

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR ELDERS, PREACHERS, TEACHERS, AND CONCERNED CHRISTIANS

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT

Gary W. Summers

In the center of its December, 2004, issue, *The Christian Chronicle* devotes three full pages to the above-titled work. Published in December, the 860-page volume is being touted as, perhaps, “the most significant book produced among churches of Christ in the past 100 years” (17). Really? More significant than some of **Max Lucado’s**? Greater than works by **Carroll Osburn**, **F. LaGard Smith**, **Lynn Anderson**, **C. Leonard Allen**, and **Rubel Shelly**? (These authors are mentioned because *The Christian Chronicle* is not likely to endorse anything written by *faithful* brethren.)

This assessment may sound rather pessimistic for it being so early into the new year, but the devil never rests, thus necessitating constant vigilance.

First of all, although this book deals with history, it has the wrong emphasis—so indicated by the title. Christians are not members of the Stone-Campbell Movement, and the history of that “movement” is only valuable insofar as it outlines the struggle with arriving at truth or rejecting it. The title **Earl West** selected for his history is one that indicated the proper approach to the subject: *The Search for the Ancient Order*. He details many of the events that occurred as men wrestled with leaving denominationalism in their quest to restore the church of the New Testament.

If that is the purpose of this volume, fine, but the title indicates it is rather more involved with the facts, details, and development of a manmade movement (especially in its conclusion) rather than dealing with the restoration principle that had been attempted by Hezekiah and Josiah in their days. In other words, is the emphasis in *The Encyclopedia* about the triumph

of truth, or does it simply provide answers to questions, such as, “Who did what when?” The overall perspective of the compilers is what would determine the direction and emphasis of the encyclopedia. The identity of the authors does not suggest a restoration emphasis.

THE WRITERS AND “STREAMS”

“Never before has anyone undertaken to prepare a comprehensive reference work of this type...” (17). So who are the authors of this “long-awaited volume”? They are from “all three streams of the **Barton Stone/Thomas** and **Alexander Campbell** restoration movement in America—churches of Christ, conservative Christian Churches and The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).” This description is not reassuring. In the first place, Christians are not streams in any mortal’s “movement.” We do not teach any doctrine originated by men, and we are not followers of men. We have obeyed the gospel presented by Jesus (Mark 16:16) and taught by his apostles (Acts 2:38). Neither Campbell, Stone, nor anyone else had anything to do with the origination of this message; it was inspired by the Holy Spirit and owes its origin to God, and they would be the first to say so.

To follow the three “streams” is no different than following the Catholic Church once it had become apostate. The Christian Church departed from the New Testament by adding instrumental music to worship, a practice which lacks biblical authority (Colossians 3:17). Such was not their only departure—only the most obvious. An even earlier departure from the scriptures was the missionary society concept, of which Alexander

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...

THE WORK IN INDONESIA

We are planning to be with Barry and Melany Hatcher and the Indonesian brethren again this year from June 24 through July 6. (On our way back to the United States we will, the Lord willing, be working in a gospel meeting with the Jurong congregation in Singapore).

Barry and Melany Hatcher have done a great work in Indonesia that will, I firmly believe, continue to prosper long after they have left the Indonesian field. They know how to get the fundamentals of the gospel deeply entrenched in the minds of the people. Furthermore, they are teaching the people to be able, by themselves, to spread the gospel, to organize congregations and to accept individual responsibility—to think for themselves. They are helping the Indonesians to be Indonesian Christians and not American Christians.

Most American Christians have not the foggiest notion of what all is involved in spreading the gospel and grounding brethren of third world countries (developing nations) in the faith. The average one of us does not grasp what it is like to work in a different culture and language that is so radically different from our own. And, frankly, most Americans would not long endure in such a work as the Hatchers have done and are doing. I cannot too highly commend them for their faithful efforts.

The Indonesian brethren who are the administrators and teachers in the Southern Sumatra Bible Academy (in Indonesia an academy is a step above a college) are sound in the faith, experienced in their jobs and great gospel preachers. The students are being well taught, trained and grounded in the gospel. The school is housed in excellent facilities and is growing. We strongly recommend your support of this worthy effort.

Please closely read the following report from Barry Hatcher. Barry's account is a good example of one aspect of the work in Indonesia and the ordeal that is involved in simply getting a place for brethren to meet. Please remember these brethren in your prayers

—DPB

BUILDING FOR BANDAR LAMPUNG CONGREGATION — PLAN “B” IS NOW IN EFFECT

Barry Hatcher

Well, we have lost the opportunity to purchase the house we have been raising funds to purchase. But, we are not without a plan. Have you ever failed to accomplish something, and when you had to revert to plan “B”, that turned out to be better than your original plan? And when you thought about it, did you consider that it must be providence? This is the case here.

When the brethren started down that long road to get approval to use the house for worship, I asked them to begin looking for an alternative property, just in case. I asked the brethren to mentally establish in their minds out in the future, a red flag. I asked them to consider, if they came to a point that they could see their efforts would not prevail. Stop! But I also asked them to look for an alternative. This is what they did, and it is a good one.

Back in September we rented the big house with the option to purchase it. In the process of getting the required agreements, the members must go to the neighbors and get their approval. This is the first step. They first talked to many neighbors. Most neighbors are non-Muslim, but we learned that that does not matter. Once the neighbors give a positive verbal agreement, then an official petition must be drawn up, and then it is back to the neighbors for signatures. All of this takes several months. So, by the end of November 2004, things were looking good and many neighbors had signed, but then there began to be dissension among certain neighbors and things began to fall apart. Fear is a real problem among people who might be asked to stand against a Muslim neighbor. So, by the first of January, the “red flag” was raised, but the effort continued. Brethren were holding out that they could increase their friendship with some of the holdouts in order that all would move forward. It did not happen. However, parallel to this, the members were working with another piece of property in another area about one and a half miles away, in a totally non-Muslim neighborhood. This is the key word, “non-Muslim”. And it is about time this congregation gets a break.

Last December, the members found a plat of land across the street from one of the members. This member has lived in this neighborhood for many years and is very influential in this community. This is the **first positive** regarding this property.

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The **second positive** is, unlike the house they were trying to purchase, every house owner bordering this new property is non-Muslim as is the entire neighborhood. The owner of the property lives next door to the property and is willing to help the church. One lady on another side of the property has already agreed to a Bible study, and all of the neighbors have not only verbally agreed for us to build a building, but the petition is already signed. This week, because there are no “red flags”, the brethren purchased this property and yesterday an agreement was made with a contractor to begin building next week. They hope to have the building finished by the first part of June.

This building will look like a house from the outside, as is required by law, since we are not allowed at this time to build a “church” building here. But, the houses in this neighborhood are large, so that is a plus for us to build a large structure.

The building will have a very nice auditorium and six individual classrooms. **Lamhot**, their preacher, will have an office that can be used as a seventh classroom. On one end of this building will be an apartment where Lamhot and his family will live. It is important for the preacher to live on the property for security purposes and to continue to have a good relationship with all of the neighbors. In Indonesia, people get to know their neighbors. And, if we need Lamhot’s living room for a classroom, it will be available also. If we count all of the rooms available for classrooms, they will total nine rooms including the auditorium. The auditorium will measure 33’ x 33’ = 1089 square feet. There is no auditorium this large, that I know of, among our brethren in Indonesia. Each classroom will measure 10’ x 12’ = 120 sq. feet, and the three classrooms at one end of the auditorium can be used to expand the auditorium when needed.

The cost — We were able to purchase the land a few days ago for \$16,500. After receiving several bids from different contractors, the contractor chosen with the best bid, is the same contractor who built our college building, and the one who renovated our house in 1999. He is a friend to all of us in the college staff and the church here. He has submitted a bid to build the building for \$25,500. The land cost \$16,500 + building \$25,500 = \$42,000 + blueprints \$850 = \$42,850. We have received, or there has been pledged a total of \$39,350. We are not far off the total needed, just \$3,500 more.

The building permit — A man who works in the building permit office — has agreed to act as the churches agent for the building permit. He will also draw up the blueprints for us. And, since the contractor has now been chosen, he will give us the temporary building permit in order to begin building next week when the blueprints are finished. If anything can go wrong now, it is beyond our view and understanding at this time.

Brethren, anytime one does something in Indonesia involving religion that becomes public knowledge, one is open to many problems. However, we have never given up hope that something could be done to get these brethren a building. We have now, after a lot of prayers, come to a point where we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I need to tell you a short story here. This man in the permit office, **Mr. Bunyamin**, met Lamhot, the preacher, in September or October 2003, before the brethren lost the use of their building. You may recall that problem culminated in February of last year, 2004. However, Lamhot worked with Mr. Bunyamin, and actually acquired the building permit from him in order to renovate that old building just days before they lost the use of it. This was no small task, to get that building permit. You may remember from my report in February 2004 that the Muslim neighbors demanded they leave that property. Not only were the members, discouraged because of the loss of the use of their building, but that useless building permit cost us \$500, non-refundable. However, when Lamhot went to this same man in the permit office last week in order to get information about how the church could possibly get a building permit for this new project, he remembered Lamhot and what had happened to the church, so Mr. Bunyamin stepped forward to help. What is more interesting is that he is a Muslim. It is always amazing, because God is capable of doing things far beyond what we can see. We must place our trust in him. In this country, where we sometimes feel we must accomplish the impossible, through much effort and prayer, it seems to happen. So, we have a building going up, and who would have thought it — it is in an all non-Muslim neighborhood, the price is within the framework of our original financial need, and the man that will actually make all of it happen is a Muslim in the building permit office. Providence?

I hope all of you will rejoice with us about this

and will stay with us as we work this out. However, if you, who have contributed, do not feel you want to continue with us through “plan B”, please let us know, and your funds will be sent back to you, or used in another way in the work here.

[If you would like to make a contribution to this good work, please note the following information. If you wish to write to the Hatchers please use the following Indonesia E-mail address for correspondence: bhatcher@indo.net.id —Editor]

All correspondence and contributions should be addressed and sent to:

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Assistant Editorial...

Look In The Mirror

In the latter verses of the first chapter of the book of James, the writer uses a beneficial illustration. He compares the gospel to a mirror. James discusses the nature and work of the gospel as well as the response men should have, toward it. He deals specifically with one hearing the word and yet not following its teachings (vs. 22-23). He states that if a man hears the word and does not do what it says, he deceives himself if he thinks he is saved.

There is a host of people in the world who fall into this category. They read and believe the Bible but lack the conviction of heart to act upon it. Many of these people are just like the way James referred to, they are deceiving themselves. I once had a professor who was a skeptic (that is he did not necessarily believe that all of the Bible was true), who said he did not fear the judgment, if it existed, because he had covered all the bases. He stated that if God does exist and there is a judgment that he could truthfully tell God that he had read his book, if simply having read the book would be sufficient James is clearly stating that this is not the case.

It takes more than merely reading the book to benefit from it. One might as well not even read the text if he or she is not going to respond to it. God did not send the Holy Spirit to inspire men to write the Bible simply because he was bored and needed something to do. He had it written that we all might know how to live. In IITimothy 3:16-17 we are told that:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Bible, God’s word, has every answer to every question we will ever face in our lives. And we can be perfect, complete before God, if we will simply believe and obey it. Yet there are millions who will not obey the word (Matthew 7:13-14).

James continues to discuss this problem in verses 24 and 25. He states that when a man looks into the mirror, the gospel, and does not obey what it says, it is like looking into a mirror and seeing all kinds of flaws such as messed up hair, a greasy forehead, and so on, and doing nothing to make himself more presentable. The gospel is designed to serve the same purpose as a mirror is designed. And as the mirror helps us see and fix our physical shortcomings, so too the gospel works to show us our spiritual shortcomings and provides the solutions to correct them as well.

James concludes his discussion of this illustration in verse 25, **“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”** The man that is going to be blessed is the one who hears the word and continues to live accordingly. Those who read the gospel and yet do not follow its precepts

cannot benefit from it. We need to be more adamant in our affirmations concerning the necessity of faithful living (Matthew 10:22, I Corinthians 15:58, Revelations 2:10).

Jesus stressed the same idea in his sermons as well. In Matthew 7:21 he states, **“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”**

In John 8:31 he states, **“...If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed.”** Jesus clearly states in these passages, as well as a host of others, that if we are not faithful to him then we are not his people.

In passages like John 14:15, 15:14, and Luke 6:46, he affirms that, **“If ye love me, keep my commandments”, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”, “And why call ye me,**

Lord, Lord and do not the things which I say?” It is clear that if we will not obey the will of Christ, we not only are not his disciples, but we do not even love him. Many, as James said, deceive themselves. They think they love Jesus but they do not. Jesus said, **“By their fruit ye shall know them”**(Matthew 7:20). If we do not obey Christ then we are of necessity serving Satan (Matthew 12:30, Romans 6:16).

Would to God that we all heed the warning vividly given by James. Let us look into the **“perfect law of liberty”** and let it do what it is designed to do. Let the gospel show us our shortcomings, provide our spiritual healing, and let God’s word do its work. Let us study it, believe it, and obey it. If we will do these things then heaven will be our home in the hereafter (Matthew 10:22).

—Michael Light, Associate Editor

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The Sad Plight Of Blind And Ignorant Cowards For Watchmen

Marvin L. Weir

The word “watch” is defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as follows: “To look or observe attentively or carefully, to stay awake at night while serving as a guard, sentinel, or watcher, [and] to stay alert as a devotional or religious exercise; keep vigil.” God’s watchmen, whether the prophets of old or elders of today, are responsible for sounding forth an alarm in regard to the enemy and for guarding against the backsliding of the people. Our concern is with the Lord’s church today and those who are serving as her overseers.

What will become of the Lord’s people if the congregation’s elders are blind? Isaiah charges the “*watchmen*” of his day with blindness (Isaiah 56:10), and such a charge is appropriate against elders throughout the brotherhood today. So many today want to proclaim only God’s grace while never warning of compromise, transgression, and blatant disrespect for God’s authority. The grace of God will never cover those who defiantly rebel against the Lord’s commandments.

God sounded forth a warning to Ezekiel that should send a chill down the spine of every man serving as an elder in the Lord’s church. Jehovah told his faithful prophet:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet, if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul (Ezekiel 3:17-19).

The writer to the Hebrews notes: **“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief for this were unprofitable for you”** (Hebrew 13:17). Elders will be held accountable by the Lord for not warning the congregation of false doctrine, false teachers, and false hope! Spiritual blindness is fatal, and **“if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit”** (Matthew 15:14).

What will become of the Lord’s people if the congregation’s elders are ignorant of God’s word? Isaiah called the “*watchmen*” of his day **“dumb dogs”** and charged them as being **“without knowledge”** (Isaiah 56:10). So many elders today are quick to discern what

people think and want, but they do not have a clue as to what the Bible teaches about salvation and faithfulness. The problem during Hosea’s day is the problem of today — people are being **“destroyed for lack of knowledge”** (Hosea 4:6). How many people truly want to know the mind of God? The Holy scriptures exist so that truth regarding God’s will may be attained (John 17:17; 8:32). The wise man’s advice was to **“Buy the truth, and sell it not”** (Proverbs 23:23). Far too many elders today have sold the precious truth so they can buy entertainment, excitement, and everything else that placates the wishes of worldly-minded members.

What will become of the Lord’s people if the congregation’s elders are cowards? Isaiah accused the “*watchmen*” of his day of being **“dumb dogs [who] cannot bark”** (Isaiah 56:10). It is a matter of fact today that the majority of those serving as elders in the Lord’s church today will not bark! They prefer the comforts of the world, the praise of the people, and their own “dreams” to the reality of God’s word. It is the old spiritual disease of loving **“the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God”** (John 12:43). Cowardly elders have no godly convictions and thus quickly forsake truth for the schemes of men.

What will become of the Lord’s people if the congregation’s elders are at ease in Zion (cf. Amos 6:1)? Isaiah declared that the “*watchmen*” of his day were **“dreaming, lying down, [and] loving to slumber”** (Isaiah 56:10). Many elders today do not care that Bible study is soft peddled or neglected in the congregation they pretend to oversee. Diligent study of the Bible (II Timothy 2:15) is not likely to pack the pews, so every other program is allowed to flourish while study of the scriptures is engaged in less and less.

The message that many so-called preachers are allowed to proclaim from the pulpit in many congregations today does indeed come from the visions and dreams of men and not from the Holy scriptures. Godly elders will quickly put an end to such nonsense, but ungodly elders who are at ease in Zion will allow such foolishness to flourish and the Lord’s church to be swept into apostasy. Souls are being lost that could be saved with the proper warning of prepared and dedicated watchmen!

Let us pray for watchmen (elders) who love the truth and boldly warn of false teachers and false doctrine.

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“THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE...”

(Continued From Page 1)

Campbell allowed himself to be elected president. Two decades ago, brother **Dan Goddard** listed more than a dozen departures the Christian Church has made from the truth, and he would know, since he came out of it.

A separate article in *The Christian Chronicle* speaks of a “unity” meeting between the Christian Church and some churches of Christ. It begins: “These efforts are not about an organizational merger, but about celebrating a common heritage...” (1). I can not speak for others, but I have about been “common heritage”-d to death. This phrase is nothing but an invitation to compromise.

If we go back to Noah, we all have a common heritage that includes Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein, and Attila the Hun. So what? We have a common heritage, if we go back to the first century, with all of the popes, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and Muhammad. Socially, we have a common heritage with Britney Spears, Anna Nicole Smith, and Michael Moore. But who wants to claim this “heritage”?

In other words, even if two people do start out at the same place at some point in time, is that supposed to guarantee a perpetual closeness? If it does, then someone explain how close Rubel Shelly is today to **Garland Elkins**, **Robert R. Taylor, Jr.**, or to brother **Thomas B. Warren** just prior to his death? Liberals do not feel any kind of kinship to those who continue to walk according to the scriptures—except when they want others to join them, perhaps.

What does the fact that we once walked together prove, except that some have chosen to depart from the faith (**Hymenaeus** and **Philetus**, for example)? When **Jehoshaphat** went up to discuss his common heritage with **Ahab**, he was rebuked for having fellowship with those who hate the Lord. Why would any reasonable person expect to be blessed for consorting with those who have trampled underfoot the word of God?

But to return to the third “stream”—the Disciples of Christ—there remains no commonality *at all* with them. A brief perusal through their Website will provide a great deal of information about what they are doing—but very little about what they believe. They do not hold to biblical teaching regarding either doctrine or morality, nor is this a recent development. Thirty years ago a man who would later become identified with them told this young (at that time) preacher that he had read an interesting research paper that claimed that Joseph ascended to power in Egypt because he was a homosexual. “Yes,” he insisted, “and it was pretty convincing.” The Disciples openly accept as members

those who practice homosexuality.

Twenty years ago at the Joplin Unity Meeting, Lynn Gardner, Dean of (what was then called) Ozark Bible College, took a few minutes that was not in the schedule to distance the Christian Church from the Disciples of Christ. He made it clear that the Independent Christian Churches and the Disciples did not share the same beliefs on such fundamental matters as the nature of God, the nature of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, man, or the church.

Yet now we are supposed to be thrilled that all three of these streams are part of this new encyclopedia? Would it not be prudent to be just a little cautious before celebrating this great achievement? Do we not need to know a little more about those involved and what their thinking is with respect to certain fundamental subjects, such as truth? Let us dig a little deeper into the background of each of the editors.

THE INDIVIDUAL WRITERS

Doug Foster is the one who is from “the churches of Christ.” He teaches at Abilene Christian University and wrote the book, *Will the Cycle Be Unbroken?* that does not recommend him to faithful brethren. As for his scholarship, **J. E. Choate** made the following comments in the September, 1993 *Firm Foundation*:

Douglas A. Foster’s article, “The New Birth and Christian Unity,” appeared in *Wineskins*, May 1992. In critique of this article, two facts were noted clearly. First, the article attempted to prove that David Lipscomb taught one is saved by faith before baptism. Foster stated his view of Lipscomb’s teaching: “He (Lipscomb) began his teaching with the clear statement that the faith which precedes baptism marks the point of salvation.” The fact is, this was never the teaching of David Lipscomb. Here Foster seriously erred.

Second, Foster tried to defend his mistake about Lipscomb’s teaching concerning faith, baptism, and salvation by quoting these words [which follow below, gws] as being from David Lipscomb:

There is no one thing taught with greater clearness in the New Testament than that the new birth precedes and qualifies for baptism. Faith unites and makes us one with Christ, and such a believer is a Christian, and saved, not with a conditional but with an everlasting salvation (“Queries on Baptism,” *Gospel Advocate* 1873, p. 1146).

As a matter of fact, these words were written by **James R. Graves**, a Landmark Baptist preacher, who was being quoted by Lipscomb so as to respond to the mistakes of Graves. Foster attributed the words of

James R. Graves to David Lipscomb!

This careless handling of quotations shows a bias on the part of Dr. Foster, which may carry over to this encyclopedia.

Paul Blowers, the second writer, is associated with the Emmanuel School of Religion in Johnson City, Tennessee. He is a historian of early and Byzantine Christianity and teaches courses and conducts research in the “Stone-Campbell heritage.”

Tony Dunnivant began work on the encyclopedia but died three years ago and was replaced by **Newell Williams**, also of the Disciples of Christ. Williams is associated with the Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University.

Dunnivant’s name was found on a related Website: www.atla.com/tsig/denomination_mat/restoration.html, which contains an article by **Carisse Mickey Berryhill** that concerns the Restoration Movement. Some of the comments are particularly interesting:

The Scottish-enlightenment rationalism of the Campbells has taken a beating in the last decade for being the root of rationalism, exclusivism, polemics, and resistance to certain doctrinal shifts about the work of the Holy Spirit.

Similarly, the term “Restoration Movement” is one the openly ecumenical Disciples now eschew as expressing *a naïve radicalism*. The most important historian of Churches of Christ in the last generation, **Earl Irvin West**, author of *Search for the Ancient Order* (4vv), is still a **dyed-in-the-wool restorationist**. So are some among the “Christian Churches and Churches of Christ” in the upper Midwest. However, **newer historians** such as **Richard Hughes** (CofC), Leonard Allen (CofC), Doug Foster (CofC), Tony Dunnivant (DofC) and **Mark Toulouse** (DofC) **understand the restorationist ideal as a frontier illusion, naïve in today’s religious climate**. Hughes and Allen’s book on the subject is called “Illusions of Innocence.” Hughes and Allen both did doctoral study at Iowa with the Puritan scholar up there, and became convinced in the process that primitivism was an American theme (emph. gws).

Well, isn’t *that* special? Foster and Dunnivant understand that the restoration ideal is a naïve illusion. And these are the fellows we are supposed to rely on to give us an objective encyclopedia? As we implied previously, these men do not care about Stone, Campbell, and others as these men searched for Truth; they only see it as religious history, period. The following point needs to be made loudly, continually, and steadfastly:

IF WE CANNOT BE CHRISTIANS ACCORDING TO WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES, AND IF WE CANNOT BE THE CHURCH THAT JESUS DESIGNED, THEN WE

HAVE NO REASON FOR EXISTENCE WHATSOEVER.

Concerning the fourth general editor, **Newell Williams** who replaced Tony Dunnivant, he does not believe in the church as taught in the New Testament, either, as the following advertisement suggests.

Do you often find yourself at a loss for words when someone is staring blankly at you after you have just told them that you belong to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination? Do you ask yourself, just what is it that we believe as a denomination and what is our identity? Who are Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone and what do they have to do with our church?

These are just some of the questions that will be addressed by Dr. D. Newell Williams, President of Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University (TCU), at the Stone-Campbell Seminar that will be held at Bethany Christian Church on Friday, March 5, and Saturday, March 6.

Newly inaugurated as President of one of our four Disciples of Christ seminaries, Dr. Williams is one of the foremost authorities in the world on Disciples’ history. Attending the Stone-Campbell Seminar not only will allow you to hear Dr. Williams tell us who we are as a denomination, but will provide you with an opportunity to ask him questions about the Disciples of Christ.

It’s our hope and prayer that you will come and attend what promises to be a very informative and inspiring time together. *If nothing else, after attending the Stone-Campbell Seminar, you won’t feel so tongue-tied the next time someone asks you what denomination you belong to!*

Would anyone go to hear Mr. Williams and expect to hear that the church is NOT a denomination? The Disciples of Christ are “liberal” in every sense of the word. Their own Website gives an indication about them:

Beliefs and practices usually associated with Disciples include:

•Freedom of belief. **Disciples are called together around one essential of faith: belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Persons are free to follow their consciences guided by the Bible, the Holy Spirit, study and prayer, and are expected to extend that freedom to others.**

•Baptism by immersion. **In baptism the old self-centered life is set aside, and a new life of trust in God begins. Although Disciples practice baptism by immersion, other baptism traditions are honored.**

•Belief in the oneness of the church. **All Christians are called to be one in Christ and to seek opportunities for common witness and service.**

•The ministry of believers. **Both ministers and lay**

persons lead in worship, service and spiritual growth.

How can there only be “one essential of faith”? Does the Bible say that there is only one? Paul lists seven things in Ephesians 4:4-6 that are common to all Christians, but anything the New Testament clearly requires is an *essential*.

Concerning baptism, how can one believe that baptism is the point at which a new life begins—yet honor “other baptism traditions”? Either baptism is the point at which salvation occurs, or it is not. If it is, we have no authority to tell someone else they are saved without or prior to it. Actually, however, if there is only

one essential of faith, how can we affirm that new life begins at baptism?

If some call themselves Christians, but have never been baptized (which is not their one essential to faith, anyway), how can those who have been born again have unity with them? What scripture is having a *common witness* based on? And where does the Bible distinguish between ministers and lay persons? Why is *The Christian Chronicle* promoting and touting an encyclopedia by men of this stripe?

—5410 Lake Howell
Winter Park, Florida 32792-1097

The Paradigms and Parameters of Postmodern Theology

J. E. Choate

When we address, in the postmodern world, our brethren as liberals there are some facts we need to know. We must first come to an understanding of postmodernism as opposed to modernism. And we must learn the relationship between modern theology and postmodern theology, and what this means for churches of Christ. Only a handful of academicians in our colleges can trace this thin dividing line and make distinctions.

Modern civilizations are moving into a postmodern global age that will make all the previous ages beggar in comparison. Who would be so presumptuous as to gaze into his crystal ball and see the paradigms of the 21st century which will not be one thing, but a vast complexity of many things, events, and forces that will be as radically different as the Renaissance was from the Middle Ages. I even find it grimly amusing to read what the editors of *Wineskins* claim to know about the changes churches of Christ must make to survive.

What are the energies that will drive the engines of the 21st century? This new epoch of man may very well be dated from World War II and the beginning of the nuclear age. This is the end of the age of the Greyhound bus, Freud and Marx, the theology of neo-orthodoxy, and the philosophy of existentialism.

In cataloging the events of such magnitude from Leonardo's sketch of the flying machine in the 16th century to the space shuttle in the 20th century, the anticipation of future changes is mind boggling. When we contemplate the intellectual achievements of the great minds from Newton to Einstein, the babbling of the “change agents” in the church about “shifting paradigms” becomes as comical as the antics of a clown in a circus.

This article centers on a selection of theological words and phrases to help explain major movements from modern to postmodern theology. We are doing this for the information of the brothers and sisters in the pews. They need to know that postmodern liberal theology is contaminating the teaching of the Bible in churches of Christ and our schools.

And painful though it may be, the “hot beds” of post-liberal theology are tracked to their primary sources, colleges and their satellites Bible departments, lectureships and workshops, the Restoration Forum, and Christian Scholars Conference.

(I am not against our schools, only against our liberal brethren who are destroying time-honored Bible traditions. I want to say that the immediate members of my family hold degrees on every level from schools as diverse as David Lipscomb College, Catholic University, Vanderbilt, and UCLA. I believe in education and do not think that ignorance ever qualified anybody for useful pursuits in life.)

A DEFINITIVE GLOSSARY

As a carpenter is known by his chips, so are our liberal brothers identified by the words and theological references that they use to express their liberal ideas. At the very outset, it is necessary to point out that the selections of the words and phrases which put handles on the religious rhetoric of our liberal brethren go back thirty years. Our liberal brethren picked up on them in the prestigious schools of religion where they did advanced graduate study.

The best way to attach a handle to *postmodern theology* is to use the common classifications of history over the past 2,000 years. We have in mind the passage of time from the *Ancient* period to the *Middle*

Ages and to the *Renaissance*. We move next from the *Modern* to the *Postmodern* period which is our own time. These two time references include and transcend all particular human events which show the flow and inter-connections of the ages in transition. Neither age was necessarily a denial or despair of one age giving way to another.

Ancient theology: The development of historical theology dates from the last century to A.D. 590. This general period embraces the apostolic period recorded in the writings of the apostolic fathers through Augustine (4th century).

Medieval theology: The medieval period lasted from 590 to 1517 to the beginning of the Reformation. The Renaissance and the Reformation periods were propelled from the vortex of 1000 years of what is sometimes called the "Dark Ages."

Renaissance and the *Protestant Reformation*: This period set up a transition epoch from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the modern period. The *Renaissance* witnessed the emergence of Protestant theology, the emergence of national states and capitalism, the age of discovery, the scientific revolution, and numerous other monumental events.

Modern theology: The roots of modern theology are traced back to the 18th century Age of Reason, and to **Immanuel Kant**, who maintained that man could only know God through reason. It is a long way from **Thomas Aquinas** to Immanuel Kant, and eventually to **Rudolf Bultmann** who embodied the spirit of neo-orthodoxy. The roots of Modernism are discovered in man's reason which rejects the supernatural and the

inspiration of scripture, and relies solely on the scientific apparatus.

Many varied forms of modern theology have evolved from the "Old Modernism" which dominated the theological scene in 1900. The old modernism was a syncretism of the late 19th century documentary hypothesis of the Mosaic law, form and source criticism of the New Testament, and which embraced the evolutionary hypothesis. This syncretism took the shape of the Social Gospel which dominated the modern theological scene until the horrors of World War I.

This brings us to 1919 to the birth of *neo-orthodoxy* (also called dialectical theology) where "God talk" and man's theological "human talk" sought common ground for the "divine-I-thou encounter" with God. Bultmann said scripture is encrusted with millenniums of myth and folk stories. Tillich reduced God to a philosophical "ultimate ground of being."

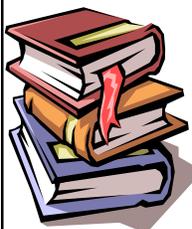
TERMINOLOGY OF POSTMODERNISM AS DISTINGUISHED FROM MODERNISM

Postmodern theology: This movement has not discarded the baggage of modern theology identified in the minds of most students with the theological systems of Barth et al. Their influence as leading spokesman of neo-orthodoxy was buried under the avalanche of the charismatics and "death of God" theologians in the 1960s and 1970s.

Our liberal brethren are now introducing theological expressions into churches of Christ as if they were their own brain children. Nowhere is this more evident than in college lectureships and the Christian Scholars

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Conference. These new terms, their meaning, and uses are hidden deeply in the dark recesses of postmodern theology. It is imperative that we understand their sources and meanings in order to learn what liberal brethren are not inclined to tell us.

Paradigms and parameters: Two of the words most often bandied back and forth are *paradigm* and *parameter*. **Thomas Kuhn** (1970) introduced the word *paradigm* into the scientific community. A paradigm is a working model of something. A parameter is an unstable circumference around something which keeps shifting.

Kuhn used the working models (paradigms) of Ptolemaic astronomy and Copernican astronomy to show the shifts which take place with the discovery of new knowledge. Each of these paradigms worked as well as the other because each showed the fixed positions of the heavenly bodies to the earth. The first was just a model. The second model showed how the universe actually works. The Copernican model, in turn, gave way to Newtonian astronomy.

Kuhn meant to show that paradigms shift with the discovery of new knowledge. Kuhn's paradigm (model) concept also found a common acceptance and

use in politics, philosophy, theology, and literary criticism. Our liberal brethren should not think us to be so ill informed that we are groping in the darkness of ignorance on these matters.

They tell us of the urgent need for the old hermeneutic (paradigm) to be replaced by a new hermeneutic (model). They tell us the churches of Christ are now in a paradigm shift moving from an outmoded, obsolete old hermeneutic to a fresh and viable form of a new hermeneutic, but never explained.

Deconstructionism is another new term about which little is known outside the colleges. The old modernism is dying though its strength is not completely spent. Postmodernism poses even greater dangers because the theology repudiates and undermines all notions of coherent and unitary truth in the Bible.

The philosophy of **Jacques Derrida** is little known outside academic circles, and not favorably there. His philosophy of ideas is known as poststructuralism or deconstructionism. He maintains that the meaning of language is hidden and elusive. Radical postmodernism says nothing can be known for certain and it is best to steer clear of all ultimate truth claims. Derrida's suspicion of all literary texts, including the Bible, is an affront to man's intelligence.

The two prime examples of the content of postmodern theology are **Elizabeth Fiorenzo-Schussler's** theology of the women's liberation movement which calls for a complete radical "deconstruction" of what she terms to be the *androcentric*, or male dominance of the biblical message. And the second example of "deconstructionism" is to be found in the work of the Jesus Seminar best represented by the writings of **John Dominic Crossan**, and especially in his treatment of the life and crucifixion of Jesus.

The theme of deconstruction as advanced by our brethren is more or less hidden from the uninitiated. Some of their "destructive" tactics come out in their most publicized writings, e. g., *The Second Incarnation*, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, and *Will the Cycle Be Unbroken*, authored by **Rubel Shelly**, **Carroll Osburn**, and **Douglas Foster**. We think that our liberal brethren will be given cause to regret that they have opened up on these matters.

—3714 ½ Belmont Blvd.
Nashville, Tennessee 37215

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"Unscriptural Trends in Worship"

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- | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|
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| 10:00 a.m. | "Does How We Worship Matter, As Long As We Are Sincere?" | Dan Cates |
| 11:00 a.m. | "Is All of Life Worship?" | Keith Mosher |
| 12:00 p.m. | LUNCH (provided by the congregation) | |
| 1:00 p.m. | SCHOOL OF THE BIBLE INFORMATION SEMINAR | |
| 1:30 p.m. | OPEN FORUM
(conducted by a panel of the day's speakers) | |
| 2:30 p.m. | "Is Worship Supposed to Entertain Us?" | Mike Greene |
| 3:30 p.m. | "Divided Worship Assemblies" | Troy Leland |

Sunday, April 24:

- | | | |
|------------|--|--------------|
| 9:00 a.m. | "The Role of Women in Worship" | Don Treadway |
| 10:00 a.m. | "Use of Choirs, Singing Groups, and Praise Teams in Worship" | Dan Cates |
| 11:00 a.m. | "Immodest Dress in Worship" | Keith Mosher |
| 6:00 p.m. | "How Does Worship Make You Feel?" | Don Treadway |

JACOB'S LADDER AND JESUS

Daniel F. Cates

Genesis 28:10-22 is a very interesting passage of scripture. In it one finds a resting place of Jacob during his trip to Padanaram to find a wife, a peculiar dream—or vision—of the patriarch Jacob, a renewal of the land promise originally made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), and even the origin of the name of the biblical town Bethel; but not only these things, for in this passage is concealed a symbol which would be attributed years later by Jesus to himself as man's Mediator and way to Heaven. As the above implies, the dream is more than just a vision of a ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it, but that is the part of the dream which Jesus chose to highlight with reference to himself, for Jesus said, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man**" (John 1:51). Let us look more closely at this ladder, Jesus Christ, by whom man may reach heaven.

First, a ladder is the means by which one may reach a higher point. Spiritually, the only way that one may reach the heights of heaven is via a ladder of a spiritual nature. John 14:1-6 culminates with the Lord speaking these words, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**" Jesus' statement shows us that man may not carry himself to such grand heights as heaven, and that neither can he rise upon someone else's shoulders to reach such loftiness, but rather that only through Jesus may one reach such.

Second, this ladder is long enough that it stretches from earth to Heaven. The distance from earth to heaven cannot be measured in miles, but is great nonetheless. The earth, and material things in general, is physical, frail, and deteriorating; whereas heaven is spiritual, sure, and eternal. The distance may not be calculable, but the difference is as night and day. And yet, though there is such a separation, there is one who can bridge the gap, or, more appropriately, ladder the gap. Since in Jesus, "**God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory**" (I John 3:16b), man has a ladder which can reach *all the way* from earth to Heaven.

Third, this ladder is wide enough that all of man-

kind could climb upon it (John 3:16; I Timothy 2:4). As our mediator (I Timothy 2:5), Jesus tasted death for every man, for God wanted every man to be saved. Any person—whether white, yellow, black or red; whether rich or poor; whether Jew or Gentile; whether educated or uneducated; whether tall or short, wide or slim; whether successful in business or financially destitute—has the opportunity to reach heaven via that ladder. Anyone can obey the commands of God, and thereby climb it. However, while this ladder is wide enough that all *could* climb upon it, it is too narrow for one who is content to continue in his sinful ways to climb upon. Jesus said concerning such narrowness:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13-14).

Fourth, this ladder consists of rungs by which the climber may attain unto greater heights. Some would wish that they could skip rungs, but it is not possible; others would tell that simply setting foot upon the lowest rungs would suffice to cause them to reach heaven. Just as one has not successfully climbed a ladder until he has navigated each rung in its order and has assumed his position upon the higher ground, so must this spiritual ladder be climbed rung by rung. What are the rungs of this ladder which must be climbed for Christ to be effectual? The first rung is faith in the Lord (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6). The second rung is repentance of sins past (Acts 17:30)? The third rung is the confession before others of who the Lord is (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33; 16:16). The fourth rung is the act of being baptized to have one's sins washed away (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4). The fifth rung is faithfulness (consisting of Christian growth (II Peter 1:5-7) and the production of spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23).

Let us all take advantage of the ladder that is before us. Recognizing our need to reach heavenly heights, and the peculiarity of Christ, let us climb rung by rung to the heavenly realm.

—3950 Forest Hill Irene Rd.
Memphis, TN 38125

THE STORMS OF LIFE

Brock Hartwigsen

Everyone, even faithful Christians, will sometimes find themselves in storms that blow them toward destruction. There are emotional storms, medical storms, financial storms and spiritual storms.

What should we do when we are caught up in such a storm? We need to follow the example found in Acts 27:14-15. When they were caught up in a destructive storm they dropped four anchors (vs. 29). We need to also drop four anchors to keep us from being driven onto the rocks and destroyed.

THE ANCHOR OF PRAYER AND HOPE

Instead of foolishly thinking that we can quell the storm on our own, we need to turn to follow the disciples example when they were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee. They turned to Jesus for help (Matthew 8:25). When Jesus was in Gethsemane he was caught up in his own storm of anguish over Calvary and went to God for help (Matthew 26:36ff).

“For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion” (Ecclesiastes 9:4). **Edgar Rice Burroughs’** character, John Carter, the “Warlord of Mars,” would regularly get into situations that it was impossible to get out of but he never gave up. His motto was “I live.” Remember **“Christ liveth in me”** (Galatians 2:20) and **“If God be for us, who can be against us?”** (Romans 8:31). As long as Christ lives in us there is hope.

THE ANCHOR OF THE BIBLE

Ephesians 4:13-14: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.

Remember the scriptures can **“thoroughly furnished unto all good works”** (II Timothy 3:16-17) and that they were **“written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”** (Romans 15:4).

When the Episcopalian church was first starting to struggle with the question of homosexuality, a member of the church was told by his father, who was Epis-

copalian, that he could better appreciate his son’s view of the Bible because he did not have the same problems. He had a set standard, the Bible. Life is a lot easier if we will accept the Bible as God’s word and simply live by it as standard instead of always compromising God’s standard or making up our own standards.

THE ANCHOR OF TRUSTWORTHY EXPERIENCES

Paul had major storms in his life (II Corinthians 11:24-27). Yet, he could write, **“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed”** (II Corinthians 4:8-9). Why? Because he had trustworthy experiences while faithfully serving Jesus and those experiences produced hope (Romans 5:1-4).

We all face many potentially destructive storms in our lives. If we will turn to God in prayer, remember that as long as Christ lives in us there is hope, go to and follow the Bible’s instruction and cling to our positive experiences in the past, we can courageously weather any storm and emerge stronger and braver because of it.

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"TEACHING, LEARNING AND GROWING"

Noah Hackworth

The growth of some local churches is phenomenal, while the growth of others is either minimal or non-existent. There are obviously many reasons why church growth takes place; volumes have been written on the subject by the most knowledgeable among us in description of such growth, but one outstanding reason is because of the efforts of a unique breed of people: the Bible class teachers, the unsung heroes and heroines of Christian education. That the Bible class teacher must stimulate church growth is a fact that does not admit of doubt. If a church has two hundred in attendance on Lord's Day morning in the worship assembly and a year later has three hundred, growth has occurred. The question is, how do we account for it? It is very likely that it began in the classroom where the teacher is the star.

THE MASTER TEACHER

No man ever traversed the land of Palestine, walked the streets of Jerusalem, or traveled the hills of Judea comparable to Jesus. His doctrine, taught by Peter and John, filled Jerusalem (Acts 5:28), and through John the Baptist, his teaching echoed throughout the regions of Judea and the Jordan (Matthew 3:5). "**Never man so spake**" are the words that characterize the teaching of Jesus (John 7:46). Nestle translates the phrase, "Never spoke so a man, as this man speaks." Rienecker renders the phrase, "**Never, not at any time.**" The first century world had never been exposed to a teacher like Jesus, nor has our world. The teachings of Aristotle and Plato fade into obscurity when compared to that of Jesus. Men like Bultmann, Harnack, Strauss, Baur and Schweitzer are thrust into oblivion when compared to our Lord.

THE SUBJECT MATTER

The teaching of Jesus was not something "warmed over" or "borrowed" from someone else. He had not been schooled by the Rabbis. What present-day teacher has ever stood before a class and said, "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Resurrection and the Life," "I am the Light of the world," "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," "I am the true Vine", "I am the Door." The teaching of the Lord was more than unique. Nicodemus put it this way: "**Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be**

with him" (1 John 3:2). What we teach men today in regard to what they must do to be saved, and how they must live, must be what Jesus would teach (1 John 4:6).

TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY

In his incomparable Sermon on the Mount, a literary masterpiece, Jesus astounded the multitudes with his teaching (Matthew 5:1-7:29). The people were "amazed," "astounded," and "beside themselves," for so the word *ekplesso* implies.

Christ taught in his own name, with the authority of a lawgiver. I say unto you the Scribes taught merely as interpreters of the law of Moses. The Scribes...were a body of professional students and teachers of the law, whose occupation consisted partly in multiplying copies of the Law, partly in expounding it (Cook).

Like that of Jesus our teaching must be authoritative that is according to his word.

TEACH WITH BALANCE

Jesus balanced His teaching. We must do the same. There are things to be done and there are things which must not be left undone in our teaching efforts (Matthew 23:23). This is called "balance." We are challenged to offer our students a spiritual diet that is equally balanced. This will insure growth and pay great dividends. And one thing is for sure: when we grow in the classrooms, we will grow in the corporate assembly.

Teaching and learning are two important phases of growth, but no one can grow in what he does not know. Jesus put the matter into the proper perspective when he said, "**. . .And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me**" (John 6:45).

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Somerville-Union Church of Christ, located on Hwy 36, one mile east of Hwy 67, Somerville, Alabama, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Tom Larkin, Evangelist, (256) 778-8955, (256) 778-8961.

Tuscaloosa-East Pointe Church of Christ one block from Exit 76, off I-20, I-59, Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed., 7 p.m. Abiding in God's Word—The Old Paths. U of A student, visitor, or resident? Welcome! Andy Cates, Evangelist. (205)556-3062.

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Cambridge-South Cambridge Church of Christ, Brian Chadwick, 198 Queen Edith's Way, Cambridge. Publishers of "Oracles of God". Tel: (01223) 501861, e-mail: brian.chadwick@ntlworld.com

Cambridgeshire-Ramsey Church of Christ, meeting at the Rainbow Centre, Ramsey, Huntingdon. Sun. 10, 11 a.m.; Wed. (Phone for venue and time); www.Ramsey-church-of-christ.org. Contact Keith Sisman, 001.44.1487.710552; fax:1487.813264 or Keith Sisman.net. Research Website of 1,000 years of the British Church of Christ; www.Traces-of-the-kingdom.org and www.Myth-and-Mystery.org.

-Florida-

Pensacola-Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, Evangelist, (850) 455-7595.

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Cartersville-Church of Christ, 1319 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy NW 30120-4222. Tel. 770-382-6775, www.cartersvillechurchofchrist.org. Sun. 10, 11a.m., 6 p.m. Wed. 7:30 p.m. Bobby D. Gayton, Evangelist- email: bdgayton@juno.com.

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-Louisiana-

Chalmette-Village Square Church of Christ, 200 Delaronde St., Chalmette, LA 70044. Mark Lance, Evangelist, (504) 279-9438.

-Massachusetts-

Chicopee-Armory Drive Church of Christ, 26 Armory Drive; Chicopee, MA 01020, in-home, (413) 592-4834, Ken Dion, Evangelist.

-Michigan-

Garden City-Church of Christ, 1657 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI (Suburb of Detroit), Sun. 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Dan Goddard, Evangelist. (734) 422-8660. www.garden-city-coc.org

-North Carolina-

Rocky Mount-Scheffield Drive Church of Christ, 3309 Scheffield Dr., Rocky Mount, NC 27802 (252) 937-7997.

-Oklahoma-

Porum-Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, Evangelist, email: lawson@starnetok.net.

-Tennessee-

Memphis-Forest Hill Church of Christ, 3950 Forest Hill-Irene Rd., Memphis, TN 38125. Sun. 9:30, 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. (901) 751-2444, Barry Grider, Evangelist.

-Texas-

Houston area-Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, Evangelist. Home of Spring Bible Institute and the SBI Lectures beginning the last Sunday in February. www.churchesofchrist.com

Hubbard-105 NE 6th St., Hubbard, TX 76648, Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Delbert J. Goines, Evangelist; djgoines@writeme.com.

Huntsville-1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9, 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Hurst-Northeast Church of Christ, 1313 Karla Dr., P.O. Box 85, Hurst, TX 76053. Sun. 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Jason Rollo, Evangelist, (817) 282-3239.

Lubbock-Southside Church of Christ, 8501 Quaker Ave., Box 64430, Lubbock, TX 79464. Sun. 9:00, 9:55 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m. Sunday worship aired live at 10:15 a.m. over KFYO 790 AM radio. Tommy Hicks, Evangelist. (806) 794-5008 or (806)798-1019.

New Braunfels-1130 Hwy. 306, 1.5 miles west of I-35. Sun: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7 p.m. Lynn Parker, Evangelist. (830) 625-9367. www.nbchurchofchrist.com.

Richwood-1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.

Roanoke-Church of Christ, Corner of Rusk and Walnut, Roanoke, TX 76262. Sun. 9:45, 10:45 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7:30 pm. (817) 491-2388.

Schertz-Church of Christ, 501 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz, TX. (210) 658-0269. Sun. 9:30a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m., take Schertz Pkwy. Exit off I-35, NE of San Antonio, Kenneth Ratcliff and Stan Crowley, Evangelists.

-Wyoming-

Cheyenne-High Plains Church of Christ, 421 E. 8th St., Cheyenne, WY 82007, tel. (307) 638-7466, Sunday: 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Gerald Reynolds, Tel. (307) 635-2482.

THE TROUBLEMAKER

Tom Moore

Most Bible students will recall the record of I Kings 17:1. It reads:

Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah, God's spokesman, informed Ahab that because of his great wickedness God was going to withhold the rain. Later in I Kings 18, after three years of drought, God instructed Elijah to confront Ahab once again. Elijah went to meet him. When they met the divine record reveals:

And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim (I Kings 18:17-18).

Ahab accused Elijah of being a troublemaker. But Elijah informed Ahab who the real troublemaker was. It was Ahab who made the trouble because he had **"forsaken the commandments of Jehovah."** It was Ahab and his father that had brought great trouble to Israel. Ahab accused Elijah of troubling the people so that the calamity in Israel would be blamed on the true prophet of God, and not Ahab himself. How typical of wicked men!

IS IT ANY DIFFERENT TODAY?

Today there are a host of false prophets (I have for many years called them sissy-boy preachers) in the church who are screaming, as did Ahab, that God's true prophets (doctrinally sound gospel preachers) are causing the trouble in the church. We hear the faithful gospel preacher maligned by being labeled a "hatchet man," "unloving," "ultra-conservative," "divisive," "close minded," and a host of other names because they are sticking closely with the oracles of God, and opposing and exposing that which is false.

Once again for emphasis we ask, who was it that caused trouble in Israel? Was it Elijah for adhering strictly to the word of God, or Ahab who had forsaken the commands of God? It was Ahab, not Elijah. Today, those standing for truth are not troubling spiritual Israel, but those who preach another gospel—a gospel of a different kind (Galatians 1:6-9), who preach the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9), who will not contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3), and those whose god is their belly—just to name a few (Philippians 3:19).

TROUBLE MAKERS IN THE TIMES OF JOSHUA AND PAUL

Who caused trouble in Israel in the days of Joshua when they went down to battle against Ai? It was Achan who had disobeyed the commands of God (Joshua 7:20-21). Thus, Joshua asked Achan, **"Why hast thou troubled us? Jehovah shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones"** (Joshua 7:25). Here we observe that it was disobedient Achan that troubled Israel. We also see how God views and dealt with the troublemakers of that day.

Again, today many are accusing God's faithful evangelists and other defenders of God's truth of being troublemakers, simply because they believe, teach, stand for, herald and defend the truth of God's word. Is this not exactly what happened to Paul and Silas in Acts 16:20? The magistrates said, **"These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city"** (Acts 16:20). In Acts 17:6 they were accused of **"turning the world upside down."**

Why were Paul and Silas accused of being troublemakers? The reason, they had the courage to stand up, proclaim and defend the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). These men of God were not going to allow the crying and whimpering of the "sissy-boys" to keep them from **"speaking the oracles of God"** (I Peter 4:11) — and neither should we. Paul asked, **"Am I therefore your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"** (Galatians 4:16; emphasis mine-TM). Surely honest and biblically knowledgeable brethren can see who are the real troublemakers that are causing most of problems in the church. They are the false teachers, the "change agents," and the theologically liberal people who are promoting and believing those things that are contrary to God's word in many different doctrinal areas.

SOME PROMINENT ERRORS TROUBLING THE CHURCH TODAY

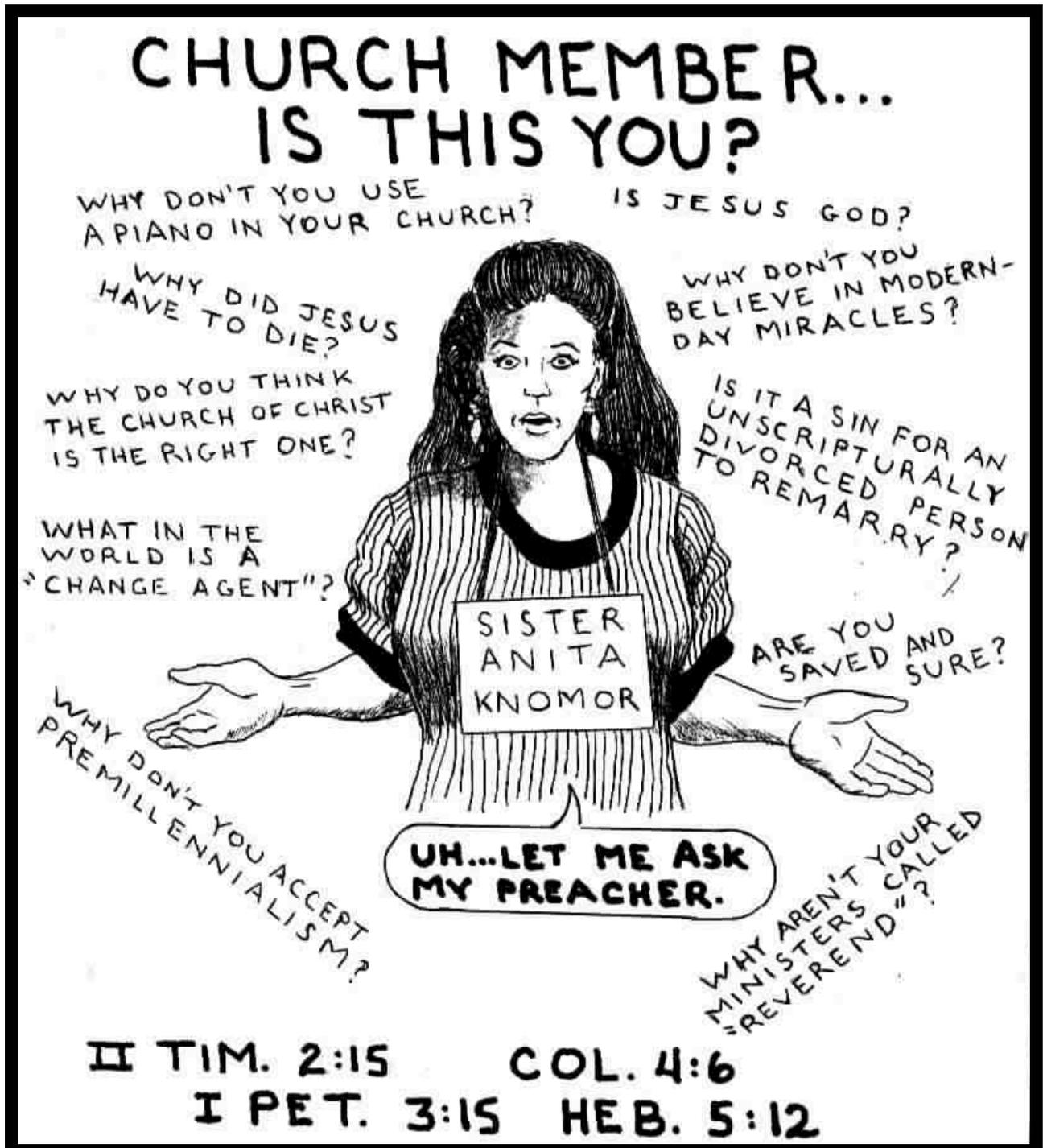
And, what are some of the false doctrines these "change agents" are teaching? Some of the errors are: (1) there are Christians in all the denominations; (2) that we are saved by grace alone; (3) that a woman may exercise dominion over men; (4) that one may disregard God's laws concerning marriage divorce and remarriage; (5) that we should have fellowship with the denominations; (6) that it is not sinful to use mechanical instruments of music and other unauthorized music in the worship of the church; (7) that book, chapter and verse preaching evidences backwardness and

lack of scholarship; and (8) those who want sermons of false love preached each Sunday. The list could go on and on, but these are some of the false doctrines that trouble the Lord's church today. These and other errors are taught and practiced by certain members. It is they who have for years troubled the Lord's church and, no doubt, will continue to do so.

We must understand it is not those who believe, practice and stand for God's truth on every matter, while

opposing all things contrary thereto that trouble the church. Indeed those who trouble spiritual Israel, the church, today and in every age are the people who possess the same rebellious characters as those of Achan and Ahab. They are the "sissy-boy" preachers and elders along with the itching-ear members who love to have it so (II Timothy 4:3-4).

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One Woman's Perspective...

THE "STONE-CAMPBELL" MOVEMENT

Annette B. Cates

In recent years I have observed that there is a trend, especially with the more liberal among churches of Christ, to call the Restoration Movement by the name "Stone-Campbell Movement." These same people often speak of the "shared heritage" of members of the New Testament church for which Christ died and the varying "Christian Church" denominations (Disciples of Christ, Conservative Christian Church, Church of Christ Instrumental, etc.). They also refer to themselves, not as Christians, but as being of the "Church of Christ persuasion," or of the "Church of Christ tradition." I do not believe this is being done by accident or out of ignorance.

To speak of the "Stone-Campbell Movement" de-emphasizes the restoring of the New Testament church to the pattern established by God in the scriptures (Hebrews 8:4-6; Matthew 15:13; I Peter 4:11). Therefore, following this reasoning, **Barton W. Stone** and **Alexander Campbell** and those who came after them did nothing more than start another denomination among many denominations. However, throughout history there have been pleas to return to the New Testament as the sole authority for the Christian. This can be documented going back at least as far as the twelfth century. The fact stands that numerous congregations were in existence in the colonies and early United States long before Alexander Campbell left Scotland. Within the last century, missionaries have gone around the world where no church was believed to exist only to find indigenous groups who have had access to the Bible worshipping according to the New Testament. This is not unreasonable considering that according to Colossians 1:23, the gospel had gone into all of the known world long before the end of the first century. Although much New Testament truth was lost because of pollution brought about through the addition of the traditions of men, the seed was planted that could bring forth new life by those honestly seeking to serve God acceptably. Indeed, to limit the Restoration Movement to the leadership of Stone and Campbell is little different from the use of "Campbellite" to refer to New Testament Christians, as has been done through derisive ignorance for nearly two hundred years.

To speak of the "Stone-Campbell Movement" is an admission by those who would use that term that *they* have departed from the New Testament pattern themselves. They have left the Restoration principles and practices that led us out of denominationalism.

When the instrument was brought into the worship at Midway, Kentucky, in 1859, there was departure; when the missionary societies were established with the introduction of the American Christian Missionary Society in Cincinnati in 1849, there was departure; when we extend the hand of fellowship to the denominations today, there is departure from the pattern God laid down in the New Testament.

To speak of the "Stone-Campbell Movement" is to place those who began with us but returned to denominationalism on a par with those who have remained faithful to the New Testament pattern. It is also an affront to the authoritative, understandable, and obeyable nature of the all-sufficiency of the word of God (I John 2:21; II John 1, 4; III John 2-4; II Timothy 3:16, 17; James 1:22-25). When one goes into sin, there is a tendency to try to take others down, too. Evil not only loves darkness (Isaiah 29:15), it also loves company. If truth can be watered down, if the importance of following Biblical authority is downplayed, if we can lump those who no longer follow God's pattern with those that do, then evil is in control. This is accomplished through expressions of speech as well as by actions.

To speak of the "Stone-Campbell Movement" denigrates the work and sacrifice of those who cleared the path back to the Ancient Landmark of the church. Note, Stone and Campbell did not blaze a new trail that should be named for them. They removed the overgrowth of weeds and broken limbs of the creeds of man that had obliterated the pathway of true Christianity for centuries.

To speak of the "Stone-Campbell Movement" is to use the language of Ashdod, more of a desire to be a part of the world and less of a desire to be God's own people. As in Nehemiah's day when he contended with half-breed Jews who no longer spoke in the Jews' language, and no doubt had lost knowledge of the facts of their history (Nehemiah 13:23-25), we must contend with those who would blend in with the denominational world and attempt to take the pure church into apostasy with them. **"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather prove them"** (Ephesians 5:11). As much as ever, we must contend for the faith.

—9194 Lakeside Drive
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Four More Years

Dee Parramore

I wonder how many Christians worked and prayed for **George W. Bush** to be re-elected to the Presidency of the United States. I also wonder if they prayed and worked in faith with the end in mind that the Lord's name could be praised and glorified through President Bush's win. If you did, do you realize that you have a part in answering that prayer? In fact, you may be one of the channels through which God answers it. If you prayed for the Lord's name to be praised and glorified through President Bush's victory, you must know that you have an obligation before God that only you can discharge, and in so doing, help to answer your prayer. It is now time to do just that—**“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”** (James 1:22).

PRAYER ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

We could have prayed all day long, every day for President Bush to win re-election. However, if enough people had not voted for the President, it would not have happened. And, the same is true regarding using the next four years to further the cause of Christ. The Lord has done his part in answering our prayers, now we must do our part in using these years to spread and defend the gospel as the Lord wills. The Lord has blessed us with an opportunity to work harder than ever to be sure more of this nation hears the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. **“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord”** (Psalm 33:12; Also see John 8:31-32).

What can you do in four years? Set goals. The main goal: **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”** (Matthew 28:19). Challenge yourself to bring more souls to Christ. How? Not everyone can go into all the nations, but we can go into our community. What if you have never really done that before? Now is the perfect time to start. Challenge yourself to develop your talents.

THINGS WE CAN AND MUST DO

Teach a Bible class. **“How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things”** (Romans 10:15). The lessons offered to us in the God's word are endless. If you have taught a Bible class, teach a different age group. What the adult Bible student needs is far different than the teenage Bible student—but both need what the Bible has to say. The same can be said of our elementary students and our cradle roll. **“I have fed**

you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (I Corinthians 3:2).

Be more attentive to visitors in the assembly and introduce yourself. You may be the one person that will reach him/her. **“...I was a stranger, and ye took me in”** (Matthew 25:35). Whether it is another brother/sister in Christ visiting in town, or a soul searching for the truth, acknowledge him/her. Make him feel welcomed.

Talk to your co-workers, classmates, and neighbors about God, Jesus, and the church. Hold a Bible study in your home and invite them. You will never know if they will accept if you do not ask. If they refuse the invitation, do not give up. Try again later.

Do not be afraid to say, “I don't know the answer to that, but I will study it and get back with you.” And do just that. Study, study, study. **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (II Timothy 2:15). You, as well as your student, will grow closer to the Lord because you will know more about him. **“But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”** (II Peter 3:18).

Get to know your brothers and sisters in Christ. Cultivating friendships in your spiritual family will strengthen all involved as well as last into eternity (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Develop or strengthen your time spent in prayer. The time our Savior spent in prayer is one to be imitated. Jesus prayed for guidance in choosing his apostles (Luke 6:12-13); thanksgiving before raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41); for his enemies in Luke 23:34. He would often retreat to his father in prayer.

The previous list is by no means exhaustive. The list of opportunities for Christian growth and development is endless. The Lord providentially gives many opportunities throughout our day to reach so many people. Pray that we see and act upon them according to his will.

WORK FOR THE NIGHT IS COMING JOHN 9:4

We are his people, his soldiers. We have a very, very powerful weapon... **“the sword of the Spirit”** (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). Dust it off. Sharpen it in your own mind. Learn how to use it properly. It

only wins battles if used. It only wins souls if used. It will also be used by the Lord to judge all men on that great Judgment Day (John 12:48).

Set and reach your goals for the next four years.

It will bring you closer to your final goal, a mansion in heaven with our father and with a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Restoration Reflections...

JOHN WRIGHT: A POWERFUL INFLUENCE FOR THE RESTORATION IN INDIANA

Paul Vaughn

The plea to restore New Testament Christianity in the America came from many different directions. In 1801 **James O'Kelly** closed the door on Methodist teaching to follow only the Bible. His efforts were in Southern Virginia and North Carolina. In 1802 **Elias Smith** and **Abner Jones** were sowers of the Ancient Order in New England. In 1804 **Barton W. Stone**, **Robert Marshall**, **John Dunlavy**, **Richard McNemar**, **John Thomas** and **David Purviance** signed the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* and embarked on a path to restore New Testament Christianity. It would be three more years before **Thomas Campbell** would leave Londonderry, Ireland for America. *The Declaration and Address of Thomas Campbell* was published on September 7, 1809. **Alexander Campbell** arrived in New York from Glasgow on September 29, 1809. They soon began to accept and preach primitive Christianity. In 1810 a group of pioneers and settlers established the Old Philadelphia Church of Christ near Manchester, Tennessee. They cleaved to no creed but the Bible and wore no denominational name. They called themselves "Christians" and the church the "church of Christ." All of these efforts to restore New Testament Christianity were independent of each other. The seed principle was at work.

In Southern Indiana another independent movement to restore New Testament Christianity was led by **John Wright**. He began his work in Washington County, Indiana.

EARLY YEARS

In 1764, **Amos Wright Sr.** was born in Rowan County, North Carolina. He grew up among the Quakers but converted to the teaching of the Free Will Baptists. He married **Elizabeth Low**. His son, John Wright, was born on December 12, 1783 in Rowan County, North Carolina. John had a limited education. In gen-

eral, he was self-educated. He did receive instruction in basic reading and writing from a teacher by the name of Hodge. It was John's goal to be able to read and to teach the Bible. It took many years before he was very successful at it.

The family migrated to Powell's Valley, Virginia. After a short period of time they moved to Wayne County, Kentucky. In 1803, while in Kentucky, John Wright married **Peggy Wolfscale**. This marriage was very short; she died in 1805 leaving John with their baby daughter. During the next two years in Kentucky, John met and married Nancy Peleer. In 1807, Amos and John Wright moved their families to the Indiana Territory. The governor of the Indiana Territory at that time was **William Henry Harrison**.

They first moved to Clark's Grant and by 1809 the Wrights moved to what is now known as Washington County, Indiana. They built their home in an area about four miles from Salem near the middle prong of the Blue River. Washington County was organized in 1814 from portions of Harrison and Clark counties. The original county seat was Royse's Lick. It was east of what is now Salem and west of the Blue River. Today the county seat is Salem.

SEEKING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

After coming to Indiana, John and Nancy Wright were baptized in the Ohio River by William Summers of the Free Will Baptist Church in 1808. By 1810, John Wright was preaching and organized a Free Will Baptist Church which worshiped in his home on the Blue River. John, along with his father, Amos, soon organized ten congregations in the area. In 1816 these ten churches formed the Blue River Association.

In Clark County, Indiana, **Absalom Littrell**, along with **J.T. Littrell** were establishing United Brethren churches. There were about 18 congregations with 1400 to 1500 members. This group was known as the Silver

Creek Association. Wright came upon this group during a preaching tour and came to the conclusion that they were teaching and preaching the same doctrines. Communication was set up to have an annual meeting for the purpose of making new acquaintances. It was at this time that Wright began to struggle with the concept of denominationalism; that it was not in harmony with the Word of God. John Wright was beginning to return to the Bible alone.

“In 1819 John Wright made a motion in the church at Blue River, which body still met in his house, to lay aside all creeds and confessions of faith and disciplines, and take the word of God for their guide.”¹ The members of the church accepted the motion and wondered what they should call themselves. “Wright suggested the name Disciples or Christians, stating further that he found that name given in the New Testament.”² The next logical question was what should they call the church? Wright suggested that they call it “The church of Christ or Church of God.”³

It was the beginning of the Restoration of New Testament Christianity in Washington County, Indiana. The Blue River Association and the Silver Creek

Association made up of Free Will Baptists and United Brethren rejected the doctrines of men to take the Bible alone as their guide. Today, there are eleven churches of Christ in Washington County, Indiana.

There is a great deal of information about the life and work of John Wright that is lost to history. But, what is known about the man speaks volumes. He came to the conclusion that God had given a pattern in the New Testament for men to follow and he was willing to cleave to that pattern. The seed principle does work. When men go back to the New Testament and follow the pattern given by the Lord, they will be in the church of Christ and call themselves Christians. The key is having the attitude that one wants to follow the Bible alone. This was the attitude of John Wright.

ENDNOTES

1. Publication of Historical Society Washington County Indiana, p. 3.
2. Ibid. p. 4.
3. Ibid.

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MAKING LISTS

Preston Silcox

A few years ago, I heard a man teach a group of Christian college students that we (members of the Lord’s church) have too many “lists.” He said this as he was introducing a lesson wherein he derided the idea that there are specific, God-appointed acts of worship. Accordingly, after suggesting that we throw our lists into the fireplace, he went on to promote the notion that all of life is worship.

When he finally brought his tirade to a conclusion, he opened the floor for discussion. I quickly raised my hand and when called on, I asked how he would respond to a person who posed the question, “What must I do to be saved?” He stumbled over his words for a moment, then finally said, “I would first tell him that he needed to have faith.” I immediately spoke up and said, “You just started a list—you even used the word ‘first.’” He stumbled over several other words, changed the subject, and never admitted his inconsistency.

The fact is, lists can be good. They help us organize our thoughts, develop our plans, and accomplish our goals. They help simplify things. The next time you’re in a grocery store, go to the magazine

rack and look at the covers of the publications. I guarantee that you’ll see dozens of magazines with article titles like, “50 Ways to Lose 10 Pounds,” “25 Decorating Ideas,” “15 Steps to Lower Stress,” and “125 Suggestions for Writing List Articles.” Apparently, members of the church of Christ are not the only ones who appreciate and benefit from lists.

In light of this no-brainer observation, consider that Jesus himself alluded to the practice of list-making when he said, **“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”** (Matthew 6:3 3). The term “first” implies that at least a “second” exists. We know, of course, that numerous pursuits in life exist beyond the “second.” The point, however, is that God is to be on the top of the Christian’s “list.” Although we might seek after hundreds of other things in this realm, God gets first place. If your list begins with anything else, only then would I agree with the man I heard a few years ago—throw it in the fireplace!

—4006 Sunset
Muskogee, OK 74403

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