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# The Role of the Restoration Hermeneutic in the Fractures of the Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century

Ronald James Francis Petter

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THE ROLE OF THE RESTORATION HERMENEUTIC IN THE FRACTURES OF  
THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

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A thesis submitted to  
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College  
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## ABSTRACT

The title for this thesis is The Role of the Restoration Hermeneutic in the Fractures of the Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century.

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The Churches of Christ trace their roots back to the Stone-Campbell movement that began in the early-nineteenth century. This Restoration movement was initially formed by several smaller religious groups that left mainstream denominations in the search of freedom in worship and Christian lifestyle. Over time, they pursued the dream of uniting Protestant denominations by restoring the first-century church. This new fellowship embraced a wide range of worship styles despite disagreements on several theological issues.

From these irenic roots, the Churches of Christ underwent three major fractures over issues of worship and Christian lifestyle in the twentieth century. There were various social and theological issues that influenced each fracture. In each case, however, this tension was initiated by a desire to restore and preserve the first-century church, and was brought to fruition by the inability to resolve different practices through the use of the Restoration hermeneutic. This thesis shows that despite different social conditions, different issues, different combatants, different countries and different times in history, this church family continued to fracture due to the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

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I am also grateful to my Church family in Hamilton and around the world for their influence in creating in me a deep love and respect for scripture. I am also thankful to fellow Church of Christ Evangelists across Canada for numerous fruitful discussions about our Church family past, present and future.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chapter

1. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST .....1

Introduction

Literature Review

Research Methodology

2. THE RESTORATION HERMENEUTIC.....13

The Protestant Hermeneutic

The Restoration Hermeneutic

Alexander Campbell and the Christian Baptist (CB)

Historians, Theologians and Others on the Restoration Hermeneutic

Conclusions

3. THE 1906 SPLIT.....22

Introduction

Instrumental Music

Missionary Societies

The 1906 Fracture

Explaining the Fracture

What to do with Inferences (Biblical silence)

Primitivism vs. Ecumenicity

Campbell's Teaching on Millennialism

Conclusions

4. THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY FRACTURE.....	39
Introduction	
Sunday School (Non-class) Issue	
Communion Cup(s)	
Science and Religion	
Communion Cup(s) in Worship	
The Mid-Twentieth Century Fracture	
Explaining the Fracture	
Conclusions	
5. THE BOSTON MOVEMENT.....	56
Introduction	
The First Ten Years	
Autonomy in Church Reconstructions and Plantings	
Discipling Relationships	
The Re-Baptism Issue	
The Late-Twentieth Century Fracture	
Explaining the Fracture	
Conclusions	
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	77



## Chapter One

### The Beginnings of the Churches of Christ

#### 1. Introduction

The Churches of Christ trace their rich history through the Stone-Campbell movement which had its beginnings in the Americas in the early-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This movement was not born in a vacuum, but was influenced by social, political and religious forces at work from the early beginnings of this family of churches.<sup>2</sup>

The late-eighteenth century brought the conflict between the colonies in North America and mother England to a conclusion. The Stone-Campbell movement and other Protestant religions on the frontier are seen by some to be an attempt to take ecclesiastical power from church hierarchy and place it in the hands of the common person.<sup>3</sup> Others have argued that this struggle for independence led to a new rational ideology that spoke of human progress dramatically influencing newly forming social structures, political values and Christian thinking. Consequently Christianity in the Americas focused on leaving behind dogmatic traditional roots while embracing the essentials of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> Paul Southern believes that the Restoration rallying cry of ‘back to the Bible in all matters of faith and practice’ was a response to the surrounding confusion within the greater Christian community.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a study of other Restoration movements, see Hughes, *Reclaiming A Heritage*, 13-34.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study, “churches” signifies those within the greater Christian community, while “Churches” (of Christ) indicates all those within this family of churches.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 75.

<sup>4</sup> González, *Story of Christianity*, 240.

<sup>5</sup> Southern, “Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Restoration Movement,” n.p.

These new religious ideas led to progressive teachings that can be seen in the writings of the early Restoration fathers including James O'Kelly,<sup>6</sup> Barton W. Stone,<sup>7</sup> and Thomas Campbell.<sup>8</sup> These men and others wrote documents espousing Christian freedoms decades before the Restoration movement began.<sup>9</sup> In 1794, for instance, James O'Kelly and several Methodist preachers met in Surrey County, Virginia, to address concerns involving the new American Bishop Francis Ashbury.<sup>10</sup> Later that year, they separated and organized the first Christian church<sup>11</sup> after writing the *Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church*. This document stated that Jesus was the only Head of the Church, scripture their only creed, Christian character and piety the only test of fellowship, the right of private judgement and liberty of conscience for all.<sup>12</sup>

Barton Stone began his ministry in Kentucky and soon found himself at odds with Calvinist teachings in the Presbyterian Church.<sup>13</sup> In 1803, Stone and others issued a document entitled the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*. In this document, they dismissed themselves from the Presbyterian fellowship and embraced the greater Christian community maintaining that local churches were autonomous, people had the freedom to read and apply scripture for themselves, and that the Bible was sufficient for all needs.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The interested reader is encouraged to see W. E. MacCleny, *The Life of Rev. James O'Kelly* (Ann Arbor: RBS Publishing, 1950).

<sup>7</sup> The interested reader is encouraged to see Barton Stone and John Rogers, *The Biography of Barton Warren Stone* (Cincinnati: J.A. and U.P. James, 1847). Reprinted by Restoration Reprint Library, n.d.

<sup>8</sup> The interested reader is encouraged to see Foster et al., *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 138-141.

<sup>9</sup> The interested reader is encouraged to see C. A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 1904. Reprinted C.A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union* (Joplin: College Press, 1985), 129-130.

<sup>10</sup> MacCleny, *Life of Rev. James O'Kelly*, 98-100.

<sup>11</sup> Many of the pre-Stone-Campbell churches were called Christian churches.

<sup>12</sup> MacCleny, *Life of Rev. James O'Kelly*, 121-122.

<sup>13</sup> Humble, *Story of the Restoration*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Stone et al., *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, 29-31.

In 1808, Thomas Campbell (father to Alexander) was suspended from the Chartiers Presbytery of Pennsylvania for teaching that creeds and confessions of faith were not scriptural.<sup>15</sup> The following year, the Christian Association of Washington was organized to promote Christian unity and Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* was accepted and taught by the Association.<sup>16</sup> This document contained thirteen articles designed to promote unity between the churches and argued that the presence of creeds and expressions of faith were the root causes of disunity.<sup>17</sup>

These documents written by the Stone-Campbell fathers reveal their distaste for denominational creeds and their desire for change by calling for a return to scripture and personal freedoms for each individual Christian. It was from within this social, political and religious turmoil that the Restoration movement had its humble origins. This movement, grounded in religious freedom, did not seek to create a new denomination but a family of churches calling themselves Disciples, Christians and Churches of Christ. These churches shared paranoia of ecclesiastical authority and a love for scripture which they believed was fundamentally clear and did not need special interpreters like the Holy Spirit or trained teachers.<sup>18</sup>

The early Restoration churches practiced baptism by immersion for the forgiveness of sins, autonomy of local congregations, plurality of elders and the celebration of the Lord's Supper each Sunday. They enjoyed strong preaching, committed memberships and serving the poor. Along with these similarities there were also many teachings and practices that were different within the various Restoration churches.

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<sup>15</sup> Young, *Historical Documents*, 31-32.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-36.

<sup>17</sup> T. Campbell, *Declaration and Address*, 4-8.

<sup>18</sup> Baker, *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 145.

The Stone churches were similar to many modern day Pentecostal churches with Spirit-filled people in the aisles. A Stone revival attendee stated that “many, very many fell down, as men slain in battle and continued for hours together, apparently breathless and motionless, sometimes groaning deeply or shrieking and shouting.”<sup>19</sup> These churches also practiced open membership and allowed unimmersed people to be counted in the membership and to celebrate communion during worship.<sup>20</sup>

The Campbellites taught that the Church was the body of Christ on earth and must continue the work He began. This was reflected in structured worship including prayer, singing, a collection for the poor, weekly communion and strong, practical preaching. Furthermore, the unimmersed were not counted among the membership of the church and therefore were not invited to celebrate communion.<sup>21</sup> These groups were united in fellowship and shared communion together despite differences in teaching and worship styles.<sup>22</sup> Their desire for unity was stronger than their drive to be right in various doctrines including the Trinity, millennialism and church membership.<sup>23</sup>

In his first issue of *The Christian Baptist*, Alexander Campbell clearly expressed his vision for the Restoration movement as he wrote:

The societies called Churches, constituted and set in order by those minister of the New Testament, were of such as received and acknowledged Jesus as Lord Messiah, the Savior of the World, and had put themselves under his guidance. The ONLY BOND OF UNION among them was faith in him and submission to his will. No subscription to abstract propositions framed by synods; no decrees of councils sanctioned by kings; no rules of practice commanded by ecclesiastical courts were imposed on them as terms of admission into, or of continuance in, this holy brotherhood.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Foster, *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 707.

<sup>20</sup> Adams and LaMascus, *Decades of Destiny*, 26.

<sup>21</sup> Baker, *Evangelicalism & The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 194–196.

<sup>22</sup> Adams, *Decades of Destiny*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 82-85.

<sup>24</sup> A. Campbell, “The Christian Religion,” *Christian Baptist*, 1 January 1827, 14.

In the years that followed, A. Campbell continued to labor to unify Protestantism through principles found in the Bible alone.<sup>25</sup> He believed that restoring the Bible in people's lives would create Christian unity. A. Campbell and the other Restorationists often included in their writings the statement, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent."<sup>26</sup> He also wrote, "No portion of Protestant Christendom is more Protestant than we are and desire to be. We are for union and truth and for the co-operation in the work of the faith."<sup>27</sup>

Despite A. Campbell's teachings, the Stone-Campbell churches began to separate and divide over issues of doctrine and worship in the decades that followed. The end of the Restoration movement began when the US bureau of consensus pressured the Restoration churches to give themselves different names. In 1906, the bureau listed the Churches of Christ (a cappella) that rejected musical instruments separate from Christian churches (Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ) that were using musical instruments in their worship services. Today, the Christian church is almost as large a fellowship as the Churches of Christ (a cappella).<sup>28</sup>

The Churches of Christ (a cappella) in the last one hundred years have continued this pattern of separating over various issues. The roots of Christian freedom and simple trust in scripture have been replaced with theological debates defending various positions on issues of opinion involving worship and lifestyle. The drive for unity that was present in A. Campbell's ministry has been replaced with a desire to find "the truth" in scripture

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<sup>25</sup> A. Campbell, "A Narrative of the Origin and Formation of the Westminster or Presbyterian Confession of Faith: No. II," *Christian Baptist*, 6 June 1825, 154-156; And "To an Independent Baptist" *Christian Baptist*, 1 May 1826, 236-238.

<sup>26</sup> Baker, *Evangelicalism & The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 212.

<sup>27</sup> A. Campbell, "Prefactory Remarks," *Christian Baptist*, 2 August 1824, 79.

<sup>28</sup> Baker, *Evangelicalism & The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 14.

and apply it.<sup>29</sup> This practice has led to ongoing dogmatism and sectarianism within this Church family throughout the twentieth century.

## 2. Literature Review

Michael Casey has done extensive research on the tension that existed in the Stone-Campbell movement in the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Casey argues that the tension in the early decades of the Stone-Campbell movement was due to an unhealthy evolution of the Restoration hermeneutic that over time began to teach inferences from the scriptures as commands affecting Christian life and doctrine.<sup>31</sup>

The majority of Disciples of Christ and Church of Christ historians believe that social issues due to the American civil war, geography, and education were central to the 1906 fracture of the Stone-Campbell movement. Hughes and Garrett argue that the increasing dogmatism in the mid-twentieth century over issues worship and Christian lifestyle were grounded in theology for those involved, but in reality were issues of personal opinion. There is not a lot of material written concerning this last fracture in 1987. The majority of the material points to the inability to resolve different theological issues from within the Churches of Christ.

Roy B. Ward correctly identified that Restoration principles are meaningless unless the hermeneutical problem is carefully considered.<sup>32</sup> His conclusions, however, fall short in that he merely points to the challenge of translating scripture into contemporary situations. He does not comment on specific issues involving the Restoration hermeneutic

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<sup>29</sup> Baker, *Evangelicalism*, 143-144.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics* (Queenston: Edward Mellen Press, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 53, 63-67.

<sup>32</sup> Roy B. Ward, "The Restoration Principle: A Critical Analysis," *Restoration Quarterly* 8, 4 (1965): np.

that include its simplicity and no acknowledgement of influences due to the exegete's experiences.

This thesis will show that the problem is not using the Restoration hermeneutic alone, as this merely provides information. It is the application of the Restoration hermeneutic that has been the driving force in all three fractures in the twentieth century within the Church of Christ fellowship.

Chapter two reveals that the Restoration hermeneutic was grounded in the Scottish rationalism teachings of John Locke, Thomas Reid and Sir Francis Bacon. These teachings led A. Campbell to believe that one could read scripture as a scientific text teaching by command, example and necessary inference.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Scottish rationalism influenced the Restoration hermeneutic by implying that a simple read of the facts (Bible) was all that was necessary to reveal the truth. This simple hermeneutic makes no allowance for the personal and spiritual influences that guide the interpreter. Therefore, it is this hermeneutic and its application that has led to the fractures that have plagued the Churches of Christ throughout the twentieth century.

Chapter three discusses the tension in the Stone-Campbell churches in the early-twentieth century. In this fracture a conservative group separated over the use of missionary societies and the presence of instruments in worship services. Historians argue that a wide range of social forces and theological issues fuelled this fracture. The driving force in this fracture was the Restoration hermeneutic that relied on the interpreter's ability to read and understand scripture while making no allowances for personal experiences and opinion. Therefore, as conservatives fought for no societies or instruments, the moderates embraced these in their churches with each being convinced

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<sup>33</sup> Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 25-27.

they were correct from a simple read of scripture. This fracture led to the formation of the Churches of Christ (a cappella) and the Christian church (Disciples of Christ/ Churches of Christ).

Chapter four looks in detail at the tension in the Churches of Christ in the mid-twentieth century. A different conservative faction separated over the use of a plurality of communion cups and the presence of Sunday school in worship services. Historians believe that this was also caused by a range of social and theological forces. The driving force in this fracture, however, was the Restoration hermeneutic that relied on the interpreter's ability to read and understand scripture while making no allowances for personal experiences and opinion. The conservatives in this fracture argued that a simple read of scripture showed there was no plurality of cups during the Lord's Supper or the Sunday schools in the first-century church. Therefore, they must be eliminated to restore the ancient order. This fracture created a one-cup, non-class group of churches from within the mainline Churches of Christ.

Chapter five studies the tension in the Churches of Christ late in the twentieth century. A liberal faction separated claiming that the mainline Churches had lost their way and were no longer "restoring the first-century Church." Historians believe that this was also caused by a range of social and theological issues. The driving force in this fracture was the Restoration hermeneutic. This fracture was able to use the Bible to proof-text practices that concerned the mainline Churches. The movement's conclusions were grounded in a confidence that a simple reading of the text would provide them with everything they needed to restore the first-century Church. This fracture created another faction within the mainline Churches of Christ called the Boston movement, which was later to be named the International Churches of Christ (ICOC).



Chapter six reveals how far this Church family has drifted from the freedoms that were the foundations of the Stone-Campbell movement. This chapter shows that the three fractures studied in this thesis were initiated by the desire to restore the first-century church and driven by tensions due to an inability to resolve differences in worship and lifestyle. Social, financial, geographic and theological differences played a significant role in fuelling these tensions. This thesis demonstrates that it was the application of the Restoration hermeneutic that was the common thread that ultimately led to each fracture.

### 3. Research Methodology

The broad subject called history is limited by the facts that are available and the limitations of those studying them.<sup>34</sup> This research assumes there are two components operating in the study of history. The first is that not all the past is recoverable and, therefore, the study of history is confined to that part of it which evidence survives. The second is that the task of selecting and arranging the evidence demands the historian's judgment. Therefore, historians themselves are a part of the historical process as they are influenced by their time and place.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, Evan's conclusions on historical methodology will be followed, "I will look humbly at the past and say despite them all: it really happened, and we really can, if we are very scrupulous and careful and self-critical,

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of history and the issues involved see Richard Evans, *Defence of History*; Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History*; Sir Geoffrey Elton, *The Practice of History*; Keith Jenkins, *On What is History and Re-Thinking History*; Richard Rory, *Objectivity, Relativity and Truth*; Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*; and G. J. Renier, *History, its Purpose and Method*. The study of history is further complicated when one turns to the study of Church History. James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*, recognize the challenges of studying church history that is intertwined with core belief of a God who acts throughout history. Each Church historian will view differently the involvement of God depending on their understanding of issues including linearity, interventions, and eschatology. Gord Heath, *Doing Church History*, is correct in his conclusion that, despite one's understanding of human free will and God's sovereignty, there must be a core Christian conviction that God is at work in history and that the coming of Jesus Christ is at the heart of that work.

<sup>35</sup> Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, 6-8.

find out how it happened and reach some tenable thought always less than final conclusions about what it all meant.”<sup>36</sup>

Gord Heath correctly identifies the denominational press as a unique primary source of information for historical research as it reflects the views of the writers and also influenced shaping contemporary public opinion.<sup>37</sup> With this in mind, the Restoration hermeneutic will be studied using the writings of Alexander Campbell in *The Christian Baptist* (1823–1830) and *The Millennial Harbinger* (1830–1864). The early twentieth-century fracture will also be studied using contemporary journals including *The American Christian Review* (1856-1965), *The Gospel Advocate* (1866-ongoing), *Lard’s Quarterly* (1863-1868), *The Christian Standard* (1865-ongoing) and *The Christian Evangelist* (1863-1958). James S. Lamaar crystallized the Stone-Campbell hermeneutic in his book, *The Organon of Scripture*. Finally, contemporary authors, such as Jeremiah P. Jeter provide commentary from outside the Stone-Campbell fellowship on A. Campbell and his teachings.

The primary sources for research into the divisions in the mid-twentieth century will come from the writings of Ronny L. Wade, Leroy Garrett and Richard Hughes. Wade writes from within the conservative faction of this split. His work, *The Sun Will Shine Again, Someday*, is a fruitful source of references while providing insight into the theology driving this fracture. Garrett is a Church of Christ historian who has lived through, and written extensively on, the fractures in the Churches of Christ in mid and late-twentieth century. As a young preacher, he was a strong promoter of dogmatic teachings, but as he aged, he came to embrace a broader group of brothers and sisters into

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<sup>36</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 252–253.

<sup>37</sup> Heath, “Forming Sound Public Opinion,” 112-113.

fellowship.<sup>38</sup> Hughes is a Church of Christ historian/theologian who writes from personal experiences and also provides valuable insight into the theology driving this fracture.

The primary sources used to study the last fracture will include writings of Jerry Jones, Rick Bauer, Flavil Yeakley and Tom Jones. J. Jones at one time was an elder for the Boston Church of Christ and contributor to the Boston movement's magazine.<sup>39</sup> In the early eighties, he left the movement and rejoined the mainline Churches of Christ and authored *What does the Boston Movement Teach?*<sup>40</sup> Bauer was also a member of the Boston movement and contributor to the Boston movement's magazine.<sup>41</sup> Bauer rejoined the mainline churches and wrote about his (and others) negative experiences in the movement.<sup>42</sup> Yeakley was a member of the mainline churches who worshipped with the Boston church to document the explosive growth that was happening. His book, *The Discipling Dilemma*,<sup>43</sup> offered psychological assessment of what was happening within the Boston church.

T. Jones' provides a valuable perspective as he was raised in the mainline Churches and was involved with the Boston Movement from its beginnings. His book, *In Search of a City*, details his experiences in both ministries.<sup>44</sup> *Discipleship Quarterly*, *Discipleship* and *Upside Down* magazines were monthly magazines published by the Boston movement. These publications provide excellent perspective on the Boston movement before and after their separation from the mainline Churches.

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<sup>38</sup> Garrett, *A Lover's Quarrel*, 112-113.

<sup>39</sup> Jerry Jones, "The Epistle to the Philippians: I," *Biblical Discipleship Quarterly*, Winter 1987, 17-20. Also, "The Epistle to the Philippians: II," *Biblical Discipleship Quarterly*, Spring 1987, 9-12.

<sup>40</sup> Jerry Jones, *What Does the Boston Movement Teach?* (Bridgeton: Mid-America Books Sales, 1990).

<sup>41</sup> Rick Bauer, "Isaiah 53: Suffering and Glory of the Messiah," *Discipleship Magazine*, 1988, 28-36.

<sup>42</sup> Rick Bauer, *Toxic Christianity: The International Churches of Christ/ Boston Movement Cult* (Washington: Freedom House, 1992).

<sup>43</sup> Flavil R. Yeakley, *The Discipling Dilemma* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1988).

<sup>44</sup> Thomas A. Jones, *In Search of a City* (Springhill: DPI Books, 2007).

The primary sources used in this research detail the convictions, emotions and experiences of those involved. These accounts provide valuable insight into the teachings that helped to shape each faction. Finally, these sources studied in each chapter are from both sides of the fracture providing a broader picture of the conflict. Secondary sources build a strong foundation from authors that have already completed studies on the social and theological dynamics of this Church family in the twentieth century.

It has been difficult to find a large amount of material written about the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century from sources outside the fellowship. The fact that the majority of the research material for this thesis comes from within this Church family is limiting as it presents perspectives only from within the Churches of Christ and often brings emotion and personal opinion in the written material. Similarly, the author has been a preacher in the Boston movement for eighteen years. This personal contact provides access to a wealth of material, but also brings the risk of emotion and opinion influencing this analysis.

Despite these challenges it is possible to gather a great deal of information from these sources. This information can then be studied to understand more completely the forces at work within these fractures in the twentieth century. This thesis will show that despite different combatants, different issues, different locations around the world and different times in history, the fractures in the Churches of Christ were due to the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

## Chapter Two

### The Development of the Restoration Hermeneutic

#### 1. The Protestant Hermeneutic

The Protestant hermeneutic<sup>1</sup> assumes that the Bible is the primary source of knowledge about God, and therefore interpretation of scripture takes on a vital role in the life of the church. The roots of the Protestant hermeneutic can be traced to 1442, in Gutenberg, where the invention of a printing press with moveable type allowed for mass printing of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> This access to the scripture allowed for more reading, teaching and discussion in the years that followed.

This led to one of the earliest hermeneutical debates as Martin Luther began to wrestle with the Bible's teachings and application to Christian life.<sup>3</sup> This tension led to several issues coming to the forefront which ultimately fueled the Reformation. In simple terms, the Roman Catholic Church argued at the Council of Trent, in 1545, that the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church carried the same doctrinal authority as the Bible while Luther argued that scripture should stand alone and be interpreted through inspiration.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The word hermeneutic finds its roots within the Greek words *ermhneueiu* and *ermhueia*, meaning "to interpret", and "interpretation" respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Burland, "Gutenberg's Invention," n.p.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed study on Catholic hermeneutics, see Ommen, *Hermeneutic of Dogma*, 1-61.

<sup>4</sup> Connolly et al, *Hermeneutics vs. Science*, 4-7.

## 2. The Restoration Hermeneutic

The Restoration hermeneutic began to take shape in the age of Enlightenment in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> It is generally accepted by Stone-Campbell historians that A. Campbell had the greatest influence on the development of the movement, and therefore, on the Stone-Campbell hermeneutic. Some historians describe A. Campbell as a grandchild of the Puritans and a child of the European and American Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> Verkruyse writes that A. Campbell “sought to transform American religion from the mountains of West Virginia by two means; an educational institution, Bethany College,<sup>7</sup> and his own printing shop.”<sup>8</sup>

His contemporary, Jeremiah P. Jeter, believed A. Campbell’s Scottish roots had a strong influence on his teachings. He wrote, “Had Mr. C. not passed his early years in Scotland, his religious views and career would have differed widely from what they have been.”<sup>9</sup> Jeter also believed that A. Campbell’s education influenced him. He wrote, “It would be strange, if his education in his school of bigotry and intolerance, had not given complexion to his spirit, character to his opinions and directions to his labors.”<sup>10</sup> Robert Richardson’s biography of Alexander revealed that his father, Thomas, spent a great deal of time preparing Alexander for his education at the University of Glasgow in Greek and Latin.<sup>11</sup> Richardson summarized Alexander’s education by detailing his classes of Greek

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<sup>5</sup> Schleiermacher was a contemporary of the early Restorationists, but it is difficult to know the influence of his teaching on the development of the Restoration hermeneutic. The wide range of hermeneutic definitions and applications that are available today were not available to the early Restoration Fathers.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, *Cruciform Church*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Bethany College was founded by A. Campbell at Bethany, West Virginia. The college opened its doors in 1840 and to today is a highly regarded and well-endowed liberal arts institution. For more information see Foster et al, *Encyclopedia of Stone-Campbell Movement*, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Verkruyse, *Prophet, Pastor, and Patriarch*, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Jeter, *Campbellism Examined*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs*, 34.

with Professor Young, Logic with Professor Jardine and Experimental Philosophy with Dr Ure.<sup>12</sup>

At university, a young Alexander was exposed to the Scottish Rationalism teachings of Thomas Reid at Glasgow and Dugald Stewart at Edinburgh. This philosophy taught that everyone was endowed with the ability to reach common sense conclusions on which all human life was founded.<sup>13</sup> Alexander studied under George Jardine whose favorite text was *Novum Organum* of Bacon.<sup>14</sup> A. Campbell was also influenced by John Locke's teachings that the human mind was a blank slate and that "simple ideas" were generated by "sensation" and "reflection" which led to "complex ideas" that he called "reason" and "association."<sup>15</sup> Subsequently, combining Locke's and Bacon's teachings allowed people to know with certainty the world around them and enabled them to agree with one another. The teachings of these men and other Scottish Rationalists influenced a young Campbell at Glasgow University.<sup>16</sup> A. Campbell matriculated at the University of Glasgow on 8 November 1808.<sup>17</sup>

A. Campbell's education profoundly impacted his theology. He compared Locke with the founding fathers of the Restoration movement and called him the "Christian Philosopher to whom we are more indebted to than our revolutionary heroes and

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<sup>12</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs*, 131.

<sup>13</sup> Some eighteenth-century philosophers suggested that people had no direct knowledge of objects or events outside themselves and all that they could know was a perception of those objects or events. This raised the question how people could know anything outside themselves. Scottish Common Sense teachings (Scottish Rationalism or Baconianism) argued that people could know things outside themselves with certainty by using the scientific method devised by Sir Francis Bacon in the seventeenth century. Baconian (inductive) scientific method was in contrast to Aristotelian science which began with one's biases and collected data in order to prove what was already believed (deductive). For an in-depth study of Scottish Common Sense teachings, see S. A. Grave, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973).

<sup>14</sup> A. Campbell, *Campbell at Glasgow*, 4; McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 25.

<sup>15</sup> Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 109-122.

<sup>16</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 49-50. To read Alexander Campbell's notes from school see: Campbell, *Campbell at Glasgow*, (Greenfield: Mitchell-Fleming, 1971), reprint.

<sup>17</sup> A. Campbell, *Campbell at Glasgow*. 3.

statesmen for the cause of civil and religious liberty.”<sup>18</sup> In the years that followed, Scottish rationalism affected his approach to Bible study. In 1830, A. Campbell still described the Bible as “a book of facts.”<sup>19</sup> Five years later he wrote, “The bible is a book of facts and not of opinions, theories, abstract generalities, nor of verbal definitions ... the meaning of the Bible facts is the true biblical doctrine.”<sup>20</sup> Two years after that, he wrote, “the inductive style of inquiring and reasoning is to be as rigidly carried out in reading and teaching the Bible facts and documents as in the analysis of nature.”<sup>21</sup>

A. Campbell was distressed by the amount of sectarianism that he saw in the Protestant community of his time. Contemporaries understood this, and embraced A. Campbell’s goals. Jeter wrote, “no intelligent Christian can object to the end which Mr. C. proposed to accomplish. The union of all true Christians on the apostolic foundation is an object most devoutly to be wished for.”<sup>22</sup> A. Campbell believed that the way to deal with issues in the Church was restoration. Early in his ministry, he wrote,

Human systems, whether of philosophy or of religion, are proper subjects of reformation. Every attempt to reform Christianity is like an attempt to create a new sun, or to change the revolutions of heavenly bodies - unprofitable and vain. A restoration of the ancient order of things is all that is necessary to the happiness and usefulness of Christians. No attempt to reform the doctrine, discipline, and government of the Church can promise a better result.<sup>23</sup>

As A. Campbell set about his task to unite Protestantism, he drew on the tools that he had learned in university. He believed that tension within the Protestant community could be relieved by doing away with divisive creeds and returning to the ancient order found in scripture. In 1825, he wrote,

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<sup>18</sup> Sims, *Campbell-Owen Debate*, 262.

<sup>19</sup> A. Campbell, “The Confirmation of the Testimony,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 4 January 1830, 8.

<sup>20</sup> A. Campbell, *Christian System*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> A. Campbell, “Remarks on Facts and Documents,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 2 April 1832, 172.

<sup>22</sup> Jeter, *Campbellism Examined*, 22.

<sup>23</sup> A. Campbell, “Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- I,” *Christian Baptist*, 7 February 1825, 128.



But a restoration of the ancient order of things, it appears, is all that is contemplated by the wise disciples of the Lord ...in attempting to accomplish this, it must be observed, that it belongs to every individual and to every congregation of individuals to discard from their faith and their practice every thing that is not found written in the New Testament of the Lord and Saviour, and to believe and practise whatever is there enjoined.<sup>24</sup>

This theology of primitivism would be a driving force in the Stone-Campbell Churches and ultimately the Churches of Christ in the next century.

In 1854, James S. Lamaar graduated from Campbell's Bethany College and was one of the first to detail the Restoration hermeneutic. In his book, *The Organon of Scripture*, readers can clearly see the influence of Scottish Common Sense and Baconianism on the Stone-Campbell movement.<sup>25</sup> Lamaar described his reasons for writing this book as threefold. First, he felt that contemporary hermeneutics was not yet an exact science. Second, he mirrored A. Campbell's concerns about division within the Protestant churches. Finally, Lamaar was concerned about metaphysical religion which he defined as "mysticism being taught as a pure, sublime, perfect devotion... therefore truth is not acquired from the observation of individual facts but by absorbing all the faculties into contemplation."<sup>26</sup> Similar to A. Campbell, Lamaar viewed Protestants of his day as sincere but encouraged them to abandon cherished beliefs that confused the literal significance of the Bible. He taught that outside the Restoration hermeneutic it was easy to weave any scripture into a metaphysical web that could mean anything and nothing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> A. Campbell, "Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- II," *Christian Baptist*, 7 March 1825, 133.

<sup>25</sup> Lamaar believed that God had spread before His children two great volumes which he entitled the Book of Nature and the Book of Revelation. He argued that both volumes were products of the same mind without contradiction and each expressed the will and wisdom of God. The facts may be different in each volume, but the tools for interpretation should be the same for both. Therefore inductive scientific study of the facts was necessary to interpret the creation and/or God's word. See Lamaar, *Organon of Scripture*.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-48.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

### 3. Alexander Campbell and the Christian Baptist (CB)

The Restoration hermeneutic was a powerful tool used by the movement for the study of scripture. An ongoing challenge was dealing with those who arrived at different conclusions while reading the same passage. Early in his writings, A. Campbell often responded to differences of opinion with verbal attacks. Baptist contemporary Jeremiah P. Jeter wrote a response disagreeing with A. Campbell's teachings but also depicting A. Campbell as opinionated and intolerant.<sup>28</sup> W. E. Garrison described *CB* as often being filled with scathing denunciations of contemporary religious groups.<sup>29</sup> Peter A. Verkruyse believes that the early *CB* was often devoted to the exposure of error in others."<sup>30</sup> Three of A. Campbell's favorite targets to mock were the pretensions of the clergy,<sup>31</sup> the use of creeds,<sup>32</sup> and organizations with no biblical precedence.<sup>33</sup>

A. Campbell's tone changed in the years that followed. Decades later, he described the first volume of *CB* as "the most uncharitable ... severe, sarcastic, and ironic" material that he had ever written, explaining that, "It was an experiment to

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<sup>28</sup> Jeter, *Campbellism Examined*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Garrison, *Disciples of Christ*, 176.

<sup>30</sup> Verkruyse, *Pastor, Prophet and Patriarch*, 90.

<sup>31</sup> A. Campbell, "3<sup>rd</sup> Epistle of Peter," *Christian Baptist*, 4 July 1825, 166-168. He offered this mocking article "to the Preachers and Rulers of Congregations." The first of four chapters encouraged leaders to have holy titles, dwell in houses of splendor and to have sumptuous fare. In chapters two and three, Campbell called for congregations to choose from among the youth, those who judgements are not yet ripe for leadership and to preachers to preach eloquently with voices as smooth as the stream of the valley. His final chapter encouraged leaders to "in all your gettings, get money!"

<sup>32</sup> A. Campbell, "The Iron Bedstand," *The Christian Baptist*, 4 October 1826, 277-278. In this article, Campbell attacks the Church's use of creeds. He described the days of the Popes when a good Christian was three feet tall and for nearly a thousand years every Christian was laid on the Iron Bedstand and his height was lengthened and shortened to meet the arbitrary (creedal) standard. Since Luther was four feet tall, the standard was changed and good Christians were adjusted appropriately to be four feet. Subsequent changes were made by Calvin, Independents, Baptists and Congregationalists. Campbell closed with, "Why not, then, dispense with this Popish furniture in the Church, and allow Christians of very stature to eat at the same table."

<sup>33</sup> A. Campbell, "Essays, on Ecclesiastical Characters, Councils, Creeds and Sects.—No. I," 5 April 1824, 54-61. In this article, Campbell attacked creeds with, "Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, and a thousand pagan philosophers who originated opinions, opinions made disciples, disciples made sects, sects adopted creeds, creeds required councils, councils published canons; and all these created and required priests to illustrate, to approve and fulminate their decisions."

ascertain whether society could be moved by fear or rage.”<sup>34</sup> In 1829, he debated with Robert Owen arguing that “there is one faith but nowhere is it written that there is one opinion.” He later added that, “we do not ask them to give up their opinions—we ask them not to impose them upon others.”<sup>35</sup> Robert Richardson explained A. Campbell’s thinking later in his life. He wrote, “It is essential to unity that there should be a universal faith ... and an individual opinion.”<sup>36</sup>

Richard T. Hughes correctly notes that the Churches of Christ are heirs to the A. Campbell found in early *CB* and not the A. Campbell who later wrote in *The Millennial Harbinger*.<sup>37</sup> Hughes describes the early *CB* tone as the “hard fighting style” which was used within the churches of Christ to denounce those who disagree with the groups teachings.<sup>38</sup> This sarcastic, self-righteous tone can be seen in many of the battles within this church family in the twentieth century.

#### 4. Conclusions

Early Restorationists believed that the Bible was a collection of simple facts that could be read, understood and applied by anybody to practical situations. A. Campbell and his contemporaries believed that scripture taught by command, example and necessary inference. There has been no change in the Restoration hermeneutic from the time of Alexander Campbell to the present day. In the early twentieth century, conservative Disciples battled against new ideas by simply asking for “chapter and verse”<sup>39</sup> or “what Church in the New Testament had instrumental music or missionary

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<sup>34</sup> A. Campbell, “Address to Reformers,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 5 September 1841, 418.

<sup>35</sup> Alexander Campbell and Robert Owen, *Evidence of Christianity: A Debate*, 395.

<sup>36</sup> A. Campbell and Robert Richardson, “Reformation,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 5 January 1848, 36, 74.

<sup>37</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 90-91.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-189.

<sup>39</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 341.

societies?”<sup>40</sup> During the mid-twentieth century, the Churches of Christ were rooted in the same rules of biblical interpretation. J. D. Thomas wrote, “Command, example, and necessary inference have in general been accepted by all of us since the beginning of the Restoration period of church history.”<sup>41</sup> Near the end of the twentieth century, Thomas H. Olbricht wrote, “The Church of Christ hermeneutic is still anchored to the belief that the Bible teaches by command, example and necessary inferences.”<sup>42</sup>

The challenge of the Restoration hermeneutic does not lie in the process of gathering information (command, example and necessary inference); but rather in the application of the material gathered. The Restoration teaching that scripture can be read and understood by anyone without any need for teachers or the Holy Spirit is misleading. The movement’s history has shown that scripture can be read by everyone but this does not assure that perfect and complete understanding is available to all. Bernard Ramm correctly explains, “The bible is inerrant BUT that does not mean that we are inerrant.”<sup>43</sup> C. Allen Leonard correctly points to the frailty of human understanding as he writes, “biblical interpretation (or theology) is always a human enterprise.”<sup>44</sup> The Restoration hermeneutic was built on a logical (and incorrect) foundation that assumed everyone reading scripture had no emotional or spiritual history that would influence their interpretation.

The application of the Restoration hermeneutic also implies anyone who does not embrace the ‘restored’ New Testament practice is wrong. The tone of the combatants in

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<sup>40</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 309.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, *We Be Brethren*, 6.

<sup>42</sup> Olbricht, “Hermeneutics in the Churches of Christ,” n.p.

<sup>43</sup> Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 201.

<sup>44</sup> Leonard, *Cruciform Church*, 12.

many of these fractures studied is similar to a young A. Campbell who often responded to disagreements with intolerant, mocking rebuttals.

The following chapters will discuss three fractures in the twentieth century in the Churches of Christ. It is apparent that despite different issues, different combatants, different countries, liberal or conservative factions and different times in history, this church family continued to fracture throughout the twentieth century. The constant, in every case, is the application of the Restoration hermeneutic and the tone of an intolerant young A. Campbell.

## Chapter Three

### The 1906 Split

#### 1. Introduction

Stone-Campbell historians recognize that there was a growing class consciousness in the Stone-Campbell churches during the period of 1865 to 1900. The conservative churches of the south were mainly rural while the northern churches were predominantly urban and stronger economically.<sup>1</sup> The conservatives in the south often ridiculed the churches in the north due to their practices of hiring young pastors, building elaborate churches and requiring a formal education for ministers. David Lipscomb and other conservatives argued that a theological education created a professional clergy which did not allow churches to train their ministers.<sup>2</sup>

The approaching American civil war fueled the tension between the north and south by raising new questions in the movement including, “can a Christian own slaves” and “is it right for a Christian to go to war?” Further complicating these issues were Disciples<sup>3</sup> in the north and south that had to fight against one another. The more the Disciples grappled with these questions and others, the less agreement they sensed among themselves.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 334-344; Humble, *Restoration Movement*, 66-68; West, *Search for the Ancient Order*; 3, 49-50.

<sup>2</sup> David Lipscomb, “Bro. Lipscomb on Bible Colleges,” *Apostolic Times* V, 7 August 1873, 4. Quoted in Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 338.

<sup>3</sup> Disciples in a common term used to describe Christians in the mainline Churches. Therefore, in this thesis, it is used in a similar fashion.

<sup>4</sup> McAllister, *Journeys in Faith*, 237.

It has been argued that early Stone-Campbell Restorationists, including Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, J.W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, Moses E. Lard, and Tolbert Fanning were pacifists and opposed the war.<sup>5</sup> Garrett argues, however, that pacifist ideals in the movement were not always clear since both Stone and A. Campbell had sons in the Confederate army. Furthermore, James A. Garfield (preacher in the Christian church and later to be president), was a General and J.H. Garrison (later to be editor of *The Christian Evangelist*) was a Colonel in the Union army and both were respected Disciples in the Stone-Campbell movement.<sup>6</sup>

The issue of slavery was also without well defined boundaries. A. Campbell did not choose sides but believed that “every man should remain in the situation he was in when God called him.”<sup>7</sup> He was very clear about his goals when he wrote, “to preserve unity of spirit among Christians of the South and of the North is my grand object and for that purpose I am endeavoring to show that the New Testament does not authorize interferences or legislation upon the relation of master and slave, nor does it either in letter or spirit authorize Christians to make it a term of communion.”<sup>8</sup> According to his wife, A. Campbell owned several slaves before he was married.<sup>9</sup> He later wrote, “I have set free from slavery every human being that came in any way under my influence or was my property.”<sup>10</sup> Early in his ministry, Stone also had owned several slaves but later emancipated them, “from a sense of right, choosing poverty with a good conscience, in preference to all the treasure of the world.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> McAllister, *Journeys in Faith*, 199-200.

<sup>6</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 337-338.

<sup>7</sup> I Corinthians 7:20.

<sup>8</sup> A. Campbell, “Our Position to American Slavery,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 5 June 1845, 194-196.

<sup>9</sup> S. Campbell, *Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell*, 454.

<sup>10</sup> A. Campbell, “Our Position to American Slavery,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 5 June 1845, 259.

<sup>11</sup> Stone, *Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone*, 44.

A. Campbell and Stone were both anti-slavery but not abolitionists. Their teachings were generally accepted in the north and south as most of the Stone-Campbell churches tried to stay neutral on the issue of slavery and waged their war fighting division within the movement.<sup>12</sup> Lipscomb and other influential preachers in the south preached a pacifism that required non-involvement in civil government. Lipscomb wrote, “Christians engaging in politics injure religion, hurt themselves and never elevate the politics.”<sup>13</sup> Obviously, having Garfield in the white house two years earlier had not changed Lipscomb’s strong conservative opinions about politics.

It is important to note that these issues and differences created tension but never caused a division within the movement. Christian Church historians W.E. Garrison and A.T. DeGroot correctly argue that the first generation leaders were still alive during these events and had a moderating influence and a passion for unity that would not allow for division.<sup>14</sup> McAllister and Tucker believe the lack of ecclesiastical structure among the Disciples also played a key role in preventing a well-defined split.<sup>15</sup>

In 1866, the passing of Alexander Campbell opened the door for conflict as the next generation was without the pastoral leadership that had guided them to that point. A. Campbell’s leadership had been exerted primarily through his writings in *The Christian Baptist* and *The Millennial Harbinger*.<sup>16</sup> The next generation of leadership imitated A.

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<sup>12</sup> James R. Wilburn, *The Hazard of the Die* (Austin: Sweet, 1969), 207. Quoted in Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 343.

<sup>13</sup> Lipscomb, “Preachers in Politics,” *Gospel Advocate*, December 1883, 601.

<sup>14</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 333-337.

<sup>15</sup> McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 207.

<sup>16</sup> Kevin James Gilbert considers this a paradox as the Stone-Campbell Churches taught that ecclesiastical authority was built on an eldership in each congregation and yet much of the leadership and direction of the Stone-Campbell movement was through publications. See Gilbert, “The Stone-Campbell Millennium: A Historical, Theological Perspective,” n.p.



Campbell by writing and circulating articles throughout the Churches.<sup>17</sup> Garrison and DeGroot described their influence by saying, “the editor’s chair had become nearer to a throne of power than any other position among the Disciples.”<sup>18</sup> Historians today highlight the influence of these men by calling them “editor bishops.”<sup>19</sup>

Several Christian Church historians believe that the next generation of leadership in the Stone-Campbell movement assumed positions of authority without the benefit of a strong theological education.<sup>20</sup> Eugene Boring argues that there was some education for these editor bishops, however, it was almost always from the Disciples’ own schools and not from the greater Christian community, preventing them from receiving a broader education.<sup>21</sup> James S. Lamar, a second generation Disciple, described many of these editors as, “men of comparably smaller calibre” in comparison to A. Campbell.<sup>22</sup>

These factors and others did not deter these editor bishops from publishing a variety of journals that were circulated throughout the Stone-Campbell Churches.<sup>23</sup> The conservative publications included the *American Christian Review* (Editor Benjamin Franklin), the *Gospel Advocate* (Editor Tolbert Fanning, later replaced by David Lipscomb) and *Lard’s Quarterly* (Editor Moses E. Lard). The *Christian Standard* (Editor Isaac Erret) and the *Christian Evangelist* (Editor J.D. Garrison) were considered the most

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<sup>17</sup> For a summary of the second generation of leadership, see McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 209-232; Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 115-163; Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 330-382; Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 387-407; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 137-167.

<sup>18</sup> Winfred E. Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier: A History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931), 210. Quoted in McAllister, *Journeys in Faith*, 212.

<sup>19</sup> Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 16-22; Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 307-333; McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 212.

<sup>20</sup> McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 230; Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 337.

<sup>21</sup> Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 115.

<sup>22</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 462.

<sup>23</sup> For a complete list of editors and journals, see Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 255-256.

liberal<sup>24</sup> in their content.<sup>25</sup> These journals along with *Millennial Harbinger* (Editor Alexander Campbell replaced by K.W. Pendleton) were the most influential during the years leading up to the fracture of the Disciples in the early twentieth century.

The Restoration hermeneutic viewed scripture as a scientific document through which inductive reasoning would reveal God's will for the contemporary Christian through command, example and necessary inference. The early Restorationists believed that the removal of all creeds and formalism would unite the Christian community and restore an exact replica of the first-century church. Therefore, conservatives taught it was necessary to assume that silence of the New Testament on any new method was equivalent to a denial of the new method. They pointed to early Restoration teaching of "when the Bible is silent, we are silent and when the Bible speaks, we speak."<sup>26</sup>

This hermeneutic was embraced by the conservatives of this generation in the movement leading to disagreements over many issues. Disciples of Christ (Christian Churches) historians believe that the issues creating tension at the beginning of the twentieth century included open communion, the title Reverend (not biblical), one-man pastoral leadership, the use of creeds, the use of instruments in worship, and missionary societies.<sup>27</sup> Church of Christ historians generally point to the use of musical instruments in worship and the development of missionary societies as the two main driving forces leading to the fracture of the Stone-Campbell movement in 1906.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The reader is reminded that these discussions were decades before the Fundamentalist – Modernist debates. Therefore, in this Church family, at this time, the terms liberals, moderates and conservatives had different meaning than later in the twentieth century. Those who embraced new ideas were generally branded as liberals while those enforcing biblical silence (i.e. instruments) were seen as conservative.

<sup>25</sup> McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 287, 328; Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 236.

<sup>27</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 337; Garrison, *An American Religious Movement*, 119.

<sup>28</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 307-308, 364; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 117-134.

## 2. Instrumental Music

The use of an instrument in worship was first introduced in 1849 and began to appear in Stone-Campbell churches in the decades that followed. Stephen J. England believes that it was not the desire for innovation but the increase of instruments within homes that led to their appearance in the Disciple's churches.<sup>29</sup> The visibility of the organ in the worship service created the most tension for conservatives since other issues may not have been as visible.<sup>30</sup> There were no open divisions concerning this practice until the late 1880s.

The strongest opponents initially were McGarvey, Franklin and Lard who disagreed on how to deal with instruments in worship, but all attacked the issue in their respective journals. McGarvey contended that the use of instruments in worship was a sin, but did not want it to lead to division and, therefore, was unwilling to make it a test of fellowship.<sup>31</sup> Franklin revealed his strong convictions against instruments when he wrote, "There can be no compromise on great and sacred principle. We will not worship with the instrument! It is opening the door for all innovation and apostasy."<sup>32</sup> Franklin viewed using instruments as a departure from the ancient order, but his passion for unity would not allow him to create division or make it a test of fellowship.<sup>33</sup> In 1868, he wrote, "we grant that we have the elements among us to produce division, but they do not have the machinery to do it."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> England, *We Disciples*, 60-61.

<sup>30</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 308.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 315-316.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Franklin, "Instrumental Music in Worship," *American Christian Review*, February 1868, 44. Quoted in Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 242.

<sup>33</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 323.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Franklin, "Can We Divide?" *American Christian Review*, February 1868, 36. Quoted in Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 7.

Lard was one of the strongest early opponents of instrumental music and had little regard for maintaining unity within the movement. In 1864, he wrote, “any Church that would introduce an organ would suffer its Bible to be torn in shreds before it would part from its pet. Such a Church forsakes the example of the primitive Church, condemns the authority of Christ and resorts to will worship.” He predicted that “these organ-grinding Churches” would in due time be broken down or else go into complete apostasy and “the sooner they are in fragments the better for the cause of Christ.”<sup>35</sup> Despite his strong words, Lard predicted that nothing would divide the movement if the Civil war had not.<sup>36</sup>

Tension created by using instruments can be seen in a statement written in 1889 by the Sand Creek Church of Christ in Illinois and read to a membership of six thousand people.<sup>37</sup> The *Sand Creek Declaration and Address* stated: “Church fund-raisers, instrumental music in worship, Church choirs, man-made society for mission work, and the one man imported preacher pastor were not found in the New Testament.” They concluded: “we are impelled from a sense of duty to say that all such as are guilty of teaching or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, after having sufficient time for meditation and reflection, if they will not turn away from such abominations, that we will not regard them as brethren.”<sup>38</sup>

The battle over the presence of an organ in a worship service led many to waver back and forth in their conviction. For example, John F. Rowe condemned the organ as sinful but later in the same article wrote, “We have never said that we intend to make the

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<sup>35</sup> Lard, “Instrumental Music in Churches and Dancing,” *Lard’s Quarterly*, March 1864, 332.

<sup>36</sup> Lard, “Can We Divide?” *Lard’s Quarterly*, March 1864, 336.

<sup>37</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 391-392.

<sup>38</sup> Verkruyse, *Prophet, Pastor and Patriarch*, 151.

use of the organ a test of fellowship in the Churches.”<sup>39</sup> He finally concluded that an organ was permissible providing “it was a little organ.”<sup>40</sup> In the years that followed, conservative Disciples concerned by the presence of instruments in worship almost always had issue with missionary societies. These conservatives viewed both as a departure from the example of the first-century church.

### 3. Missionary Societies

The young Alexander Campbell had paranoia of creeds and their ability to create division within the church that was reflected in his early writings about missionary societies. He wrote, “The New Testament is the only source of information on this topic. It teaches us that the association, called the church of Jesus Christ is, in *propria forma*, the only institution of God left on earth to illuminate and reform the world.”<sup>41</sup> As explained in Chapter Two, A. Campbell changed his intolerance and eleven years later, he wrote, “The Church is not one congregation or assembly, but the congregation of Christ, composed of all individual congregations on earth. In this work of conversion the whole Church, by natural necessity as well as by the authority of the great King, must cooperate.”<sup>42</sup> These conflicting teachings would resonate through conservative and moderate factions in the years ahead.

In 1850, the Connellsville Church was one of the first Churches to ask, “If the church is the only organization through which to do God’s work on earth, then why a missionary society apart from the Church.”<sup>43</sup> Over time, other Churches began to raise similar questions and more opponents to the use of instruments during worship began to

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<sup>39</sup> William Clayton Bower and Roy G. Ross, *The Disciples and Religious Education* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1936), 30. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> John F. Rowe, *Christian Messenger*, February 1828, 72. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 21.

<sup>41</sup> A. Campbell, “Remarks on Missionaries,” *Christian Baptist*, 3 August 1823, 13.

<sup>42</sup> A. Campbell, “To Barton W. Stone,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 5 September 1834, 445.

<sup>43</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 360; Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 353.

embrace these conservative teachings also. Fanning, McGarvey, Franklin and many others initially favored missionary societies. McGarvey argued from the beginning that societies were only a method but still had issue with using instruments since he claimed that was an “act of worship.”<sup>44</sup>

Franklin initially was a strong supporter for missionary societies arguing that “authority for missionary societies came from the same place as authority for building a meeting house or a baptistry or translating scripture.”<sup>45</sup> It is of note that thirteen years later Franklin became an outspoken opponent to missionary societies. The conservatives including Fanning and Lipscomb, who were senior and junior editors respectively, of the *Gospel Advocate* rejoiced that Franklin now, “was making war upon all human organizations as substitutes for the Church of God.”<sup>46</sup>

The battle over missionary societies began while Alexander Campbell was still alive and both factions were competing for his blessings.<sup>47</sup> After his attempts failed, Lipscomb and other conservatives rationalized A. Campbell’s views by claiming that in his later years he had become a broken man who was being controlled by others in his life.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. The 1906 Fracture

It is important to note that hundreds of congregations responded to these issues without fracturing as some accepted the innovations and some did not. Those Disciples who had issue with either of these practices generally had concerns about both. The outspoken conservative Moses E. Lard described his position as, “Argue with the spirit of

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<sup>44</sup> McGarvey, “Instrumental Music in Churches of Christ,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 3 November 1864, 513.

<sup>45</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 353.

<sup>46</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 361.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, *Reclaiming A Heritage*, 46.

<sup>48</sup> Lipscomb, “A. Campbell and the Societies,” *Gospel Advocate*, April 1886, 358.

innovation indeed! I would as soon be caught cracking syllogisms over the head of the man of sin. Never. Rebuke it in the name of the Lord; if it go not out – expel it.”<sup>49</sup> A conservative Disciple wrote in the *American Christian Review* that, “We want more faith and less machinery, more work and less talk; but instead of going to work with the tools He has furnished, we spend all the day making new ones which in our wisdom we think will work better.”<sup>50</sup> The conservative base deflected the introduction of new ideas by simply asking for “chapter and verse”<sup>51</sup> or “what Church in the New Testament had instrumental music or missionary societies?”<sup>52</sup>

Moderates like McGarvey understood that the real issue was whether silence in scripture permitted freedom of opinion or allowed for no freedom of expression.<sup>53</sup> There were outspoken moderates who argued that where the scriptures were silent they had the right – indeed the duty – to use ‘sanctified common sense’ and to follow ‘enlightened judgment.’<sup>54</sup> Garrison’s writings reflect the thinking of many moderates. He was surprised at the conservative teachings since he believed that anything that would cause them to stand aloof from cooperation with other religious bodies “was utterly inconsistent with the spirit and aim of our reformation.”<sup>55</sup> Therefore, conservatives saw Garrison and others as too liberal, and yet Garrison saw himself as a biblical literalist battling against liberal teachings. He wrote, “The world is becoming very liberal, and many churches have drifted into a liberality not recognized by the word of God. It is a good thing to be

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<sup>49</sup> Lard, “Abuse of the Christian Name,” *Lard’s Quarterly*, April 1865, 346.

<sup>50</sup> A letter to the editor in *American Christian Review*, 18 June 1867, 194. Quoted in West, *Search for the Ancient Order*: 2, 60-61.

<sup>51</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 341.

<sup>52</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 309.

<sup>53</sup> McGarvey, “Instrumental Music in the Churches,” *Millennial Harbinger*, 6 November 1864, 512.

<sup>54</sup> McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 238.

<sup>55</sup> J.H. Garrison, “Vital Points,” *Christian Evangelist*, April 1891, 226. Quoted in West, *Search for the Ancient Order*: 3, 26-28.

liberal but a better thing to be right. A liberality which is above and beyond the truth is to be dreaded.”<sup>56</sup> There were many within the movement who could not understand the lines that were being drawn by both sides. Contemporary theologian, Lamaar was amazed that some of the leaders could have been so petty and trivial in their concerns, as if Christ had died to prevent the formation of societies and to keep organs out of churches.<sup>57</sup>

There was also a great deal of confusion during this time as editor bishops often changed their minds on various issues. For example, Lipscomb, at one time, preached where there was an organ and accepted pro-organ ministers into his church and home. In 1888, while many around him were talking division, Lipscomb said, “We have never been able to reach the point when we would say, let’s divide the Church of Christ.”<sup>58</sup> A decade later, Lipscomb painfully admitted, “Division must come until we are all willing to be led by God.”<sup>59</sup> West believes the continued pressure of Harding and others led to Lipscomb slowly changing his views on these issues.<sup>60</sup> Garrett described a conversation where Harding predicted that organ-society folk would be accepting the unimmersed into the fellowship within ten years. The driving force in Lipscomb’s changes was his amazement that Harding’s prediction began to be fulfilled in just two years in some churches.<sup>61</sup> In 1906, Lipscomb advised the U.S. Bureau of the Census to list Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ as separate denominations.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> J. H. Garrison, “Fatherhood of God – Brotherhood of Man,” *Christian Evangelist*, December 1882, 4. Quoted in Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 10.

<sup>57</sup> James S. Lamaar, *Memoirs of Isaac Errett: Vol. 3* (Cincinnati: no publisher, 1893), 4. Quoted in Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 312.

<sup>58</sup> Lipscomb, “Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed,” *Gospel Advocate*, 1888, 821.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Hooperman, *Crying in the Wilderness*, 297. Quoted in Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 397.

<sup>60</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*: 2. 375.

<sup>61</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 400.

<sup>62</sup> Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 134; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 121.



## 5. Explaining the Fracture

There are some Christian Church historians who argue that social tensions left over from the Civil war created different factions in the north and south that eventually led to the fracture in 1906.<sup>63</sup> Harrell argues these issues were related to the social history of the movement and therefore instrumental music, missionary societies and other debated issues were symptomatic of economic and social diversity in the Stone-Campbell churches and not theological in nature.<sup>64</sup> There is a great deal written about the role of theology in this fracture. These ideas can be divided into three major groups: the use of inferences, tension between A. Campbell's teaching of primitivism and ecumenicity, and a misunderstanding of his views on millennialism.

### a. What to do with Inferences (and biblical silence)

Michael Casey correctly points out that the Restoration hermeneutic was initially attractive since it reduced the number of essentials within Christianity to a minimum.<sup>65</sup> Stone-Campbell historians agree that the increasing list of practices lacking "approved precedent" created tension between the opposing factions.<sup>66</sup> This tension increased as moderates altered the Restoration hermeneutic to include inferences that allowed for liberty, freedom and more expedient practices. In sharp contrast, the conservatives grew more exclusive and rejected inferences (claiming biblical silence) as part of a valid hermeneutic influencing their worship and doctrine.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Humble, "The Influence of the Civil War," n.p.; Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 70, 138; McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 33.

<sup>64</sup> Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 324, 342.

<sup>65</sup> Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 50.

<sup>66</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 308; Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 50, 262-267; Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 5; England, *We Disciples*, 61-63. Yancey, *Endangered Heritage*, 151-157.

<sup>67</sup> Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 262-267; Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 401; McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 25-26.

Garrett believes that the reactions of Lipscomb and McGarvey explain the choices that many faced in the Stone Campbell movement. Their writings reveal that both publicly opposed instrumental music in worship but McGarvey remained in the mainstream of the movement and refused to become a separatist. Therefore, Garrett argues that the Lipscomb (and others) lost the vision of the founding fathers who believed that in essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; and in all things love. He wrote, “not only were opinions transformed into essentials but they lost the love they had at first.”<sup>68</sup> McAllister and Tucker argue that the conservative and moderates both embraced the motto “in essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things love,” but they were unable to specify the same essentials and debate led to discord and then to separation.<sup>69</sup>

These historians believe that over time the hermeneutic within both factions of the Stone-Campbell movement continued to shift to deal with biblical silence. The moderates allowed for more freedom where the Bible was silent (called expedient practices) and the conservatives grew more exclusive and rejected Biblical inferences and freedom where the Bible was silent in their hermeneutic.

### **b. Primitivism vs. Ecumenicity**

There are many Stone-Campbell historians who believe that the tension in the movement after A. Campbell’s passing was not due to shifting hermeneutics issues but were a result of his teachings which created within the movement “two irreconcilable traditions.” The first was defined by a drive to unite Protestantism (ecumenicity) and the

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<sup>68</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 403.

<sup>69</sup> McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 33.

second was a drive to restore the first-century Church (primitivism).”<sup>70</sup> Contemporaries saw both of these focuses in the Stone-Campbell Churches. In 1908, John W. Montcrief published a list of denominations entitled *A History of the Christian Church*. He described the early focus of this denomination as “Christian Union” and that it gradually changed to, “Primitivism as a tool to realize the goal of ecumenicity.”<sup>71</sup>

These historians argue that the different use of inferences and Biblical silence was a reflection of two irreconcilable traditions within the movement. The conservatives focused on scripture to restore the first-century Church (at the cost of ecumenicity). This drive to restore the first-century church would evolve into the Churches of Christ which continued to fracture in the following decades. The drive for ecumenicity (at the cost of primitivism) would lead to the formation of the Christian churches which continued to undergo fractures in the following decades.<sup>72</sup> Reuben Butchart, a third generation Canadian Disciple looked back on his seventy years with sadness when he wrote that his people “had become so focused on restoring the first-century Church that they forgot their heritage of Christian unity.”<sup>73</sup>

### **c. Campbell’s Teaching on Millennialism**

There are several historians who argue that the apocalypticism common on the American religious landscape in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century was also prevalent in the Stone-Campbell Churches.<sup>74</sup> These historians argue that the tension in the

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<sup>70</sup> Hughes, *Reviving An Ancient Heritage*, 47-48; Casey, *Battle over Hermeneutics*, 262-267; Stewart, “The Restoration Movement’s Attitude Toward Other Believers,” 177-179; Ward, “The Nineteenth Century Restoration Movement and the Plea for Unity,” 79; Harrell, *Sources of Division*, 8;

<sup>71</sup> Montcrief, *Short History of the Christian Church*, 445-457.

<sup>72</sup> Boring, *Disciples and the Bible*, 207-451; McAllister and Tucker, *Journeys in Faith*, 33, 284-489; Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ: A History*, 402-587.

<sup>73</sup> Butchart, *Disciples of Christ in Canada*, 513.

<sup>74</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 206-207. Gilbert, “The Stone Campbell Millennium: A Historical, Theological Perspective,” n.p.

movement resulted from the different eschatological teachings of A. Campbell and Stone who believed in post-millennialism and apocalyptic pre-millennialism respectively.<sup>75</sup>

These historians believe that tensions over missionary societies and instruments in worship were a result of radically conflicting worldviews found in the movement through the eschatological teachings of Stone and A. Campbell.<sup>76</sup> Therefore in the south, the rejection of missionary societies and instrumental music symbolized their allegiance to the apocalyptic kingdom of God with no room for progress, change or human potential. The churches in the north were pushing for missionary societies and instruments in worship to fulfill their allegiance to progress and human potential.<sup>77</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

There were social, geographic, educational, financial and political tensions between the north and the south which dramatically affected relationships in the Stone-Campbell churches in the United States. It is important to note that there was also tension over instruments and missionary societies in the Stone-Campbell Churches in Australia, England and Canada.<sup>78</sup> These countries were not influenced to the same degree by social, geographic, political and civil war issues that were present in the United States and yet they also divided over these issues. Therefore, social, geographic, educational, financial and political forces were involved but not the main cause for this fracture in the early-twentieth century.

There were also theological issues concerning how to deal with biblical silence, tension in A. Campbell's teachings of primitivism and ecumenicity, and different views

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<sup>75</sup> Gilbert, "The Stone Campbell Millennium: A Historical, Theological Perspective," n.p.; Hughes, *Reviving An Ancient Heritage*, 45-46. Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 207.

<sup>76</sup> Gilbert, "The Stone-Campbell Millennium: A Historical, Theological Perspective," n.p.

<sup>77</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 112-116; Gilbert, "The Stone-Campbell Millennium: A Historical, Theological Perspective", n.p.

<sup>78</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 292-303.

on millennialism between Stone and A. Campbell. Biblical silence was a challenge that was prevalent in the next fracture also. However, biblical silence is not the issue but biblical silence does reveal weakness in the Restoration hermeneutic. This hermeneutic is grounded in the assumption that a simple reading of any passage will lead to a correct understanding of scripture, and therefore allow the interpreter to “restore” it. Once it has been restored, it is a natural assumption that anyone who thinks differently is wrong. This application of the Restoration hermeneutic, combined with the attitude found in A. Campbell’s early writings, has continued to lead to fractures in this Church family.

Furthermore, the tension between primitivism and ecumenicity, and A. Campbell and Stone’s millennialism views, was a real issue for this Church family at the turn of the century. These theological challenges were born by embracing incorrect Restoration teachings and not the use of the Restoration hermeneutic. For example, the primitivism that A. Campbell taught and practiced had its roots in thirty-three articles, each entitled, *A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things*. These writings were spread across seven years of monthly articles contained within *The Christian Baptist*. These teachings focused readers on the need for restoration of the church to its first-century pristine roots. Over time these teachings crystallized into a set of practices necessary for “correct” worship and were used to determine who was a Christian and who was not.

In 1827, A. Campbell argued that his teachings concerning the ancient order should not be considered a creed since “he never made them, hinted that they should be, or used them as a test of Christian character or terms of Christian communion.”<sup>79</sup> A. Campbell believed that restoring the first-century church (primitivism) would unify the kingdom on earth and usher in the new millennium and Jesus would come back to claim

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<sup>79</sup> A. Campbell, “Reply to the Above, No. I,” *The Christian Baptist*, 6 August 1827, 361.

His own (post-millennialism). This can be seen clearly in the opening lines of *The Millennial Harbinger*, which he edited for fourteen years. He wrote,

“This work shall be devoted to the destruction of Sectarianism, Infidelity, and Antichristian doctrine and practice. It shall have for its object the development, and introduction of that political and religious order of society called THE MILLENIUM, which will be the consummation of that ultimate amelioration of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures.”<sup>80</sup>

Therefore, A. Campbell never intended his teachings on primitivism and millennialism to be used as a test of who was a faithful Christian.

There were many social and theological issues that influenced this fracture in the early-twentieth century. This fracture was initiated by a desire to restore the first-century church, and was brought to fruition by the inability to resolve different practices using the Restoration hermeneutic. This fracture foreshadows splits that continued to occur in this Church family in the twentieth century. Subsequent chapters show that later fractures in the twentieth century in the Churches of Christ involved different social conditions, different combatants, different issues, different locations and different times in history. The common thread in these fractures in the twentieth century was the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

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<sup>80</sup> A. Campbell, “PROSPECTUS,” *The Millennial Harbinger*, 4 January 1830, 1.

## Chapter Four

### Mid-Twentieth Century Fracture

#### 1. Introduction

The Restoration hermeneutic continued to thrive within the Churches of Christ in the decades that followed. The empirical foundation can be seen clearly in the writings of J. D. Thomas. His book, *We Be Brethren*, was published in 1958 and was considered the standard in biblical interpretation by the Churches of Christ. Thomas opened the section on methods by praising Francis Bacon and his inductive method “for discovering truth.”<sup>1</sup> The application of this Restoration hermeneutic continued to influence the Churches of Christ that were wrestling with many issues.<sup>2</sup> The two most divisive issues were the battles over the presence of Sunday school (non-class) and plurality of communion cups during Sunday worship.

#### 2. Sunday School (non-class) Issue

Modern Sunday school practices had their beginnings in 1780, under the leadership of Robert Raikes in Gloucester, England.<sup>3</sup> His teachings were widely accepted, but some, including Thomas Burns in Scotland, preached strongly against the practice. The conflict caused William Pitt to consider proposing a bill in Parliament for the purpose of preventing Sunday schools.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas, *We Be Brethren*, 13.

<sup>2</sup> These issues include grape juice or wine for the communion, the order of the worship service, pacifism, pre-millennialism, black and white churches and institutions (educational and missional). These are explained in more detail later in this chapter

<sup>3</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

The mainline Churches were not immune to conflict arising from the presence of Sunday school during worship services. A. Campbell initially objected to Sunday school for three reasons. First, such an organization could not be found in scripture.<sup>5</sup> Second, he feared that Sunday schools and missionary societies could lead to division.<sup>6</sup> Finally, he did not want to usurp the parent's authority: "by the law of nature ... as well as by his written word you are ordained to be the only preachers of the gospel, properly so called, to your own offspring."<sup>7</sup>

Twenty-three years later, a more tolerant A. Campbell wrote, "Next to the Bible Society, the Sunday school institution stands pre-eminently deserving the attention of co-operation of all good men." Later in the same article, he explained his earlier reservations as, "That objection was simply to the sectarian abuse of whenever any bias was given presented as premiums but which seems to me that there was an unfair advantage taken in making an institution peculiarly Catholic, sectarian and partial."<sup>8</sup> These opposing viewpoints concerning Sunday schools opened the door for conflict in the decades that followed as each faction in the Churches of Christ quoted the appropriate writing as proof of A. Campbell's teachings on the subject of Sunday school.

Barton Stone also objected to Sunday school as an institution, but did not object to teaching the children in classes. He wrote, "Let a part of the day be devoted to instruction of our children in the scriptures. Choose one or more pious and intelligent men, who shall

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<sup>5</sup> A. Campbell, "The Christian Religion," *The Christian Baptist*, 4 July 1823, 14.

<sup>6</sup> A. Campbell, "Prefatory Remarks," *The Christian Baptist*, 2 August 1824, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>8</sup> A. Campbell, "Reply to Elder A.W. Corey," *The Millennial Harbinger*, April 1847, 200.



preside over the class of children: let them previously assigning the portion of scripture to be read, and labour to make them understand it. This will be profitable and pleasant.”<sup>9</sup>

The debate over Sunday schools was present in the pages of the Restoration journals long before the first split in the early-twentieth century. In 1888, Lipscomb supported Sunday schools and Austin McGary answered, “Away with Sunday Schools, even if Bro. Lipscomb had memorized the whole New Testament at Sunday school. If the apostles did not have Sunday Schools, we do not need them and should not have them.”<sup>10</sup>

The decades that followed continued to be filled with tension in various Churches of Christ over the presence of Sunday schools during worship. N. L. Clark was a mainline Church preacher and a prolific writer during his lifetime, and many refer to him today as the “father of the non-class movement in Texas.”<sup>11</sup> He was a co-editor of the *Firm Foundation* and the *Apostolic Way* allowing him to author many articles over the years expressing his concern over Sunday schools. Clark believed that this issue came to a head in editorial debates between himself and R.L. Whiteside within the pages of *The Firm Foundation* dating from September 1906 to February 1907.<sup>12</sup>

Whiteside and others argued that Sunday school was acceptable since it was not a part of the worship assembly, to which Clark responded with his original claim that it had no place in contemporary worship since it was not used in the primitive church.<sup>13</sup> Clark argued that “The Lord appointed for the Church one meeting every Lord’s Day. Had He

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<sup>9</sup> Stone, “An Address,” *Christian Messenger*, January 1828, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Austin McGary, “Sunday Schools and S.S. Papers,” *Firm Foundation*, 15 January 1888. Quoted in Hart, “A Brief History of the One-Cup and Non-Sunday School Movement,” 215.

<sup>11</sup> Ervin Waters. “The Odyssey of Division,” *Restoration Review* 13 (1979): 39. Quoted in Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 437.

<sup>12</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 34-35.

<sup>13</sup> Clark, “The Sunday School Question,” *Firm Foundation* XXIII (29 January 1907): 4.

thought more were needed, He would surely have said so.”<sup>14</sup> The Churches that battled against Sunday schools in the early-twentieth century called were “non-Sunday School or non-class” Churches.

There were many authors who battled against Sunday schools in the following years. In 1910, like a young A. Campbell, J.T. Showalter wrote, “I emphatically deny that there is any divine authority for Sunday-schools either by precept or precedent or hint or allusion. ...In all the writings of the New Testament there is not one word that even squints in that direction. Not a word is said about Sunday-school superintendent, a Sunday-school teacher, Sunday-school scholars or anything of that kind.”<sup>15</sup>

As the tension over Sunday schools continued to crystallize, writers began to express five major concerns including biblical silence. These conservatives also objected to the use of outside curriculum (called lesson leaflets), women teaching, diminished biblical role of Elders, and concerns of releasing parents from the responsibility to teach their children.

One of the earliest opponents to lesson leaflets was Austin McGary who was an editor for *The Firm Foundation*. He wrote that children were to be “instructed under the eye of the feeders of the flock, and not under some man who is in Nashville or Cincinnati.”<sup>16</sup> Eighteen years later, Clark used a similar argument. He wrote, “In teaching and admonishing the saints on the Lord’s Day, we should use the inspired writings,” which he contrasted with man-made curriculum.<sup>17</sup> Clark echoed the concerns of many when he addressed the family’s responsibility to raise their children in the faith. He wrote,

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<sup>14</sup> Clark, “The Sunday School Question,” *Firm Foundation*, XXIII (19 February 1907): 106.

<sup>15</sup> Showalter, “The Sunday School,” *Gospel Advocate* (April 1901): 488.

<sup>16</sup> Austin McGary, “Sunday Schools and S.S. Papers,” *Firm Foundation*, 15 January 1888. Quoted in Hart, “A Brief History of the One-Cup and Non-Sunday School Movement,” 218.

<sup>17</sup> Clark, “The Sunday School Question,” *Firm Foundation* XXII (23 October 1906): 339.

“The family and the church are the only divine organizations in the world; God organized the family in Eden; and the church, in Jerusalem. The obligation to train children rests primarily on the parents.”<sup>18</sup>

The role of women teaching has been an issue that many denominations have wrestled with, and it was no different in the Churches of Christ. Conservatives argued that if Sunday worship was an assembly of the church, then allowing women to teach was disobedient to God’s teachings. Clark argued,

Some of us have accepted the modern way of providing special instruction for children and to others through an arrangement unheard of in the New Testament. We find Paul’s words concerning women’s teaching in our way. Hence, in order to keep up our show of faith in the Bible, we resort to perversions of its teaching that make nonsense of its language.<sup>19</sup>

Women teaching Sunday school was not his concern but he feared that “the sisters are encouraged to make rapid strides toward the pulpit and the eldership.”<sup>20</sup> Clark also believed that the Elder’s teaching of the church was being undermined. He wrote, “An inefficient eldership is the greatest curse of the church of today. But with the Sunday school and pastor to do our teaching in the church we can never develop an efficient eldership.”<sup>21</sup>

The strongest argument for Clark was a simple matter of New Testament authority. This is evident in his statement, “I have opposed Sunday school because it is not in the book.”<sup>22</sup> Clark and other conservatives believed that changes, including Sunday school, were a departure from the early Restorationists views and, therefore, proof of a

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<sup>18</sup> Clark, “Religious Instruction Essential to Freedom,” *Firm Foundation* XXII (8 May 1906): 236.

<sup>19</sup> Clark, “A Women’ Work in the Church,” *The Apostolic Way* (15 July 1924). Quoted in Hart, “A Brief History of the One-Cup and Non-Sunday School Movement,” 219.

<sup>20</sup> Clark, “The Sunday School Question,” *Firm Foundation* XXIII (15 January 1907): 22

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>22</sup> Clark, “What Shall We Do About It?” *Firm Foundation* XXIII (12 March 1906): 97.

church gone astray. In 1906, Clark wrote,

The trouble with us as a people is, we have been drifting, drifting, drifting with the tide of modern popular notions in religion until we have lost our bearings, and now we feel to languid, too weak, to ply the oar and battle against the tide. We are on dangerous grounds. We are nearing the vortex of our destruction. Equipped, as many of our Churches are, with all the modern paraphernalia of human devices in Church work, we find ourselves ashamed to say, without qualification, from the pulpit, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent."<sup>23</sup>

Despite his strong convictions on this matter, he was very clear about how far he would push the issue. He wrote, "I wish it now to be understood that I am opposed to division among the people of God on account of such questions as the one before us. I do not, I would not, until convinced of my error, make the manner of teaching on the Lord's Day a test of fellowship."<sup>24</sup> It is of note that Clark wrote this the same year that the Churches of Christ and the Christian Churches parted ways over missionary societies and the use of instruments during worship, which arguably may have been a strong influence on his reservations over fracturing despite his deep convictions.

These debates were generally confined to the journals for the next several decades, but in 1925, tension came to a head when R. F. Duckwood published a book containing a list of "Preachers for the Churches of Christ."<sup>25</sup> This list included only those who were opposed to the use of Sunday Schools and was published in response to a strong demand for a list of preachers who opposed the Sunday school. These congregations were concerned that pro-Sunday school preachers would come into their midst, claiming to be sound, and while there, and sow seeds of discord."<sup>26</sup> J.G. Allen in

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<sup>23</sup> Clark, "What Shall We Do About It?" *Firm Foundation* XXII (12 March 1906): 99.

<sup>24</sup> Clark, "The Sunday School Question," *Firm Foundation* XXII (4 Sept. 1906): 304.

<sup>25</sup> R. F. Duckwood, *Apostolic Way* (16 Sept. 1925): 31. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 44.

<sup>26</sup> Hart, "A Brief History of a Minor Restorationist Group: The Non-Sunday School Churches of Christ," 222.

the same year answered for the other side when he wrote in *The Gospel Advocate*, “no hobby-riding anti-Sunday School preachers stop at his house ... but only sound Gospel preachers.”<sup>27</sup>

During the years that followed, more churches began to use this issue as a test of fellowship with each faction blaming the other for withdrawing fellowship. G. A. Trott wrote, “I am sure you make a mistake in regard to the withdrawing that has been done heretofore. In a majority of the cases that I know of the Sunday-school brethren did the withdrawing because the others refused to sanction their non-scriptural practices. “It was an ultimatum of agree to the Sunday school or get out.”<sup>28</sup>

The *Firm Foundation* began in conservative Texas in response to what was seen as liberal teachings within other journals at the time. The focus of this journal was evident in Trott’s opening statement: “to begin the publication of the paper, to oppose everything in the work and worship of the church for which there was not a command or an apostolic example or a necessary inference.”<sup>29</sup> Trott often weighed in on the issue of Sunday school but was more involved in the tension over individual communion cups during the communion service.

### 3. Communion Cup(s)

The tension over the presence of Sunday schools continued to divide the Churches in the decades that followed. There were many other issues being debated during these years, but none was more destructive than the debate over using a single or a plurality of communion cups for the Lord’s Supper.

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<sup>27</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> Trott, *Apostolic Way* (15 December 1926). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 47.

<sup>29</sup> Trott, *Firm Foundation V* (5 September 1889): 4. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 31.

The primitivism that A. Campbell taught and practiced is reflected in thirty-three articles entitled *A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things*. These writings were spread across seven years of monthly articles contained within *The Christian Baptist*. In the fifth instalment, he explained that “worship must have structure and design that is specific in detail and divine in its authorization.”<sup>30</sup> He concluded, “we do not mean the position of the bodies of the worshippers, nor the hour of the day in which certain things are to be done, nor whether one action shall be always performed first, another always second and another always third, &c. &c.”<sup>31</sup> In the next publication, he addressed issues concerning the communion service in a three-page study.<sup>32</sup> This was followed by four more articles detailing the communion service. He concluded that, “the primary intention of the meeting of the disciples on the first day of the week, was to break bread,” and therefore he urged his readers to follow the primitive church’s example.<sup>33</sup>

- These writings reveal a deep conviction that the New Testament provided an unalterable example of the Lord’s Supper, but nowhere did he make mention of the number of cups that should be used. This topic was never an issue in the Restoration movement until the late-nineteenth century. Ronny L. Wade writes that the early Churches drank from a common cup but, “in many worship services there was a cup for each side of the building.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A. Campbell, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- No. V; The Order of Worship,” *Christian Baptist*, 4 July 1825, 164-166.

<sup>31</sup> A. Campbell, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- No. V: Order of Worship,” *Christian Baptist*, 4 July 1825, 164.

<sup>32</sup> A. Campbell, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- No. VI: On the Breaking of Bread-No. I,” *Christian Baptist*, 1 August 1825, 174-176.

<sup>33</sup> A. Campbell, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things- No. VIII: On the Breaking of Bread- No. III,” *Christian Baptist*, 3 October 1825, 233-235.

<sup>34</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 60.

### a. Science and Religion

This controversy originated in the greater Christian community over the use of a shared communion cup. These questions were generated due to scientific advancements in the understanding of germ theory and the influence of germs on a communal communion cup. In the early-nineteenth century, science taught that “a sick person’s breath, skin, evacuations and clothing all harbour seeds of disease and spread them to those who were well.”<sup>35</sup> Chemist Louis Pasteur’s work on fermentation opened the eyes of the scientific world to new processes. In his publication, “The Germ Theory and Its Application to Medicine and Surgery,” he wrote, “there actually exist transmittable, contagious, infectious disease for which the cause lies essentially and solely in the presence of microscopic organisms and that the conception of spontaneous generation must be forever abandoned.”<sup>36</sup>

Science continued to accumulate knowledge on infection mechanisms and the threat from the microscopic world. The disease that had the greatest impact on the communion cup controversy was tuberculosis (TB). This disease was responsible for between ten and eleven per cent of all deaths at the turn of the century, with three out of every four of these deaths occurring in those under the age of 45.<sup>37</sup>

TB research revealed that the tubercle bacillus was carried in a consumptive’s spit which ushered in a whole new era of public health practice including a heightened concern with spitting, coughing and sneezing.<sup>38</sup> Public perception of TB was influenced by anti-TB groups that were dedicated to the dissemination of information on causes,

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<sup>35</sup> Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs*, 3-5.

<sup>36</sup> Louis Pasteur, “The Germ Theory and Its Application to Medicine and Surgery,” 19010.

<sup>37</sup> Grob, *Disease and Death in America*, 210.

<sup>38</sup> John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 124-126. Quoted in Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 95.

preventions and cures for the disease. They embarked on an intensive health education campaign using lectures, films, newspaper articles and pamphlets that preached to millions that hygiene could help prevent TB.<sup>39</sup> They warned, “The germ, which is a microscopic rod, is found in millions in their spit from very early disease, and it is through this spit almost alone that it reaches others.”<sup>40</sup> Their slogan, “no spit, no consumption,” continued to highlight the dangers involved in sputum.<sup>41</sup>

Public concern about TB soon extended to a shared communion cup during worship. In 1887, M. O. Terry, M. D. presented a paper suggesting that the common communion cup was a transmitter of communicable diseases. He assured his audience that he was deeply impressed with the sacredness of the communion service but insisted that “the whole system is a wreck.”<sup>42</sup> W. M. Parker, M.D. answered the following year, that from his studies, “not one case could be found either in this country or in Europe where any injury had resulted of any kind whatever.” At the end of his article he concluded that “We may safely believe that He who instituted the sacred feast will be equally strong to guard His children against such dreadful danger.”<sup>43</sup>

### **b. Communion Cup(s) in Worship**

The debate moved from the medical community into the pews of churches as many debated religious doctrine vs. hygiene. The Vaughnsville Congregational Church in Ohio was the first to use individual cups for the communion in 1893. It was in this

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<sup>39</sup> Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 113-125.

<sup>40</sup> National Tuberculosis Association, *What You Should Know About Tuberculosis* (New York: NTA, 1916): 8. Quoted in Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 133.

<sup>41</sup> Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 118-125.

<sup>42</sup> M.O. Terry, M.D., “A Criticism on the Present Method of Administering Wine in Sacrament,” *Transaction of the Fifty-Seventh Session of American Institute of Homeopathy Held at Richfield Springs*, N.Y. June 18, 1901 (New York: William N. Jennings, 1902): 435. Quoted in Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 132.

<sup>43</sup> W. M. Parker, M.D., “The Hygiene of the Holy Communion,” *Medical Records: A Weekly Journal of Medicine and Surgery*, 41 (1982): 264-265. Quoted in Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 133.



congregation that Rev. Dr. J. G. Thomas invented a tray and containers for individual cups.<sup>44</sup> In the twentieth century, many churches wrestled with using a plurality of communion cups during their Sunday service.<sup>45</sup> It is no surprise that the Churches of Christ began to have the same questions.

In 1900, the communion cup issue was discussed in different journals in the Restoration churches. J. W. McGarvey, President of Lexington Bible College, wrote that “this fresh and verdant fad was only accepted by church members who care more for keeping up with the procession than following the example of our Lord.”<sup>46</sup> The following year, the *Christian Standard*, a journal for the Disciples of Christ, (later to be part of the 1906 Christian Church branch of the movement), ran an ad for an individual communion cup set offered by the Thomas Communion Cup Service Company. *The Christian Standard* asked readers, “Why do you permit a custom at the communion that you would not tolerate in your own home?”<sup>47</sup>

C.E. Holt was the first mainline Church preacher to come out in favour of individual cups.<sup>48</sup> In 1911, Holt wrote, “I do not claim that this is the only scriptural way of taking the Lord’s Supper, but it is as scriptural as any other way, and besides it has the advantage of being clean. We are aware that some brethren ridicule the idea that microbes can be transmitted from one to another by the common cup, yet the weight of authority is against them.”<sup>49</sup> The tension was clear, as Lipscomb wrote in the same journal, that month, “Does anyone think that it was instituted by Jesus and observed by his disciples as

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<sup>44</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 60.

<sup>45</sup> Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 133-134.

<sup>46</sup> John W. McGarvey, “Biblical Criticism,” *Christian Standard*, 31 March 1900. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 63.

<sup>47</sup> An advertisement in *The Christian Standard*, 1901. Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 61-62.

<sup>48</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 65.

<sup>49</sup> C.D. Holt, *The Gospel Advocate* (11 July 1911). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 65.

an individual (cups) communion service? If no, why do it now? Did he institute it in conditions and circumstances that would spread disease and sickness among those who attended? If he did, why did he do it?”<sup>50</sup> Over time, Lipscomb changed his views as he explained that “each individual person may have had his own cup that had previously been filled from a common vessel.”<sup>51</sup> In the years that followed, Lipscomb and *The Gospel Advocate* became more supportive of the use of the individual communion cup.

The tension can also be seen in articles written by G.A. Trott and N. L. Clark who were both editors for *The Apostolic Way*. Their animosity spilled onto the printed page. Trott wrote, “When they know they have the truth on their side they are as brash and impetuous about debating as a mule’s hind leg, but just try to get one of them to debate the Sunday school or the individual cup and they have about as much pep as a chicken dying with the limber neck.”<sup>52</sup> Later that year, Clark openly defended the use of more than one, but still wrote that more than one was sinful because it pampered human pride. He did not make this issue a test of fellowship and wrote, “I cannot accept the contention that one-cup only is scriptural.”<sup>53</sup>

In the years that followed, Trott (in young A. Campbell fashion) continued to write in *The Apostolic Way* mocking those who favoured individual cups. He wrote that “they failed to call attention to the cuteness of the little individual cups ... preserve unity by equally cute individual plates, with a miniature loaf on each.” He finished sarcastically with, “This is the progressive and scientific age and it is not to be supposed that people of this enlightened time are going to take any chances by following too closely to the

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<sup>50</sup> David Lipscomb, *The Gospel Advocate* (11 July 1911). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 65-66.

<sup>51</sup> David Lipscomb, *The Gospel Advocate* (10 January 1915). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 67.

<sup>52</sup> G.A. Trott, “Cup or Cups?” *Apostolic Way* 2, 14 (1 July 1925). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 70.

<sup>53</sup> N.L. Clark, *The Apostolic Way* (15 December 1925). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 71.

example of Jesus and the apostles, who were densely ignorant on the subject of germs.”<sup>54</sup>

Over time *The Apostolic Way* followed the example of *The Gospel Advocate* and defended the use of individual cups during communion services. The battle for the single cup was picked up by Harry Harper who resigned as an editor for *The Apostolic Way* over the communion cup issues and in 1928, began a new journal entitled *The Truth*.

Wade believes that Trott, Harper, McGarvey, Lipscomb, and Clark were all vocal at different times against plurality of communion cups but “Harper more than any individual deserves credit for leading the fight against a plurality of cups in the communion.” In his relentless battle, “he refused to be bought, bribed or bridled in his rejection of error and defence of truth. If ever a man had a passion for thus saith the Lord, it was him ... With him a thing was either right or wrong. If right it deserved to be defended, if wrong it had to be rejected at all costs.”<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. The Mid-Twentieth Century Fracture

The mid-twentieth century saw increasing tension in the greater Christian community as debates raged over liberalism, modernism and fundamentalism. The tension in the mainline Churches of Christ at this time was no different than in past decades. The mainline Church combatants found themselves embroiled in issues including grape juice or wine for the communion,<sup>56</sup> order of the worship service,<sup>57</sup> pacifism,<sup>58</sup> pre-millennialism,<sup>59</sup> black and white churches,<sup>60</sup> and institutions (educational

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<sup>54</sup> G. A. Trott, *The Apostolic Way*, (15 September 1924). Quoted in Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 68.

<sup>55</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 68-69.

<sup>56</sup> For more details concerning the tension over grape juice or wine, see Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 109-111.

<sup>57</sup> For more details concerning order of worship, see Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 117-134.

<sup>58</sup> For more details concerning pacifism, see Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 119-120, 211; Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 153-157.

<sup>59</sup> For more details concerning pre-millennialism, see Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 208-210, 221-222; Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 438-439; West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 185-211.

and missional).<sup>61</sup> These battles were not the same issues being discussed in the modernist fundamentalist debates. Modernists, fundamentalists and liberalists all viewed both factions in the mainline Churches as conservative.

The actual date of separation for this conservative faction from the mainline Churches of Christ is not well defined. The Encyclopaedia of the Stone-Campbell movement writes that these churches had separated from the mainline Churches by 1960.<sup>62</sup> Hughes also believes that this fracture crystallized in the sixties.<sup>63</sup> Wade wrote, from within the faction, that the death of Harper in 1986 moulded a brotherhood of believers who counted themselves apart from Churches of Christ who did not worship in a similar fashion.<sup>64</sup> Wade wrote, “Churches that embraced the common cup were almost always those which also did not have Sunday school during worship.”<sup>65</sup> This faction was called the one-cup, non-class Churches.

### 5. Explaining the Fracture

Churches of Christ historian Earl J. West did not make mention of the one cup or non-class Churches in his four volume set detailing the history of the Churches of Christ from the beginning of the Restoration movement to 1950. N. L. Clark, G. A. Trott and E. R. Harper are mentioned in passing but there is no description of their writings or the battles they waged over these controversial issues.<sup>66</sup>

Hughes devoted a surprisingly small amount of his historical writings to the one cup, non-class Churches. He wrote, “These churches rejected Sunday schools because

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<sup>60</sup> Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 439-440; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 270-306; West, *Search for the Ancient Order*: 3, 235-256.

<sup>61</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 160-166.

<sup>62</sup> Foster et al., *Encyclopedia of Stone-Campbell Movement*, 213-214.

<sup>63</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 252.

<sup>64</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 117.

<sup>65</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine*, 118.

<sup>66</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 82, 213, 219, 275.

they generally employed women to teach the Bible.”<sup>67</sup> This is a major simplification of the real theological issues within this group of churches. This faction did wrestle with women teaching on Sunday. They were also concerned with outside influences teaching their children (lesson leaflets), lack of training for elders and release of parents from the responsibility to raise their children in the faith.

Garrett provided more detail about these Churches but did not devote much of his writings to those who battled for these issues or their convictions. His writings offered one reference to N. L. Clark while G. E. Trott and E. R. Harper are not mentioned at all, let alone their teachings.<sup>68</sup> Christian Church historian David Harrell argued again for social influences driving this fracture. He wrote, “The sociological and economic elevation of a portion of the members of the church, especially since WWII, has motivated a large part of the church to begin the transition toward denominationalism resulting in the movement dividing along sociological lines.”<sup>69</sup>

This fracture was a theological issue for those within these conservative Churches. Wade defended the one cup teaching by pointing to God’s commands to Moses in Hebrews 8:5. He wrote, “If Moses was commanded by God to make all things according to the pattern are we not bound by the same obligation?”<sup>70</sup> Don L. King revealed the depth of this conviction for many of these Churches. He wrote, “We believe people are going to be lost for using more than one-cup.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 219.

<sup>68</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 437.

<sup>69</sup> Harrell, *Churches of Christ*, 121.

<sup>70</sup> Wade, *Sun Will Shine Again*, 1.

<sup>71</sup> Don L. King, “Proper Perspective,” *Old Paths Advocate* LXVII (Sept. 1995): 2.

## 6. Conclusions

This fracture in the mid-twentieth century was initiated by a conservative faction that desired to restore the practices of the first-century church, and was brought to fruition by the inability to resolve different issues using the Restoration hermeneutic. The conservatives argued and taught that the use of a plurality of communion cups and introducing Sunday school to worship services was a departure from the example of the first-century church and was sinful. Therefore, this conservative faction within the mainline Churches believed that separation was necessary to preserve the first-century church.

Some historians argue that social forces due to the influence of the Second World War and tension between younger, more conservative and older, more liberal members created this fracture. These social tensions were real in this Church family but other denominations were undergoing similar tensions without fracturing in the twentieth century and so it is difficult to focus on social issues as the driving force for this separation.

The theological challenge of dealing with biblical silence was present again in this fracture. The Restoration hermeneutic taught that a simple read of scripture would provide answers to the questions of how many communion cups should be used during the Lord's Supper and also if corporate worship should include the presence of Sunday schools. While trying to answer these questions, the various factions arrived at very different conclusions. The conservative factions believed and taught that silence in

scripture was prohibitive while the moderate and more liberal Disciples argued that silence of scripture allowed for freedom in interpretation.<sup>72</sup>

This fracture continued to reveal the weaknesses in the Restoration hermeneutic including the assumption that a simple read of scripture would reveal the truth and also failed to make any allowance for the influence of personal and spiritual experiences in the life of the interpreter. This application of the Restoration hermeneutic, combined with the attitude found in A. Campbell's early writings, was the driving force that led to this separation in the Churches of Christ.

This fracture in the mid-twentieth century in the Churches of Christ involved different social conditions, different combatants, different issues, a different location and different time in history than the fracture earlier in the same century. The common thread in these fractures in the twentieth century was the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

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<sup>72</sup> This is very similar to Zwingli's doctrine that says, "in matters of religion nothing is to be believed except that which can be satisfactorily and plainly proved by Scriptures, while as to that which has no foundation in the Word of God, one man has the same liberty to reject it as others have had, and still exercise, to proclaim and establish it." See Raget Christoffel, *Zwingli: The Rise of the Reformation in Switzerland*, Translated by John Cochran (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clarke, 1857), 182, 347.

## Chapter Five

### The Boston Movement

#### 1. Introduction

Hughes believed that many mainline Churches in the sixties were adopting the social values of conservative Protestantism as they opposed Catholics, were overwhelmingly white, male dominated and had lost their earlier pacifism teachings. The younger generation rejected their spiritual parents by walking away from religion or restoring more fundamental teachings.<sup>1</sup> The conservative journal, *The Firm Foundation*, was more straightforward claiming that “the church was stagnant, apathetic, with sterile elders, useless deacons and ineffective preachers.”<sup>2</sup> Yeakley described the mainline Churches as a stagnant fellowship with lack of numerical growth due to little concern with sending missionaries and most resources were inward focused to preserve and defend sound doctrine.<sup>3</sup> It is from within this environment that many historians trace the earliest beginnings of another faction to rise out of the mainline Churches; the Boston movement.

During this time, the younger generation of the Churches of Christ attempted make changes in worship and lifestyle which caused grave concerns among the older, more conservative members. John Ramsey criticized the younger Christians when he wrote, “this youth rebellion poses the gravest problem of our decade because much of it comes under the guise of deeper spirituality... some of these super-spirituality boys and

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 252-253.

<sup>2</sup> Reddick, “What About Balance”, 707.

<sup>3</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 70.



girls come back to their home congregation with a cynical, self-righteous attitude as the first-century Pharisees.” His sarcasm is reminiscent of a young A. Campbell and various authors in Church of Christ journals from decades past. He continued, “some of these enlightened ones even have to meet early on Sunday morning for their own worship prior to the humiliating experience of having to assemble with lesser-informed brethren.” He concluded with an appeal for primitivism, “Let’s return to the simple pattern of Christianity and leave the extra appendages alone.”<sup>4</sup>

T. Jones outlined the culture in the mainline Churches in the sixties and seventies by describing many prominent and respected leaders as, “legalistic, self-righteous and downright vicious.”<sup>5</sup> T. Jones believes that young campus Christians attempting to try new things were often met with sarcasm and roadblocks from their older, more conservative brothers and sisters in the mainline Churches.<sup>6</sup>

Campus Evangelism (CE) was a new ministry that was a bright star in this fellowship that seemed to have great promise in the seventies. Conservative writers and preachers labeled the CE a dangerous movement causing mainline congregations that prized sound doctrine to stay clear of this fledgling movement.<sup>7</sup>

There were other young ministries that enjoyed success in this environment, including a campus ministry in Gainesville, Florida called the Crossroads ministry. This ministry, led by Chuck Lucas, introduced two activities that would crystallize and define the Boston movement in the years that followed. He taught that older Christians mentored (later to be called discipling) younger Christians and everyone was involved in

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<sup>4</sup> Ramsey, “The Youth Rebellion,” 661.

<sup>5</sup> T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

evangelism by joining small groups called soul talks (later to be called Bible talks) throughout the city.<sup>8</sup> Marty Wooten believed that the soul talk leader was given responsibility to see that the teachings of the elders and ministers of the congregation were implemented by the members of the soul talk.<sup>9</sup> This ministry grew quickly and the Crossroads Church of Christ set up its own school of ministry and trained over eighty full-time ministers during the next several years.<sup>10</sup> One of these young ministers was Kip McKean who would later go on to lead the Boston movement.

In 1979, McKean was hired by the Lexington Church of Christ in Massachusetts to serve as pulpit preacher and campus minister. The church had approximately thirty members and had recently considered closing its doors due to financial problems and low morale.<sup>11</sup> The Lexington Church of Christ, under McKean's leadership, grew to over three hundred members within several years and was renamed the Boston Church of Christ. In the years that followed, the Boston church continued to grow rapidly, adding two to three hundred new converts each year.<sup>12</sup>

The use of Bible talks and discipling relationships created tension that was apparent in mainline Church of Christ periodicals.<sup>13</sup> The mainline Churches claimed that these practices, which emphasized strong one another relationships, led to manipulation and abuse of the membership.<sup>14</sup> There were also mainline ministers who were supportive of the new ministry. In 1981, Reuel Lemmons wrote, "Most of the criticism we have seen

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<sup>8</sup> Chuck Lucas, "Soul Talks," *At the Crossroad* (14 October 1979): 1, 3. Quoted in Wooten, "The Boston Movement as a Revitalization Movement," 86; T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Wooten, "The Boston Movement as a Revitalization Movement," 85-86.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> McKean, "Revolution through Restoration," *Upside Down*, April 1992, 13.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, "Cultism in the Church," 114-121; North, "Comments from the Editor," 331-335; Floyd, "The Total Commitment Evangelistic Movement," 168-169.

<sup>14</sup> Wooten, "The Boston Movement as a Revitalization Movement," 86-87.

is purely rhetoric, by someone whose ox had been gored. When you boil out the inflammatory talk, and get right down to what is scripturally wrong with the congregation, you may find a thimble full. You might find more in your own congregation.”<sup>15</sup> There were also other mainline ministers who tried to imitate the discipling relationships and Bible talks of the Boston church.<sup>16</sup>

In defense to the questions, McKean argued that these practices created strong, faithful Christians. He wrote, “Every person is in a personal relationship with God in prayer and Bible study, with a strong emphasis on discipling.”<sup>17</sup> As the Church in Boston continued to grow, the criticisms also continued to grow. Initially, the concerns of the mainline Churches were church autonomy and discipling relationships.

## 2. The First Ten Years

In an interview, McKean described his early ministry strategy as “training evangelists in the larger churches and sending them with small groups of Disciples to the capital cities of each nation. These churches would send church plantings to all the major cities of that nation and the world would be evangelized in one generation, like the first-century church (Colossians 1:6, 23).”<sup>18</sup> This plan began in the early eighties as the Boston Church of Christ planted churches in London, England (1980), Chicago (1981), and New

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<sup>15</sup> Reuel Lemmons, “The Crossroads Controversy,” *Firm Foundation* (17 November 1981). Quoted in T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Milton Jones, *Discipling: The Multiplying Ministry* (Ft. Worth: Star Bible & Tract, 1982). This book attempted to mimic discipleship in the Boston movement but never commented on the movement itself.

<sup>17</sup> Wooten, “Discipleship and Church: An Interview with Kip McKean,” *Biblical Discipleship Quarterly*, Spring 1987, 4-5.

<sup>18</sup> McKean, “Revolution through Restoration,” *Upside Down*, April 1992, 8.

York (1982).<sup>19</sup> By 1987, the Boston movement had also planted churches in Providence, Toronto, Paris, London, Stockholm, Bombay, Johannesburg, Sydney and Sao Paulo.<sup>20</sup>

Eight and a half years into the work, Yeakley wrote that the Boston movement had baptized over four thousand people around the world and at home. The Boston church was on a pace to baptize almost a thousand people that year.<sup>21</sup> After the first ten years, the Boston movement had planted and reconstructed forty churches around the world.<sup>22</sup> This process continued with varying degrees of success until in 1993 the Boston movement claimed a membership of forty-five thousand in one hundred and thirty-nine churches located in fifty-five different countries around the world.<sup>23</sup> Dr. John Vaughn, editor of *Church Growth Today* and Director of the International Mega-Church Research Center described the Boston Church of Christ as, “an evangelism/discipleship and church planting movement, representing one of the most aggressive and rapidly growing world-wide movements of this decade. The national and global focus makes it a movement that even its critics cannot ignore.”<sup>24</sup>

The tension between the Boston movement and the mainline Churches stretched across many areas of conflict including the use of instruments and the involvement of women in the worship service. These issues created tension, but in a family of autonomous churches there were always practices that created tension within the

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<sup>19</sup> McKean, “Revolution through Restoration,” *Upside Down*, April 1992, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Wooten, “Discipleship and Church: An Interview with Kip McKean,” *Biblical Discipleship Quarterly*, Spring 1987, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Roger Lamb Ed., “The New Testament Multiplication Dynamic – 1989,” *Boston Church of Christ Newsletter* X, 8 January 1989, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Randy McKean, “Glory: World Missions Leadership Conference Report,” *Boston Bulletin*, 12 September 1993, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. John Vaughn, interview on Kingdom News Network (KNN), April 1993. Quoted in “Revolution Through Restoration,” *Upside Down*, April 1992, 7.

fellowship. After ten years, the main issues that could not be resolved were local church autonomy, discipling relationships and re-baptism.

### **3. Autonomy in Church Reconstructions and Plantings**

The doctrine of congregational authority has been one of several constant teachings throughout the history of the Restoration movement.<sup>25</sup> It is of note that McKean stated in 1987, “I believe in the individuality of the local church and the local leadership over a local congregation.”<sup>26</sup> This was not practically what was practiced in the Boston movement in the years that followed.<sup>27</sup>

The Boston movement’s growth was the direct result of the planting and reconstruction of other churches. These younger churches maintained discipling relationships with their “spiritual parents” which led to the development of an ecclesiastical authority in the Boston movement that concerned the mainline Churches.<sup>28</sup> The Boston church continued “reconstructing” mainline Churches that asked for help. These reconstructed churches imitated the practices of the Boston church and many experienced the growth that the movement was undergoing.

In 1988, Wooten described reconstruction as “not replacing repentance but rather helping to define what repentance is.” He explained, “In most congregations repentance no longer conveys a call back to the radical commitment that Jesus expects from all of his

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<sup>25</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 12; Hendren, *Which Way the Church*, 57-65.

<sup>26</sup> Wooten, “Discipleship and Church: An Interview with Kip McKean,” *Biblical Discipleship Quarterly*, Spring 1987, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Church plants and reconstructions were disciplined by the ministries that sent or reconstructed them. They were expected to seek advice for their lives and the activities within the church. Relationship and experience would dictate the amount of involvement ranging from someone leading the younger ministry from another city to no involvement beyond the personal life of the minister (author’s own experiences).

<sup>28</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 10.

disciples. Jesus' idea of repentance involves rebuilding or reconstruction of our lives so that our first love is Jesus Christ."<sup>29</sup>

J. Jones describes the reconstruction process as, "The Church is renamed in accordance with the city it is located in. Most of the present leaders resign their positions and are sent to other ministries for retraining. Members of the Church must re-count the cost which often resulted in re-baptism of many of the Christians."<sup>30</sup> This practice of re-baptizing mainline Church members was a very painful issue that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In 1988, McKean appointed nine World Sector Leaders (WSL) who were given the charge to evangelize different portions of the world.<sup>31</sup> These WSL operated as Lead Evangelists with each reporting to McKean who became the missions evangelist to disciple the WSL in their personal lives and ministry.<sup>32</sup> In true Church of Christ fashion, McKean claimed that he was "following the pattern of Paul's role in the first century" by directing the churches in the Boston movement.<sup>33</sup> This hierarchy was also present at the local church level and will be discussed in the next section on discipling relationships.

The issue of autonomy was a source of tension between the Boston movement and the mainline Churches, but with the numerical success of this ministry it may have been acceptable except there were more difficult bridges to cross. The practices of discipling and re-baptism in the Boston movement were greater sources of conflict between these two groups.

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<sup>29</sup> Wooten, "Reconstruction: The Biblical Imperative," *Discipleship Magazine*, January 1988, 4.

<sup>30</sup> J. Jones, "What Does the Boston Movement Teach?: 2" 39; Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 13-17.

<sup>31</sup> McKean, "Revolution through Restoration," *Upside Down*, April 1992, 12-13.

<sup>32</sup> Wooten, "Kip McKean Enter Full-Time Mission Work," *Discipleship Magazine*, February 1988, 26.

<sup>33</sup> McKean, "Kip McKean Becomes Missions Evangelist, Brown to Lead Boston," *Boston Bulletin*, 1 May 1988.

#### 4. Discipling Relationships

These relationships between members in each local church were similar to the relationships between the Boston movement churches. The mainline Churches certainly had issue with both. McKean believed that the success of the Boston movement found its roots in “one another” relationships. He wrote, “The Crossroads teachings of one another Christianity, evangelistic small groups and dynamic campus ministries were the seeds of discipling placed on my heart as I saw personally how one man could affect another’s lifestyle and eternal destiny for God.”<sup>34</sup> Discipling was used in this movement to describe a system of training involving one-on-one relationships to help younger Christians to become more like Christ.<sup>35</sup>

In 1988, discipling was explained by Wooten who contrasted linear and triangular relationships. He explained that if only the triangular model is emphasized, “then the church will have no direction or accountability” and if only the linear model is emphasized, “then the congregation will lack compassion, acceptance and love necessary to bind the church together.” Wooten concluded that, “both are necessary in a strong, unified, growing congregation.”<sup>36</sup>

Yeakley correctly described the process as, “a unique, hierarchical relationship where the younger Christian is expected to confess struggles and sin to the older Christian to receive guidance and prayers. After a Christian has been discipled for awhile, they are expected to start discipling others in a pyramid of relationships that resembles multi-level marketing strategies.”<sup>37</sup> These discipling relationships were found in each local

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<sup>34</sup> McKean, “Revolution through Restoration”, *Upside Down*, April 1992, 6.

<sup>35</sup> Author’s own experiences.

<sup>36</sup> Wooten, “Leadership in the Church,” *Discipleship Magazine*, Fall 1987, 4-8.

<sup>37</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 1-2.

congregation that was generally divided into regions, sectors, zones and Bible talks with leaders at each level. The ministers were disciplined by other ministers and ultimately by the WSL.<sup>38</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the mainline Churches where ministers and elders led a single congregation with no other church hierarchy over them.<sup>39</sup> Yeakley believed that the concerns of the mainline Churches over discipling were ignored explaining that, “the Boston movement rejected the idea that discipling is a method, ardently proclaiming that it stemmed from a proper interpretation of the Bible.” The movement defended hierarchical, delegated shepherding by pointing to Exodus 18:13-26 where Moses instituted a judicial system with four levels of rulers overseeing groups of ten, fifty, one hundred and one thousand.<sup>40</sup>

Yeakley applauded the Boston movement for the things they did right including, the involvement of the entire membership in evangelism, teaching thoroughly before baptism, emphasizing mission work, sending some of their best people into mission fields, spending most of their money on preaching the gospel and little on church buildings, confronting sin in peoples lives and ultimately baptizing large numbers of people. However, Yeakley also conducted psychological studies<sup>41</sup> on the membership of the Boston church and was concerned by the discipling relationships that he described as “very unhealthy.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Author’s own experiences.

<sup>39</sup> Hendren, *Which Way the Church*, 57-65.

<sup>40</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 60-61.

<sup>41</sup> With the Church’s permission, Yeakley conducted Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI) tests on large numbers of the Boston church. He found a majority of the members were changing from Introverted to Extroverted, from Intuitive to Sensing, from Thinking to Feeling, and Perceiving to Judging. He concluded whatever was causing these unhealthy personality changes needed to stop. The Boston leadership countered by explaining that Jesus was an ESFJ, that the changes were due to a radical conversion or that the fellowship unconsciously screened for these personalities. These arguments did little to dissuade Yeakley of his concerns over discipling relationships. For more detail see Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 24-57.

<sup>42</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 20-21.



In 1988, despite criticisms, McKean preached, “We need to make it abundantly clear that every brother in the congregation needs to have a discipleship partner. To not have a discipleship partner is to be rebellious to God and to the leadership of the congregation.”<sup>43</sup> According to the Boston Church of Christ Bulletin, discipleship partners were not considered optional: “We expect every member to be discipled by a more spiritually mature Christian who is given authority to teach him to obey everything that Jesus commanded.”<sup>44</sup>

There were concerns within the mainline Church over ecclesiastical authority and discipling in the Boston movement.<sup>45</sup> The staggering growth of the movement may have been enough to continue some support from the mainline Churches but the greatest hurt was when the movement began to teach re-baptism of mainline Church members who placed membership in the Boston movement.

## 5. The Re-baptism Issue

A. Campbell built the Restoration movement on the basis that Christianity needed to continue to be restored and that the answers could be found plainly within the biblical text. In 1985, the Boston movement claimed that it had discovered a new Christian truth in the modern era.<sup>46</sup> Gordon Ferguson taught that the early Restoration leaders had rediscovered the correct form of baptism (immersion) and the correct teaching (forgiveness of sins). He added that the mainline Churches had rediscovered the need for correct understanding at the time of baptism<sup>47</sup> and not after the fact. Ferguson concluded

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<sup>43</sup> McKean, “Discipleship Partners,” 1988 Boston Gardens Leadership Conference, Author’s notes.

<sup>44</sup> Baird, “Authority and Submission: Part 5,” *Boston Bulletin*, 4 October 1987, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 442

<sup>46</sup> Ferguson, “Progressive Revelation, Part I: The Concept Explained,” *Boston Bulletin*, 1 May 1988, 1.

<sup>47</sup> The mainline Churches teach that a potential convert must understand that baptism is where sin is forgiven, one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-40) and is added to the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

that the Boston movement had rediscovered another truth in the New Testament: “that one must be a Disciple before being baptized.”<sup>48</sup>

The Boston movement pointed to the great commission<sup>49</sup> and argued that the pattern was to go and make disciples and then baptize them.<sup>50</sup> McKean taught, “all the commitment in the world, and even being a disciple does not save you. You must respond to Jesus with the commitment of a Disciple and then and only then can you be baptized to be saved.”<sup>51</sup> T. Jones described the movement’s teachings more clearly when he wrote, “If you were baptized before you became a Disciple, then your baptism was not valid.”<sup>52</sup>

The greatest tension in this fracture began when mainline Church of Christ members were re-baptized in order to place membership in the Boston movement churches. McKean argued that their previous baptism was not valid as they had not made the decision to be a Disciple beforehand. He wrote, “Let me tell you something. No one has been re-baptized around here. Not a single person has been re-baptized around here. I only believe in one baptism.”<sup>53</sup> Boston elder, Al Baird agreed, “I don’t think there is such a thing as re-baptism. There is only one baptism.”<sup>54</sup>

Re-baptism sent the message that the mainline Churches were not faithful. Furthermore the Boston movement began to call themselves ‘the remnant,’ which implied that people outside of the Boston movement were not saved. Over time, the term Disciple, in the Boston movement, represented those who were faithfully following Jesus in

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<sup>48</sup> Ferguson, “Progressive Revelation, Part IV: Disciple’s Baptism,” *Boston Bulletin*, 29 May 1988, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 28:18-20.

<sup>50</sup> Wooten, “The Boston Movement as a Revitalization Movement,” 186.

<sup>51</sup> McKean, “Perfectly United,” 1987 Women’s Retreat (Boston), Audio Cassette. Quoted in J. Jones, “What Does the Boston Movement Teach? 1” 25-26.

<sup>52</sup> T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 88.

<sup>53</sup> McKean, “Perfectly United,” Quoted in J. Jones, “What Does the Boston Movement Teach?” 26.

<sup>54</sup> Baird, “God and Baptized Disciples Only,” Quoted in J. Jones, “What Does the Boston Movement Teach?” 26.

contrast to someone from the mainline Churches who had been immersed without making the decision to be a disciple of Jesus.<sup>55</sup>

The mainline Churches argued vehemently that this was a weak exegesis of this passage.<sup>56</sup> Even from within the Boston Movement, there were some who argued against theology of re-baptism. Wooten agreed that, “an in-depth exegesis of the passage is lacking within the movement.”<sup>57</sup> Yeakley correctly identified the issue of re-baptism as the greatest force creating tension between the mainline Churches of Christ and the Boston movement.<sup>58</sup>

## 6. The Late-Twentieth Century Fracture

In the late eighties, the movement began to believe that the mainline Churches were spiritually dead, stuck in traditions and not evangelizing the world, and that all that was proof that they had departed from scripture and were not restoring the first-century church. In 1987, McKean called out the remnant when he said, “All those who are faithful and want to evangelize the world must align with Boston.”<sup>59</sup> The following year, in 1988, McKean wrote that, “The Boston movement had stopped considering the movement a part of the mainline Churches of Christ fellowship.”<sup>60</sup>

The fracture in the Canadian Churches of Christ (ICOC) was brought to a head in 1987, at Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto. Canadian evangelist, Henry Kriete was preaching excitedly and in a moment of passion described the mainline Church of Christ buildings as “synagogues of satan.”<sup>61</sup> Approximately half a dozen older

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<sup>55</sup> Giambarba, *Bent on Conquest*, 7.

<sup>56</sup> See J. Paul Pollard’s analysis in J. Jones, “What Does the Boston Movement Teach? 2,” 47-49.

<sup>57</sup> Wooten, “The Boston Movement as a Revitalization Movement,” 186.

<sup>58</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 64.

<sup>59</sup> T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 89.

<sup>60</sup> McKean, “Revolution through Restoration,” *Upside Down*, April 1992, 29.

<sup>61</sup> Author’s discussions with Canadian Evangelists present.

ministers from the mainline Churches got up and walked out, ending any significant dialogue for approximately fifteen years.<sup>62</sup> In the winter of 1988, it was decided at a Toronto Church of Christ leadership meeting that mainline Church members who wanted to place membership would have to re-study the Bible and be re-baptized to become members.<sup>63</sup>

The mainline Churches had no central authority and so no one made the decision for everyone. However, the same year that the Boston movement officially separated from mainline Churches, there were mainline ministers writing similar statements. For example, mainline Church preacher F. H. Buddy Martin wrote,

I feel that we can no longer consider them brethren. This is a very painful and difficult decision. In my investigation, I have had to come to this decision because of the error being taught and the departures from the Word of God. They have totally and completely apostasized the teaching of the Word of God on so many doctrines we can no longer afford to count them as brethren. This is especially true when it comes to the matter of baptism.<sup>64</sup>

## 7. Explaining the Fracture

There has been little written to date about the tension between the Boston movement and the mainline Churches of Christ. Almost all has come from sources within either faction. Garrett is the only Church of Christ historian who has written about this fracture to date. In 1994, he wrote,

The mainline Churches could level more serious charges (against the movement), such as being legalistic on baptism (Boston re-baptizes all new members including those from mainline Churches), neglecting grace in its emphasis on works, subjugation of women and a sectarian view of the church. But such criticism

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<sup>62</sup> The relationship between the Boston movement (now called ICOC) and the mainline Churches has been in a steady state of repair throughout North America for the last five years. The relationships now are more akin to the relationships generally found between the mainline Churches. (Author's experiences.)

<sup>63</sup> Mark Mancini, Evangelist for Toronto Church of Christ, Winter 1988. Author's own notes from leadership meeting.

<sup>64</sup> F. H. Buddy Martin, *Multiplying Ministries Movement: A Six-part Information lecture Series* (Houston: Memorial Church of Christ, 1988), 29. Quoted in T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 99.

would get too close to where the mainline Churches of Christ have been all these years.<sup>65</sup>

T. Jones believed that Kip used a pragmatic hermeneutic unconsciously and was not purposely misusing scripture. He described a deductive theology in Bible studies, “where the interpretation of the passage came from the outcome you wanted to achieve with the person you were studying with.”<sup>66</sup> Yeakley describes discipling in the Boston movement as an example of developing doctrine to explain practices. “This deductive theology has no roots in a careful Bible study but grows from a pragmatic concern to find methods that work.”<sup>67</sup>

## 8. Conclusions

This fracture between the Boston movement and the mainline Churches occurred in the late-eighties of the twentieth century. This fracture was highlighted by a liberal faction introducing new practices of church authority, one another relationships and re-baptism. This young movement was generally tolerated during the early years but over time was seen as departing from the Bible’s teachings in these areas. The movement pointed to its desire to restore the first-century church and argued that its numerical growth was proof that its practices were biblical.

In the first decade, those in the Boston movement saw themselves as faithful, committed and restoring the first-century church within one generation. Over time, they came to view the mainline Churches as uncommitted and weak at best and at worst not a part of the Kingdom of God. The claims of the Boston movement of continuing to restore

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<sup>65</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 441.

<sup>66</sup> T. Jones, *Search of a City*, 107

<sup>67</sup> Yeakley, *Discipling Dilemma*, 57.

the first-century church combined with their successes in world evangelism were a blow to the mainline Churches who often taught that they had already restored it.<sup>68</sup>

There has not been a great deal written about this fracture to date. The majority of the writings come from within each side of the separation. These writings reflect strong emotional issues driving this separation. The greatest issue was the re-baptism of mainline Church of Christ members who placed membership in the Boston movement churches.

There were many theological arguments over different practices in this fracture. The Boston movement used the Restoration hermeneutic to point to commands, examples and inferences in scripture to support their practices of discipling and Church hierarchy. This ability to “proof text”<sup>69</sup> their practices along with the numerical growth caused them to ignore their critics and withdraw from the mainline Churches.

This division in the late-twentieth century in the Churches of Christ involved different social conditions, different combatants, different issues, a different location and a different time in history than the fractures earlier in the same century. This work has shown that the common thread and only constant in these fractures in the twentieth century was the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

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<sup>68</sup> Allen, *Cruciform Church*, 82-83.

<sup>69</sup> The process of focusing on specific scripture in the Biblical text that supports various teachings and practices within the church. The argument against this practice is that when a passage is read in context it may not support the original proposition.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Conclusions**

The Churches of Christ trace their roots back to the Stone-Campbell movement that began in the early-nineteenth century. This Restoration movement was formed by several smaller religious groups that left mainstream denominations in search of freedom in worship and Christian lifestyle. These churches shared paranoia of ecclesiastical authority and believed that scripture was fundamentally clear and did not need special interpreter like the Holy Spirit or trained teachers. They practiced a wide range of worship styles and did not agree on many theological issues including the Trinity, millennialism and Church membership, and yet they still enjoyed a strong fellowship.

It is ironic that from these irenic roots the Churches of Christ evolved into a fellowship filled with conflict concerning dozens of substantial theological issues concerning worship and Christian lifestyle. This Church family also underwent three major fractures in the twentieth century, with each resulting in a separate, new and distinct fellowship. The tension in each fracture was initiated by the goal to restore the first century, sustained the tone of a young A. Campbell and brought to fruition through the application of the Restoration hermeneutic. This hermeneutic teaches that the Bible can be read as a scientific text filled with commands, examples and necessary inference to provide direction for daily life and worship. This thesis shows that there were social and theological issues at play in each of these fractures. The common thread and single driving force throughout each fracture was the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

The third chapter showed that in the early twentieth century there were many issues being debated in this Church family. This fracture was driven by the inability to come to an agreement on the role of instruments in worship and using missionary societies. Conservative Disciples, at the turn of the century, battled against these new ideas by simply asking for “chapter and verse”<sup>1</sup> or “what Church in the New Testament had instrumental music or missionary societies?”<sup>2</sup>

Some historians believe that social, geographic, educational, financial and political tensions between the north and south left over from the civil war ultimately led to this fracture. These forces certainly influenced the relationships in this Church family, however, there were also fractures over instruments and missionary societies in the Stone-Campbell Churches in Australia, England and Canada.<sup>3</sup> Therefore these social pressures in and of themselves were not enough to cause this to occur.

The theological arguments presented reveal challenges in dealing with biblical silence, tension in A. Campbell’s teachings of primitivism and ecumenicity, and the different views on millennialism between Stone and Campbell. These issues were not the cause of these fractures, but rather, reveal a weakness in the Restoration hermeneutic. This hermeneutic was grounded in the ability of an individual to gain the correct understanding of scripture by simply reading the text and “restoring” it. Once it has been restored, it is a natural assumption that everyone who thinks differently is wrong. This application of the Restoration hermeneutic, combined with the attitude found in A. Campbell’s early writings, led to this fracture early in the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 341.

<sup>2</sup> Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 309.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 292-303.



The fourth chapter showed that, in the mid-twentieth century, there were still many ongoing debates concerning “correct” worship and lifestyle in this Church family. The Restoration hermeneutic was still being used by the mainline Churches in the mid-twentieth century to try and resolve these issues. J. D. Thomas wrote, “Command, example, and necessary inference have in general been accepted by all of us since the beginning of the Restoration period of church history.”<sup>4</sup> This fracture involved another conservative faction that believed that the use of a plurality of communion cups and the presence of Sunday school during worship was a departure from the first-century church and therefore was sinful.

Some historians claim the younger generation embraced a conservative interpretation of the Bible in response to a perceived liberalism in the older Church of Christ membership. Others argue that the tension between the different generations was due to different social values following the Second World War. These social tensions were real in this Church family, but many other denominations wrestled with similar issues without fracturing in the twentieth century. Therefore, these contemporary social issues played a role in creating tension but were not the cause of the fracture.

The theological challenge of dealing with biblical silence was present again in this battle. This conservative faction, later to called one-cup, non-class Churches, argued that a plurality of communion cups at the Lord’s Supper and introducing Sunday school to worship services was a departure from the example of the first-century church and therefore was sinful. This tension was created by both factions applying the Restoration hermeneutic and arriving at very different conclusions. The attempt at dealing with Biblical silence reveals a weakness in the Restoration hermeneutic. This hermeneutic was

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas, *We Be Brethren*, 6.

grounded in the ability of an individual to gain a depth of understanding of scripture from simply reading it with no allowances for the personal and spiritual influences of the reader. This allows the interpreter to draw conclusions and “restore” New Testament practices. Once a practice has been restored, it is a natural assumption that everyone who thinks differently is wrong. This application of the Restoration hermeneutic, combined with the attitude found in A. Campbell’s early writings, led to this fracture in the mid-twentieth century.

The fifth chapter showed that in the eighties a liberal faction was born from within the Churches of Christ. The issues in this fracture were still being solved with the Restoration hermeneutic. Thomas Olbricht wrote, “The Church of Christ hermeneutic is still anchored to the belief that the Bible teaches by command, example and necessary inferences.”<sup>5</sup>

This new movement, later to be called the Boston movement, introduced new practices of church authority, one another relationships and re-baptism of mainline Church members placing membership in the Boston movement. In first decade, the movement saw itself as faithful, committed and restoring the first-century church within one generation. Over time, it came to view the mainline Churches as uncommitted and weak at best, and at worst not a part of the Kingdom of God.

This young movement was generally tolerated during the early years but over time was seen as departing from the Bible’s teachings in many areas. The movement pointed to its desire to restore the first-century church and argued that its growth was proof that its practices were biblical. These claims of restoring the first-century church combined with

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<sup>5</sup> Olbricht, “Hermeneutics in the Churches of Christ,” n.p.

its successes in world evangelism were a blow to the mainline Churches who often taught that they had already restored it.<sup>6</sup>

There were strong emotional issues within this fracture. The greatest issue was the re-baptism of mainline Church of Christ members who placed membership in the Boston movement churches. There was also a strong theological component present in this fracture as the Boston movement used the Restoration hermeneutic to point to biblical commands, examples and necessary inferences to proof-text many of their practices. This reliance on self, again, led to the dismissal of everyone who thought differently on these issues. Embracing the tone of a young A. Campbell, bolstered by their substantial numerical growth, they ignored the critics and separated from the mainline Churches.

This division in the late-twentieth century, in the Churches of Christ involved different social conditions, different combatants, different issues, a different location and a different time in history than the fractures earlier in the same century. The only common element continued to be the application of the Restoration hermeneutic. Therefore, this application of the Restoration hermeneutic, combined with the attitude found in A. Campbell's early writings, led to this fracture near the end of the twentieth century.

This thesis has shown that three major fractures within the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century were affected by various social and theological issues in play at the time. However, despite different social conditions, different issues, different combatants, different countries and different times in history, this church family continued to fracture. In each case, this tension was initiated by a desire to restore and preserve the first-century church, and was brought to fruition by the inability to resolve different practices through the use of the Restoration hermeneutic. These fractures were also greatly influenced by

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<sup>6</sup> Allen, *Cruciform Church*, 82-83.

the tone of the combatants as many imitated a young A. Campbell who was intolerant and sarcastic with those who disagreed with him. A constant in each fracture of the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century was the attempt to use of the Restoration hermeneutic to resolve disagreements and, as this thesis illustrates each fracture was driven by the application of the Restoration hermeneutic.

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