From *Restoration Review*

ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF OUR PROPOSED REFORMATION

Alexander Campbell

In 1836 Alexander Campbell listed seven "principle articles of reformation for which we contend." That is, these were his ideals and major goals for Christians and churches. He published them in a letter to Andrew Broaddus, a prominent Baptist critic of his. If you were asked to summarize your vision and hopes for reformation or renewal of God's people, what would you say? Here is what Campbell said:

1. A more intimate, general and special acquaintance with the holy oracles of both Testaments.
2. The weekly meeting of all Christian churches on the Lord's day in honor of the resurrection of the Lord, to keep all the ordinances instituted in the primitive, i.e., early, church by the authority of

Jesus Christ--amongst which the Lord's supper is the most cardinal and essential part.

3. A more strict and scriptural discipline in the church, a greater vigilance on the part of overseers and a greater attention to good order and good behavior amongst all its members.
 4. A more Christian morality in keeping covenants, fulfilling promises, in doing justly to all men, in loving mercy, in visiting and relieving the poor, the afflicted and in being always ready for every good word and work.
 5. More gravity, temperance and moderation, even in the use of things lawful; more self-denial, and strict self-government on the part of all who profess to follow the New Testament.
 6. More piety and devotion--more prayer and praise--more private meditation and communion with God, than appear to obtain amongst the great mass of those called Christians.
 7. More enterprise, concert and cooperation amongst all Christians and all Christian churches in converting the world.
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A "CAMPBELLITE PECULIARITY" OR SIMPLY THE NEW TESTAMENT POSITION?

Tom Mobley

While a student at Souther Baptist Theological Seminary, I studied under a British Baptist, Dr. George Beasley-Murray. The course was entitled "New Testament Teaching on Baptism." After several class sessions, I was amazed, and very pleased, with his stand on baptism as to both mode and purpose. After mustering enough courage one day after class, I approached him and asked if he were familiar with the writings of Alexander Campbell. Beasley-Murray replied that he had never read any of them. He went on to explain why. It seems that when he was on a speaking tour of this country in the 1960's several had accused him of being a "Campbellite." He had then decided not to read any of Campbell's works, so his denial that he could not be such a follower when he did not know what the man had said would carry more weight. His position was *his* position. Then Beasley-Murray added, "Maybe it's time now that I should read some of Campbell's works." I do not know if he ever did or not.

[Additional note by AVW: The above incident assumes greater impact when we realize that Dr. Beasley-Murray is an internationally known New Testament scholar, teacher and writer. He has authored significant commentaries on the Gospel of John, Mark 13, the book of Revelation, Ezekiel and others. And his book, *Baptism in the New Testament*, is acclaimed as one of the most important works on this subject in our generation.]

ROOM FOR THE SPIRIT

C. Leonard Allen

In mid-nineteenth century America, religious debates were a popular form of entertainment. As one observer remarked in 1851, "Theological champions meet with burnished swords and cut and haul each other to the wondrous gratification of their respective partisans, who gather in hundreds to these scenes of religious combat." Leaders of the restoration movement in this period excelled at debating and controversy. Many shared Alexander Campbell's judgment that "a week's debating is worth a year's preaching." The debating emphasis produced a hard, sometimes bombastic style of preaching and teaching. It brought success in the rough-and-tumble world of denominational competition, but it also spawned bitterness and fragmentation.

In the midst of this period of controversy one man sounded a different note. His name was Robert Richardson (1806-1876). By training, Richardson was a medical doctor, but he spent much of his life teaching and working as an administrator at Bethany College. He was an intimate friend of Alexander Campbell, serving as his family physician for over thirty years and as office manager and associate editor of Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger* for nearly thirty years.

When Campbell died in March of 1866, Dr. Richardson was the one chosen to deliver the funeral sermon. He was also the one Campbell's family asked to write his biography. After three intense years of research and writing, Dr. Richardson completed the massive, two-volume *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* in 1869, a work that remains today the major biography of Campbell.

In a time of controversy and harsh debating, Richardson was unique in stressing the things of the spirit and the devotional life. The debating mindset, he believed produced a deadly spiritual vacuum. The effect of doctrinal controversy was to "distract the mind, destroy love, generate dislike, jealousy, revenge [and] foster the passions of the carnal nature." Too many people, he wrote, "are ready to argue, debate, discuss, at all times, . . . and will spend hours in the earnest defense of their favorite theories" but will not spend five minutes meditating "upon the character, the sayings and perfections of Christ, or upon their own inward spiritual state."

Dr. Richardson believed that this was precisely the central problem with much of the Protestant world. Each Protestant sect had developed its distinctive doctrines and theories, encased them in creeds and confessions, then tenaciously defended them against all comers.

In that way Protestantism had become one "grand doctrinal controversy."

A grave error resulted, Richardson believed. Professed Christians began to mistake completely the nature and focus of the Christian faith. They began to view it "as a belief in doctrines; as consisting in correct intellectual views . . . ; as having respect to the mind rather than to the heart." More and more people came to regard "a correct view of doctrine as something essential to salvation, and as having in *itself*, if not a saving efficacy, at least a meritorious orthodoxy, which will go very far toward securing acceptance with God."

Richardson saw the same tendency in the restoration movement. By the early 1840s he believed that a "heartless and superficial formalism" was overtaking the movement, and this conviction grew throughout the 1840s and 50s.

Many people in the movement denied any significant present day role to the Holy Spirit, and thereby fostered a doctrinal formalism. In reacting against the abuses of the doctrine of the Spirit in popular theology, many leaders, he believed, had become "so extremely cautious upon the subject that, so far from cultivating religious feeling, they seem rather to repress it."

Two extreme positions attracted many people, he thought. One he called the "Spirit alone" theory, the other the "Word alone" theory. On the one hand, the advocate of the "Spirit alone" view "imagines himself to have realized the presence of the Spirit in some emotional excitement, some brilliant vision, or some audible revelation." On the other hand, the advocate of the "Word alone" view "amuses himself with the notion that he has resolved all the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, when he has persuaded himself that this Spirit is merely a visible and tangible New Testament."

Both extremes, he said, pervert scripture's plain teaching about the work of the Spirit. But if forced to choose between the two views, he said, he would certainly choose the "Spirit alone" position, for such views "at least lead the mind to seek after fellowship with God; and embody the idea . . . that there is a real communion to be enjoyed with the spiritual world." How many professed reformers there are, he exclaimed, "to whom the gospel has come 'in word only,' and who seem unable to make their way out of the cocoon of formalism, which enwraps them and their religion in perpetual immaturity!"

Throughout his many writings Richardson called his fellow believers to a religion of the Spirit, to a faith empowered by the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With Christian faith beset by worldliness, compromise, formalism and bitter controversies, how, Richardson asked, will a vital Christian faith be restored to the world? He answered: "by returning to the primitive faith and love; by doing the first works, and by manifestation in the life of those fruits of the Spirit which alone reveal the truth of religion, and demonstrate to the world the divine mission of Jesus."

But in order to show forth the fruit of the Spirit, Richardson quickly added, "the presence of the Spirit Himself is necessary." Indeed, in the present day the presence of the Holy Spirit in a fuller measure is the "true want of the Church." People must "cease forever from those discords and dissensions which . . . have largely banished the Holy Spirit from the hearts" of professing Christians.

The Holy Spirit, Richardson said, is "God's missionary" to human hearts. The Spirit, he often affirmed, is "imparted to the believer, really and truly, taking up His abode in his person, as a distinct guest, or inhabitant." The Spirit is "God enthroned in man's moral nature, renewing and sanctifying the affections, and transforming humanity into the Divine image." The Spirit does this through "the graces it imparts and through the 'ingrafted Word' which it has introduced into the heart."

Without the Spirit, Richardson thought, faith loses its true character, becoming more the adoption of a doctrinal system than of a spiritual life. Indeed, without the Spirit much that passes for orthodoxy is vain. The secret of the early church's power was nothing less than this: "the indwelling of the Spirit of God, giving unity, imparting energy, evolving the glorious fruits of Christianity, and presenting to the world, in every disciple, an illustration of the life of Christ."

[Reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Distant Voices: Discovering a Forgotten Past for a Changing Church* (Abilene Christian University Press, 1993)]

FELLOWSHIP AND OUR HERITAGE

Alex V. Wilson

Do you have any unwanted brothers or sisters in Christ? Last month we saw what the Bible teaches about unity and fellowship among believers. We referred to over ten passages. That study was basic, for our authority in any matter is the Word of God, not the opinions of uninspired men.

Yet we can learn a lot too from mature Christians of later ages who were diligent students of Scripture. And on the topic of Christian fellowship their insights are especially valuable. For in the days when the New Testament was being written, there were no full-fledged denominations such as exist today. So the apostles did not face a situation exactly like our own, and give specific instructions about it. Thus as we face the Christendom of today and wonder how to react, we must seek to *extract principles from Scripture* to guide us. This is not always easy, and we can profit from the teachings and practices of believers who preceded us.

Brother Boll put it superbly when he wrote:

The consideration that this or that great man taught thus and so, or even that "the brotherhood" believes thus and so--weighs absolutely nothing so far as the determining of the faith of the humblest Christian is concerned. The simple Christian knows absolutely no Rabbi save the Lord Jesus Christ alone. (Matt. 23:8-10.)

By this is not meant that Christians are to show no deference and consideration to the able and worthy teachers among them. Far from it. There are men whose ability and long faithfulness command our fullest respect; whose positions on matters of faith deserve to be weighed and examined with more than common care and thought. — *The Church I Found and How I Found It*

With this as our attitude, let's examine the views of various men who were prominent in the so-called Restoration Movement during the 1800s.

STONE AND THE CAMPBELLS

Barton Stone: In 1831 Stone wrote these comments about differences between the churches associated with him and those associated with Alexander Campbell: "We have fellowship and communion with unimmersed persons. They contend that, according to the New Testament, none but the immersed have their sins remitted, and therefore they cannot commune with the unimmersed. On this point we cannot agree with them; and the reason is that this sentiment will exclude millions of the fairest characters [i.e. believers of outstanding holiness and love for God--AVW], for many centuries back, from heaven

. . . We believe and acknowledge that baptism is ordained by the King as a means for the remission of sins to penitent believers, but we cannot say that immersion is the *sine qua non*, [or absolute essential--AVW] without maintaining the awful consequences mentioned above and without contradicting our experience."

Thomas Campbell wrote, "By our Christian brethren we mean, 'All that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, throughout the churches.'" So when he spoke of "the brotherhood," that was his meaning--all members everywhere of God's family, or of the "invisible church" as it is sometimes called. This is obvious throughout all of Campbell's great document, "Declaration and Address," in which he appealed to *Christians* in all sectarian bodies to give up their bickerings and divisions and unite by following Christ alone.

Alexander Campbell: He referred to their movement as "a project for uniting the sects, or rather the *Christians* in all the sects, upon a clear and scriptural bond of union." Again he said, "I labor to see sectarianism abolished, and *all Christians of every name* united upon the one foundation on which the apostolic church was founded."

His view of "Who is my brother?" was broad indeed. Notice some more quotations from his writings. "I am greatly indebted to all the Reformers, from Martin Luther down to John Wesley. I could not enumerate the individuals, living and dead, who have assisted in forming my mind." Again, "John Bunyan (a Baptist) and John Newton (an Episcopalian) were very different persons, and had very different views of baptism and of some other things; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did obey the Lord in every thing." And again:

I was some fourteen years ago a great admirer of the works of John Newton. I read them with great delight, and I still love the author and admire many of his sentiments. He was not a staunch Episcopalian, though he died in that church. In an explanation to a friend for his departure from the tenets of that sect in some instances, he said, 'whenever he found a pretty feather in any bird, he endeavored to attach it to his own plumage, and although he had become a very speckled bird, so much so that no one of any species would altogether own him as belonging to them, he flattered himself that he was the prettiest bird among them.' From that day to the present I have been looking for pretty feathers, and I have become more speckled than Newton . . .

Another time he wrote, "There are many consecrated . . . Christian Presbyterians. And although our Savior has no Presbyterian church in heaven or on earth, yet I doubt not but that he has had many, very many that love and honored him in that worldly church, whom he will honor in the world to come."

But Campbell's actions matched his words. Many folks today who consider themselves his spiritual heirs would be shocked to know the following, as told by Homer Hailey's book *Attitudes and Consequences*: "Although not (yet) advocating a missionary society among the Disciples, Campbell did not hesitate to commend the work of the Baptist Missionary Society, inserting in his paper their 'Report on Foreign Missions.' Not only did he commend the work they were doing, but also he encouraged congregations to make contributions to it. In his commendation of the society, he said:

(We should) appreciate the labor and zeal which it has required on the part of our Baptist friends to get under way their society, and realize the obligations under which all true Christians are placed to lend them a helping hand When the work is good, and well and scripturally done, we will not stop to dispute about (who does the work), unless indeed we forget the glory of God and aim only to build up sectarianism. (1845)

In the same year, some of the Disciples started a Bible society in Cincinnati. Campbell wrote an objection, "not on the ground of Scripture, but on the basis of 'practicability.'" He reasoned that since the Baptists had a Bible Society doing the same work, in which all the disciples could cooperate, there was no need for another, inasmuch as the Baptists were doing no more through their society than issuing the Scriptures" (Hailey).

To be sure, Campbell often spoke out against the doctrines of Baptists or others which he considered erroneous, and practices which seemed unspiritual to him. Especially he denounced many of their preachers who considered themselves mini-popes and tried to dominate their members. He called upon them to forsake sectarianism and creedism. At the same time, it is clear that he not only believed that there were fine Christians to be found among the various denominations, but also urged his followers to cooperate with such Christians in activities like supporting missionaries and publishing Bibles.

LATER LEADERS

The preacher and editor *Benjamin Franklin*: "There are individuals among the sects who are not sectarians, or who are more than sectarians—they are *Christians*; or persons who have believed the gospel, submitted to it, and in spite of the leaders, been constituted Christians according to the Scriptures." Again he wrote, "That there are Christians among the sects . . . we admitted many years ago, and we believe the same now. That these have a right to commune (in the Lord's supper) we presume is not doubted by any brother." In other words, Franklin took it for granted that in 1862, when he wrote, all the Restoration churches recognized penitent believers from the denominations a born-again brethren or sisters in the Lord.

Moses Lard: "Against the individual members of these parties (denominations) we cannot have even one unkind feeling. Many of them we regard as true Christians, and love them sincerely."

David Lipscomb: "There are some in sectarian churches who will obey God and follow him in spite of the churches in which they find themselves. As examples, there are persons in the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches who are baptized to obey God rather than to please the sects. In this they rise above the sectarian spirit, despite the parties in which they find themselves. They ought to get out of the sectarian churches, but they see so much sectarianism in the non-sectarian churches that they think they are all alike."

Daniel Sommer: "What shall we say of those preachers who denounce all persons who happen to hold membership in a sectarian denomination with a sentence of sweeping impeachment, as though they were all under the influence of sectism? We should say that they are probably more sectarian than some whom they denounce. Their manner shows that they are unscripturally exclusive, and this is one of the elements of sectarianism."

Isaac Errett: "Corruptions have crept into the church because of Popery and have scattered the people of God into various sects. Our plea is for a reunion of the people of God. While our plea does not recognize these sects as of divine origin, yet it recognizes a people of God among them."

Brother E. L. Jorgenson gave other examples in his *Word and Work* editorial of October 1961:

All the great men of the nineteenth century unity movement understood there were some born-again ones in many of the American religious groups. It was the general understanding at least to the turn of the century when I was a boy. McGarvey, Larimore, the Srygleys, Kurfees, et al knew it, but hoped and labored to show many 'the way of God more accurately.' The nonsectarian concept of the church grew measurably dimmer with the spread of the 're-baptism' theory--the view that a candidate for valid baptism must know (besides all other antecedents) that he is being baptized for remission of sins. This strange twist . . . tended directly to make a sect of the church.

It seems to me that the beliefs and practices of these nineteenth-century leaders provide us with much food for thought.

[Sources of the quotations, some of which have been slightly amended for clarity: *The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. I, by Earl West. *Attitudes and Consequences*, by Homer Hailey. Carl Ketcherside in *Mission Messenger*, Jan. 1960.]

QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

Please explain to me about Christian offerings.

This request comes from one who is a new Christian. The individual's background is such that there is probably not the basic understanding which would be held by some in becoming Christians. Because of Bible teaching received or one's associations, some who become Christians already understand, even if somewhat imperfectly, many Christian truths. Others may not have this advantage. We will try to give, therefore, a sort of basic summary of New Testament teaching concerning Christian giving.

Every organization, association, etc., has to have finances to carry on its work. The extent of that will depend on several factors--aims, personnel, necessary equipment, etc. This is achieved in several ways. Some are underwritten by a wealthy person or a charitable foundation. Others may depend on many small gifts from interested individuals. Some may have a subscription or fee system, and the members are assessed certain sums. Some may operate a business and use the profits to finance the activity. Some may charge for services rendered. Or there might be a combination of these methods used. Human organizations may use any method that is legal and that has been agreed upon by the membership. Some methods may be wiser than others, or may be more adapted to the needs, or be more likely to succeed. There is no divinely given blueprint for these to follow, however.

The church of the Lord does not have the freedom of human organizations. It is directed by Christ, the Head. It must not only be bound by what is legal and ethical, but also by the principles and examples of the New Testament. It is true that religious bodies in the name of Christ have adopted most, if not all, of the above methods, and possibly others, to raise finances, but not all of these fit the New Testament pattern. Some of them are questionable. Some, while not wrong in and of themselves, do not provide the Christian the opportunity to grow and to serve. Some put the church in the position of being a beggar. The New Testament gives us enough teaching on the matter of giving that we can have a financial system for the church that is totally in harmony with scripture.

The earth is the Lord's. The cattle on the thousands of hills are His. God has no lack as to material things. There is a sense in which we human beings can give Him nothing. It is already His. And He

could have worked out a system whereby the church was financed by gifts directly from heaven. Instead He has chosen to finance the church by gifts made by Christians, the members of the church: In much that God does in the world He uses human instruments, and it is so in the matter of church finances. The abundance of supply is not so much controlled by what He has as by the faithfulness and liberality of His people.

For the sake of drawing some distinctions, let us review the matter of giving in the Old Testament. This represents a system no longer binding on God's people seeing we live under the new covenant or New Testament, but there are principles to be found in the Old Testament which are still valid. Under the law God required of the children of Israel tithes *and* offerings. The tithe is simply a tenth. This was used largely to provide the offerings made before God and to support the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi was the one from which the priests came and which was in charge of the temple and the religious activity. During the time of their service the priests lived from the goods provided by the worshippers. Since there was the killing of many animal sacrifices (Christ had not yet died and removed this necessary act of worship), much of the giving under the law was providing animals for sacrifice. But in addition to the tithe, God called for voluntary offerings according to the ability of the people to give. In effect, the religious life of the people of Israel was financed by tithes and offerings brought by the people. The tithe was a sort of religious tax, required whether they gave it willingly or not. Offerings were made above what was required and belong more in the category of free-will offerings, offerings made by choice of the worshipper.

Now Israel was not always faithful in giving the tithe and offerings. It would be oversimplification to say that God's only concern in bestowing or withholding His blessing on the nation had to do with their giving. This was one area or activity of their lives about which He was concerned. At times He brought chastening on them for their unfaithfulness in giving--sometimes a drought, reducing their crops and their incomes, or insects to destroy the crops, etc. Generally His method was this--if they withheld, then He would withhold those things affecting their gain; if they were faithful, He blessed them with good crops, etc. In the long run they gained more when they were faithful in giving than they gave in tithes and offerings. This seems to be a principle through the ages of God's dealings with man--man does not outgive God, and it does not really cost him to give as God requires. Of course God is not going to be made a tool by man, and we must avoid the misconception that this is a mechanical rule or that God is not interested in any other facet of our life. Great financial gain is not always a mark of God's approval. God's judgments

do not always come immediately. Even so, there is a comparison between our sowing and reaping. A liberal heart before God often receives liberally from God.

When we come to the New Testament and the early church, there is no longer any need to bring the sacrifices as of old. Christ was the once-for-all sacrifice for sin. Even so, there continued to be giving on the part of God's servants. One of the more remarkable examples follows the establishment of the church. Some of those who had become Christians on Pentecost and shortly thereafter had presumably come from long distances. They remained for a period in Jerusalem for instruction and fellowship. Some of those Christians therefore who had houses or land sold their property in order to give the money to the church to meet these needs. Liberal, voluntary, free-will giving became and is the financial method of the church. They were not compelled to sell their property; they chose to do so to meet the need. Shortly thereafter persecution scattered Christians from Jerusalem and the property they owned would have been only a liability. The communistic (but not atheistic) arrangement did not last long and did not destroy the right of private ownership of property in the church. We mention it here because it shows the spirit of New Testament giving--liberality to meet a valid need.

An offering was a regular feature of the Lord's Day worship service of the early church (1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 2:42, where "fellowship" includes sharing in financial need). Such giving is indeed an act of worship when it is a loving gift to the Lord from the heart. In a zeal to raise funds, some have tried to carry over the Old Testament law of the tithe as still binding on Christians or have adopted methods and pressures which do not honor God, and Christian giving is seen sometimes today as a burden to be avoided in every way possible. Some are always looking for an "easy" way to finance the work of the church, one which gets the money from others, even non-Christians, or which in some way bypasses giving. We repeat, however, that the New Testament plan for church finance is the liberal, free-will offering by Christians themselves, given regularly on the first day of the week. When this is done there will be no necessity for high-pressure methods, shoddy schemes, or even "passing the plate" at every service--morning, evening, weekdays, etc. There will be no need for the church to seem to be a beggar.

A great deal of New Testament teaching on the matter of giving is found in 2 Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9. Here we have the "secret" of liberal giving--first giving ourselves to the Lord (8:3-5). It is called a grace, one of the qualities desired in the Christian (8:7). We are given the supreme example--that of the Lord Jesus (8:9). We are taught it is not the size of the gift that counts but the readiness and

giving according to ability (8:11-12). There is a need for equitable sharing in this responsibility--a few ought not have to carry the load for others (8:13-15). We learn that responsible and honorable conduct in the handling of the funds is important (8:18-24). Our giving to the Lord is to be bountiful, with purpose, not grudging or of necessity, but cheerful (9:6-7). It is noted here that God enables greater giving by those who give freely (9:8-11). Finally, it is pointed out that this kind of giving not only meets the needs of the saints but results in glory to God (9:12-15).

A word needs to be said about the amount. Christians are to give as they have been prospered (1 Cor. 16:2) and as they have purposed in their hearts (2 Cor. 9:7). Christians are not under the law of the tithe. "Then God does not require that I give ten percent of my income?" someone asks. No, not as a law. But He does want you to give liberally, freely, bountifully. Many new Christians have found that ten percent or more is a good starting place, and then they give more as they grow in ability to do so. The new covenant is better than the old, and grace should get a better response than law. We should not be satisfied with less than the Jews did! "As purposed" suggests some kind of percentage giving rather than giving on the basis of emotion or chance. "Purpose of heart" suggests a definite plan.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert & Joy Garrett
June 28, 1994

P.O. Box 30, Ruwa Zimbabwe
where winter is during our Summer

Brrrrr, but it is cold! Of course our winters are nothing like what most of the U.S. experiences. We do not have to worry about putting anti-freeze in the car radiators. At night the temperature often drops to 34F with frost in some areas, but the days are usually warm. However, the houses are not heated (except for portable electric heaters), so we just put on extra layers of clothing to be shed as the day warms up - and put back on in the evening. Now I am NOT complaining, just describing. I prefer our winters to yours any day!

At the June Harare area Ladies Bible class Joy gave the Bible teaching on Homosexuality. Some of the women had never heard of such a thing as it is quite foreign to traditional tribal ways. However, due to the Western influences and the influx of immoral entertainment from Hollywood and on TV and what seems to be the rampant heterosexual immorality of the majority, such things are finding their way into society. This week the newspaper reported that 90% of deaths in Zimbabwe are AIDS related.

Brother Bob Morrow arrived the 9th of June for a three month visit. The churches are keeping him busy with gospel meetings Sunday through Friday each week at a different congregation while he is here. This week he is at the Rimuka church in Kadoma. The meetings at Glen Norah and Mbare were well attended and the lessons were most profitable.

The construction of the girls' dormitory here at the Camp is going well. Brickwork is almost to the top of the windows. We are about to run out of our home made brick so next month we will switch operations to Kuwadzana where we have to use factory made brick.

Last week we contracted two young men to make brick here at Ruwa. Brick-making will have to stop when the rainy season begins (hopefully) in September.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

4th Annual Ladies' Overnight

Ladies, plan now to join dozens of sisters in Christ at the yearly Christian Ladies Overnight Retreat, Fri. Sept. 30 - Sat. Oct. 1. It will again be at Camp Kavanaugh in Crestwood, Ky., which has been the best site so far. Various ladies you know will elaborate on this year's theme, "Nestled in the Arms of Love."

Those who've attended in previous years say, "Don't miss it!" For more info, call Ramona Marsh (812) 945-7209, Sherry Marsh (606) 744-3021, Melanie Mitchell (812) 967-4861, or Ruth Wilson (502) 897-2831.

Off to South American Mission Field

On Aug. 8, Alex Paris will leave for one year's missionary ministry in Venezuela. He spent one month there in Jan. '94, and the Lord has led him to return "because of the need I saw for someone to do the physical labor while the missionaries concentrate on their many other duties." He will work as a maintenance man at the school for missionary children where he was located before. New Tribes Mission, which works among primitive tribal people around the world, has accepted Alex as an associate missionary for one year. This is a good work. New Tribes missionaries preach the gospel, immerse converts and form them into Biblical local congregations. Alex will need \$600 monthly plus plane fare of \$1200 round-trip. Some funds are already given but more are needed. For

more info call Richard Paris, an elder at Pekin, Ind. church: (812) 944-2550.

Heading toward Africa

Tim and Dawn Yates hope by 1995 to be missionaries in Malawi. This is a country in southern Africa where they spent the summer of '94 in mission work. Tim is from the Linton/Dugger, Ind. area where he was active in Woodland Bible Camp for years. He moved to Louisville for his senior year in high school, graduating from Portland Christian High School. He got his four-year degree from Johnson Bible College, majoring in Bible-&-missions. While there he met and married Dawn, who also was set on being a cross-cultural missionary.

They now are working to pay off college bills, awaiting their first child's arrival in early '95, and visiting churches to raise prayer - and financial - support. Want more information? Call (615) 573-4537 or write P.O. Box 13198, Knoxville TN 37920.

News from Manila, Philippines

Bert Abella, director of Central Bible College, writes: "There are 31 students (14 men; 17 ladies) staying in the dorms. The buildings need so many repairs. Some of the beds and other dorm equipment are ageing; leaks are all over."

He also tells of the downtown church's ministry to poor children: 75 children have enrolled at their Christian Day Care Center. Also 40 children and 10 lactating mothers

are in the feeding ministry. These ministries involve at least 8 part-time staff. There are tremendous evangelistic opportunities among these children and parents.

Polding Jabian, who is on furlough from tribal work for one year, is spearheading the evangelistic thrust of the church. "A number of us are helping him in conducting home Bible studies among the Day Care parents."

More about Central Bible College (formerly Institute): The Filipino school year starts in June, and 97 students were enrolled at CGC for 1st semester. 27 are freshmen. Pray for this strategic school in downtown Manila.

Utica, Ind. Seeks Preacher

The Utica Church of Christ is considering its role in the Lord's Vineyard and its need for a minister in that context. Anyone whom the Lord moves to be interested may contact:

Mr. Henry Dorman (Deacon)

736 Utica / Chartlestown Rd.

Jeffersonville, IN. 47130

Phone: (812) 288-6748

Maple Manor Christian Home, Inc.

We are in need of more beds. We are still on hold as to making any definite plans for building. The State will allow us to add the extra beds, but we are in need of \$\$\$ to get the project going. Please be in earnest prayer concerning this need! The site and building planning is an expense of around \$7,000. *We are turning people down for a bed almost on a daily basis.*

Church of Christ, Jennings, La.

Bible Students Growing
Members of the Ladies' Bible Class on Thursday evenings are learning to pray and not just about prayer! Thus far they have determined that God answers all prayer, either with yes, no, or wait; that He cannot hear our prayers if we have not confessed specific sins in our lives; and that He cannot forgive us our sins unless we have forgiven everyone who has hurt us. That may be difficult, but asking for God's love and power enables us to do just what He says.

Questionnaire Served This morning your leaders ask that each adult complete the 24 question survey. This will aid the men in making decisions about possible changes in the format of worship. The subject (the Word of God) and the gospel message will *not* change! The questionnaire is one page, will take minimum time to answer, and needs to be returned today. Thank you for your cooperation.

Gallatin Church of Christ

The March for Jesus was Saturday, June 25th. We took the church van. There were people marching for Jesus in every time zone around the world. It was exciting to a part of that throng of millions whose only agenda was bringing glory to our Lord.

Ralph Avenue Church, Louisville

The church called Bro. Bill Smallwood to start fulltime ministry. He began July 1st, resigning as business manager of Portland Christian School, where he worked hard and well for some years. Ralph Avenue is growing!

Veterans' Milestones

On July 16, 1994 *Bro. and Sis. Paul Addams* celebrated their 60th anniversary. Their daughter, Shirley, held a surprise "day" for them. Cards and letters were sent by many friends. If you wish to send belated greetings, the address is: Mr. and Mrs. Paul Addams, c/o Shirley Javins, 68 Bonney Street, Steilacoom, WA 98388. Sis. Addams is Standford Chambers' daughter and former teacher at Portland Christian School.

Bro. C.V. Wilson celebrated his 91st birthday on June 15. He is a shut in and retired minister of Portland Ave. Church of Christ in Lou, KY. His address is: 231 South Galt, Louisville, Ky 40206.

Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville

The TEAM MINISTRY continues to move forward. The Evangelism Team started a "Greeter" program today; watch for "First Time Visitor" parking places to be put up soon. The Education Team is active in assigning new rooms for Sunday School classes today. Make sure you come to work night activities, to be supervised by the Service Team. Thanks to a member of the Service Team my office lights are in good working order again.

Someone said, "Self-preservation is the first law of nature; self-sacrifice the highest rule of grace." Self-sacrifice is what many at Southeast are doing. In order for this work to grow, it will require that everyone sacrifice time, effort and finances. We will grow spiritually and numerically *if we want to grow*. It takes visionary leadership and willingness of God's people to follow. Ephesians 3:20 "Now to him who

is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, *according to His power that is at work within us.*"

Cramer & Hanover

At the writing of the bulletin we are anticipating Sherry Hill's return from Russia. Reports have been encouraging hearing how the Lord has used them in working with college students in Moscow and living in Russian homes. Pray that the seed sown there will bear much fruit to His name's honor and glory.

Tonight we have asked Sherry to share with us slides, pictures, and information about her Russian trip. We will be meeting in the fellowship room and will have a time of fellowship afterward. Each family is asked to bring fruit. (Sherry is Bennie Hill's daughter.)

Urgent Prayer Needed! Church leaders killed in Iran

At press time *Open Doors* learned that Bro. Tateos Michaelian, one of the few remaining Protestant leaders in Iran, was shot to death in Tehran on July 1st. Michaelian had replaced Bro. Haik Hovsepian-Mair who was murdered in late January, as chairman of the Council of Protestant Ministers in Iran.

It has also been confirmed that Bro. Mehdi Dibaj, who disappeared on June 24, has been found murdered as well. Dibaj had been released from prison in mid-January after a worldwide outcry opposing his scheduled execution. At least three other Christian leaders are currently under arrest in Iran.

Please pray for the church and the families of these brave martyrs during this very difficult time.

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