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A Trimming of the Wick

BORROWED, ADDED TO, COMPILED
AND EDITED BY

ARTHUR T. BOONE

VOLUME ONE

*Dedicated to the heritage of America –
our sons and daughters*

PREFACE

Christians today are hypochondriacs of the first order in our wretched efforts to be servants of Christ. With concentrated effort we insist on expending most of our time in diagnosing our multitude of problems and ills and then proceed to consume ourselves in endless treatments that produce little, if any, improvement in our health. The cure, or at least the arresting of our ills, lies in the better comprehension and practice of love, not in the perfection of knowledge, organization, thought or works.

Christ summed it all up in His admonition to love God and our neighbor. He was not discarding His revelations. He was directing us to proper perspective and emphasis in living Christ-like.

Paul placed love as the greatest attribute; above faith, hope, knowledge or works. In dealing with the multiplicity of problems among the Corinthian Christians, his primary and consistent criticism was the lack of sufficient love that was evidenced. Paul knew that faithfulness to Jesus Christ and harmonious constructive relationship with our brother was an inevitable result if Christians would but fill their hearts with love. Contrariwise, without mature love as its basic foundation and motivation, a Christian life would be a farce.

This epistle was written out of a desire by its author to contribute substance to the vacuum. Although it states a position in the writer's convictions, it is not its primary objective to alter another's thinking in knowledge so much as to support the theme that love is our great need. It is also somewhat unique in that it was written to a congregation of servants with which the author identifies personally, not to other congregations or the brotherhood. It is a work of love to further love and has no other compensation to or aspirations from the author. It will benefit and edify any reader that will read its contents with the same motivation as the author had in its writing. Regardless whether a reader agrees with the author's convictions on certain matters, it is hoped that each reader will concur in a recognition that love is the answer.

C. G. McGehee, Jr.
Elder, San Jose Church of
Christ — Jacksonville, Fla.
August 1968

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INTRODUCTION

A widespread unrest and sense of spiritual barrenness prevails among thinking men in the Churches of Christ. Nothing is clearer than that the Church of Christ, along with many other religious groups of similar pattern, is losing men it cannot afford to lose. Many in the Church of Christ are completely unaware of how many intelligent, compassionate young Christian men and women have departed from them in search of freedom from dogma. Thousands are restless and dissatisfied with the aridity of exclusivism and authoritarianism. Bright young minds are refusing to be put off with answers that have no more to commend them than the classically suave beard of ancient conformity. As leaders in all organized churches are increasingly educated, the tension between party lines and free minds will increase with resulting freedom in the mind of Christ. Unyielding orthodoxy will break on confrontation with men trained to study analytically and critically. Such men will not submit to coercion. Drive them out and the result will be intellectual barrenness for the losing congregations. Only unity and unity in diversity will level the walls over which so many have already scaled to seek freedom in Christ. This kind of unity would have kept most of the young men and women who have left for few were eager to go.

This compilation has been prepared for this congregation, our congregation, a community of Christians worshipping as the San Jose Church of Christ with the hope our children will not depart to other religious groups or denominations because of a lack of honesty and understanding.

All statements concerning the "Church of Christ" have reference to the Twentieth Century system, organization or party which has so denominated itself, a portion of a segment of the Restoration Movement with which we have identified ourselves; with the belief that we do not "belong" to any such group any more than we "belong" to the *Church of God*, the *Christian Church* or other denominated religious groups, but on the contrary, that as Christians we belong to Christ only and by virtue thereof are members of his assembly, community, church or ecclesia, which includes all Christians in all the world and fellowship in which is not dependent on wearing of a name. That it is the belief in one person (Christ) and the witness through one institution (baptism) that determines our fellowship and we are identified through love for one another.

For those who would care to read the full text of all "voices" used in "A Trimming of the Wick" from which excerpts have been taken, they may obtain a copy of the book *Voices of Concern* published by

Mission Messenger Company of St. Louis, Missouri, which publishing house was so kind to allow the material to be used.

What is written herein is written with compassion and meant not to be negative in approach but to inform our congregation, for it is congregations where a select few know what is going on with the rest kept in ignorance, that are in danger; and that our sons and daughters will not feel alone because of our man-made barriers to Christ, built, maintained and strengthened through ignorance, prejudice, intolerance, failure, weakness, fear, insecurity and pride in ourselves as the only "Christians only", the infallible corporate interpreters of the Book of Life; and that we may realize with their help we can unite in diversity of opinion and bring the walls tumbling down.

Paul emphasized that there is one body and one spirit. Even the outward, organizational divisions of the visible Church do not destroy its inward and spiritual unity (love) which is indissoluble. This spiritual unity, created by the One Spirit, has sometimes been termed the invisible church. Its membership is unseen. It is the community of all true believers, the ecclesia. Every real Christian belongs to it, whatever his racial, social or ecclesiastical background. If he belongs to Christ, then he belongs to *this* Church which is the fellowship. At the same time, we cannot be content with membership of an invisible and intangible society. The invisible and universal Church has its visible and local manifestations, (congregations) and to one of these every Christian should also belong. Here he will worship, and enjoy the fellowship, and find opportunities for service. It will prove to be a company of sinful and fallible men and women; but he must not for that reason shun it, for he is sinful and fallible himself. He will recognize that not all members are necessarily members of the invisible ecclesia. Some of those whose names are inscribed on local congregation rolls and registers have not had their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life. But it is not for him to judge, for as Timothy said, "The Lord knows those who are his."

To any who in frustration have reached a decision they cannot with freedom in Christ work and worship within the Church of Christ may these facts bring peace of mind and the knowledge that many know and recognize the problems and are seeking answers. But more importantly realize you no longer need remain silent--you no longer need to bury your talents beneath resentment, frustration or the sickness of Laodicean indifference; realize you are needed here, that you are loved here, and need not leave.

It is for you the youthful heirs of Christ the light is focused--the lamp is lit. You can be the yeast of renewal if you remain and allow

the flame of love in meaningful dialogue, to expand our horizons and to dissolve the resentment, frustration or cure the indifference and in the fellowship with Christians everywhere witness Christ courageously with true freedom of thought and action that is the gift of God.

To all of you my brothers and sisters in Christ, I say that if but one young man or woman caught up in spiritual confusion at the inconsistency and discrepancy at what he sees and what he has been taught, reads herein that which he has felt but been unable to say and by virtue thereof sees more clearly the direction his spiritual journey should take, I shall be repaid a hundred times for all the hours of labor here unfolded.

Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida

May, 1968

ADDENDUM TO INTRODUCTION

Lest the value or usefulness of the information contained herein be blunted, diluted or obscured because of my fallibility as a sinful man, let me set forth the relevant facts of my position pertinent to these matters in an effort to prevent any distortion thereof.

I joined the Riverside Park Church of Christ in Jacksonville on or about the year 1952. At that time I was a Christian member of the First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville holding office as a deacon therein, which congregation I had attended from the Cradle Roll, a background I would not and cannot repudiate anymore than Paul repudiated his Jewish relationship or Thomas and Alexander Campbell disavowed their roots in the Scottish Presbyterian Church. I joined the Church of Christ because my wonderful wife was a member and stated prior to our marriage she did not wish to change. With children coming along I felt the family should be united in one congregation. Accordingly I submitted to the rite of baptism which was required by the Riverside Park Church of Christ for admittance to

membership. The fact I had already been baptized and could not remember a time when I did not believe in Christ was not discussed or considered, in fact it wasn't even mentioned.

I had never equated Christianity with any particular protestant church denomination or group nor being a Christian dependent on which denomination or party one belonged or held membership.

It soon became apparent the dogma of the Church of Christ regarded the status of "Christians only" in connection with Church of Christ membership and a full pledged member was required to be defined as "sound". Which in turn made it necessary in order to enjoy full membership to conform or give the appearance thereof to the dogma, doctrines and unwritten creeds existing not only in the particular segment of the Church of Christ your congregation "fellowshipped" but those of your particular congregation. Unity of diversity in God's family individually and corporately was ignored or unknown.

No mature intellectually honest person of sound mind could conform to this type situation absent indoctrination and monastic educational training from childhood. It is in such a legalistic and pharisaical environment that the *acknowledged* fellowship among Christians becomes narrow and sectarian. The absence in most of the local congregations of the Church of Christ of educational forums for the exchange of meaningful dialogue forms an almost impassible barrier for the use of such persons no matter what their talents since the lack of conformity virtually forces them to be segregated into something less than full membership, where they are not allowed to hold church office and their activities, if any, such as teaching, selected and monitored to prevent the impregnation of "unsound" ideas.

I have never personally denied being in fellowship with Christians no matter in what organized "church persuasion" they hold membership for fellowship is a *relation* existing between all members of the body of Christ.

Membership in the Church of Christ has meant loneliness, frustration and heartache in many ways, yet my love for the community of saints worshipping therein has grown with each passing year, and I am determined to be a useful citizen in our congregation and member of the ecclesia, with the belief firmly held that I have a Christian mission which only I can fulfill. I believe the Church of Christ needs me and God knows I need the love and affection of the saints therein. I have been spurred on to study, continually re-examining the Bible and interpretations thereof and in connection with actual Christian witness from the earliest times, with an increasing awareness that Jesus

Christ has on many occasions by many religious groups throughout the history of his Church been subordinated to party spirit and factional dispute which has caused division upon division of the visible body of Christ and always accomplished in His name.

God is so close, we have only to open our hearts to let him in, but we as the Church of Christ build walls that shut him out--in the name of Christ. "We" want Christ "shut up" within our walled religious groups to be dispensed through our sally ports to any and all "pagans". Granting entrance through the walls only in the name of our password "conformity" meaning when "we" interpret the Bible it means just what "we" chose it to mean--nothing more nor less. The two great commandments are ignored and "we" hang "all the law and all the prophets" together from our religious party fortress walls. Our God and our neighbors have become those and only those within the walls. Our doctrinal artillery is leveled at any and all other religious groups who call themselves Christians differing from us only through the use of some legalistic interpretation or interpreter of the scriptures. Our heaviest salvos land on those who dare to be known as the "Church of Christ". Our greatest supporter is the devil who encourages in every subtle way the sectarian party spirit without which the walls would crumble and love would abound and indentify--the world would know and see Christ in us surely as in the beginning the apostles saw the risen body of Christ.

I pray that the grace and spirit of God will cause the bonds of the organized Church of Christ to loose themselves that God's love may abound, for such love crosses all boundaries and surmounts all barriers in its identification of Christians everywhere. From the manifestation of such love unity and communion within the visible fellowship follows as surely as the night follows each Lord's day.

Arthur T. Boone

May - 1968

APPRECIATION

My heartfelt thanks to all those whose thoughts, words and phrases were so freely given and freely used herein. I can only say I now understand more than ever the instruction given us. "Freely you have received--freely give".

VOLUME I

Part 1

THE PIERCING BEAM

CHAPTER 1

Hear O Israel

The situation existing within the Churches of Christ, presently composed of more than twenty separate religious party groups each denominating themselves "The Church of Christ", is most compassionately and richly illustrated in Bill Huckaby's *A Reluctant Rejection*. Mr. Huckaby is a teacher at Shelbyville High School, Shelbyville, Tennessee. While at David Lipscomb College he was president of the student body and preached often for the various Churches of Christ, intending at that time to become a Church of Christ minister. He has since changed his mind. He says, to-wit:

"Throughout my entire life I have worshipped and lived within the somewhat narrow fellowship of the Church of Christ, and at the age of seventeen became a student at David Lipscomb College, a school supported by the Churches of Christ. Four years later I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree having a major in Mathematics (60 hours) and a major in Bible (62 hours). I preached my first sermon while still in high school and since have preached in six different states, have spoken at numerous youth rallies and have participated in nine Campaigns for Christ sponsored by the Churches of Christ, and was at one time the vice president of Mission Emphasis at David Lipscomb College.

"All of this has been said to emphasize that I have a reasonable acquaintance with what the members of the Church of Christ believe and practice. I know most of the arguments supporting their beliefs since I have used most of them myself at one time or another and have studied them continually for four years. And yet as early as 1962, while still in high school, there were questions in my mind regarding certain of our beliefs. I engaged in some religious discussions with a friend at school who seemed to me to be a Christian but I knew he was not for he belonged to one of the denominations and all denominations were wrong (we referred to ourselves as non-denominational, though I slowly came to feel that we were more of a denomination than most other churches). Since that time more and more questions have arisen, but few of them have been asked, since at Lipscomb one is looked upon as dangerous and radical if he dares to question the established beliefs or admit that he actually doubts what is to the Church of Christ the 'infallible truth.' But one can coast along with such questions while in the sheltered arms of such a school, since a sort of idealism develops that is only shattered when exposed to real life. And after ten months away from Lipscomb

my own idealism has been broken and I must rebuild on its ruins a more substantial foundation which can face the test of reality. Yet it is with reluctance that I must reject certain beliefs and practices which I have held almost my entire life for they have become almost a part of me. In many cases I don't know what to put in their place. I only know that the time has finally come that I can no longer remain silent. Just as the Springfield Presbytery, so well known in the annals of the Restoration Movement, dissolved itself into the universal Body of Christ, I must join them in recognizing myself as just a Christian and not a Church of Christ Christian. If that means that here and now I must be a Christian completely free from any group or that I must work for Christ in another fellowship, that does not mean that in another place and under different circumstances I would not again work and worship with the Church of Christ. On the contrary, I sincerely hope that the time will come that I can fully support all that the Church of Christ stands for, and that they can accept me as a true Christian.

"I must begin by admitting that I am not a scholar, and have never thought myself to be one. All I know is that, based on my limited experience and study, there are certain beliefs, attitudes and practices which are prevalent in the Church of Christ which I cannot accept. They are the following:

"1. Most of our doctrinal problems stem from our basic approach to the Bible which I feel is not justifiable. Since we have used it as a rulebook we have illustrated the truth of II Corinthians where Paul says that the letter kills while the Spirit gives life. We say others interpret and don't realize that we do the same. Our principle--that everything which is not specifically authorized is necessarily denied--is not even found in the Bible. Yet we use it to determine what is right and wrong and in so doing undermine the very purpose for which the Bible was written. It is interesting that so many men who have studied the Bible their entire lives have come to conclusions different from ours. We say they were not really looking for the truth and then we quickly add that sincerity is not enough. It is also a shame that so much history was included in the New Testament, for that could have been replaced by pages of rules and laws which would make it clear to everyone exactly what God wanted. And even Jesus, when he actually broke the law of Moses, excused David for doing the same and said that man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath was made for man.

"2. Closely tied to the preceding is our view of inspiration.

Since it borders on the principle of 'dictation' there is within its framework no reasonable explanation of the synoptic problem (most of our people don't even know what the problem is). Our view provides no reasonable justification for Paul saying 'I think' or stating that he spoke completely on his own apart from what God would have him say. There are no answers to the challenges of modern Biblical Criticism, no explanations of such apparent contradictions as the resurrection story (one Gospel says there was one man at the tomb, one Gospel says there were two men, one says there was one angel, and the other mentions two angels).

"3. Our claim to have all of the truth is not only conceited, bordering on self-righteousness, but it prevents us from growing in understanding and gaining depth to our lives and our thinking. It destroys our personal integrity, since we warn others to beware of thinking they stand lest they should fall. We say, 'Let's study together. If you can show me that I'm wrong I'll change, and if I show you you are wrong, then you will change, OK?' But we have no intention of ever re-examining our beliefs; we really mean 'I'll pretend to listen to your side, but I know I'm right so as soon as you are finished I'll show you what is really correct.' We are afraid to even listen to the other side of any issue; but if we are so sure we are absolutely right, why should we be afraid of what anyone else believes? We know of other denominations only what we read in our books which are far from objective since most of them are written for the sole purpose of disproving what others believe when it differs from our beliefs. We say that others will never come to an understanding of the truth because their minds are closed, yet at times I wonder how open ours are.

"4. Our attitude towards other Christian people is often far from the attitude Jesus seemed to display (see Mark 9:38-42). We say 'I don't know whether others are lost or not if they are not in the Church of Christ,' but we mean 'Actually I think they are lost but won't say it since people will think I am narrow-minded.' Yet whether we say it or not people know what we think. I have heard preachers say that there were towns in the northeast with 250,000 population which had in them no more than a dozen Christians (which means there were no more than a dozen members of the Church of Christ). When I hear such things I can only hang my head in shame and ask how one could prove such a statement. We assume that God will forgive us our sins of un-Christian living, but will not forgive those who are not doctrinally pure like we are. I think it was Jesus who told the parable of the judgment in which the question was asked 'Did you feed the poor, visit the sick, clothe the naked, give drink to the thirsty?'

and not 'Did you worship without an instrument and go to a church that was scripturally organized?'

"5. We strain out gnats but swallow camels, a sin that Jesus accused the Pharisees of committing. He said that the weightier matters like Faith, Mercy, Justice and Love were being neglected and details were emphasized. When a preacher of ours talks about Love and Faith all of the time we fear that he is not 'grounded in the truth,' and call him 'too liberal.' In a recent sermon, typical of so many I have heard, the preacher was discussing how to recognize the church of the Bible. He mentioned such important matters as worshipping right (no instrumental music), having the church organized right, meeting on the correct day, taking the Lord's Supper at the right time, etc. I guess he overlooked Jesus' own description of His followers found in John 13. He said that the one way to recognize His disciples for certain was to see if they loved each other as He had loved them.

"6. Even though Paul said there was freedom in Christ, we allow almost none. Anyone who does not conform, or who will even admit that he is not sure about some matter which we consider vital is looked upon with a critical eye. He is never trusted with teaching a class and often he is driven from the Church of Christ. The disciples of Jesus were those who wanted to follow Him. He never asked that they accept a certain body of beliefs; He simply said 'Follow me.' And who among us can decide exactly what must be accepted since we are so badly divided ourselves?

"7. If our worship is in spirit and in truth, it is only because we proclaim it to be so in almost all of our Sunday morning prayers. While our people go spiritually un nourished we preach to those who are not even present. Should the preacher say something about our living, we become upset and call him noseey. Our prayers are like reading from a litany. The only difference is that we rearrange our phrases and sometimes pray for the sick and afflicted the world over before we are thankful for this day and all its many blessings. We make a farce out of the Lord's Supper by our efforts to get our pocketbooks and billfolds out for the collection (which many honestly consider the third part of the Communion Service). All spontaneity is gone from our worship since everyone knows the order so well that to suggest having four songs before the sermon instead of three will bring criticism from someone for sure. (One lady thought this was unscriptural).

"8. We refuse to participate with other Christians (we call them Christians only 'in the broad sense') when there is a good work to be done in the community. Our motives may have some

small measure of merit, but outsiders cannot see that. All they know is that there is work to be done and everyone wants to help but the Church of Christ. By refusing to 'condone their errors' we give the world occasion to condemn us for knowing to do good and not doing it.

"9. We are inconsistent even with regards to the slogans which we have set up to follow, and our announced principle of Biblical interpretation. We say we will call Bible things by Bible names, but even the word 'Bible' is not a Bible word. We say we speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where it is silent but do neither. For example, the Bible speaks of equality of all races. I have never heard a sermon on the relationship between white and Negro, whether as fellow Christians or not, even though the matter is such an important issue in our day. I do remember hearing more than one member of the church say that he hated niggers. We allow our people to have such an attitude and are afraid to speak against it. In most of our congregations (the vast majority are segregated) if integration begins many members would quit the church.

"The Bible is silent on women taking part in the worship by teaching. Therefore, we do not allow them to preach to the congregation, but we do allow them to sing which is described as teaching and exhorting one another. No preacher I have asked has produced the Apostolic example of women singing in the worship. These are just two of the many examples of speaking where the Bible is silent and remaining silent where the Bible speaks.

"10. Our approach to the Christian life is basically negative. We derive much of our 'rightness' not from what we do, but from all of the things we don't do. In fact, what separates us from the world and other churches is not the good things that we do, but the 'bad' things and 'unscriptural' practices that they engage in.

"11. We neglect our young people to the extent that far more than half of them are lost to us before they reach the age of 21. I would not want to bring up my children in an atmosphere where all that is provided for them by the church is a word from the preacher every once in a while. And that word is almost without exception, 'Be careful not to dance or park and pet, or drink, etc., etc. etc.' We usually give them no place in the work of the church and then wonder why they drift away.

"12. There is almost complete absence of assurance within the Churches of Christ. If someone is baptized and asks if he is saved, the answer is yes. If he asks a week later we have to say

we don't know, and through his life he is alternately saved and lost and his salvation depends on when he dies--if he has just prayed for forgiveness, fine, but if not he may be lost. Could it be that in our fight against the Baptists we have gone to the opposite extreme on the matter of Grace? We seldom talk about it and seem to have no real understanding of what it is. Paul talks about the man in Christ having his sins covered, and says, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed unto Him against that day.' Oh, that we could say the same!!

"13. We are continually looking backward, seeking to walk in the 'old paths.' As a result our religion becomes irrelevant to the world today. We have no answers to the vital moral and spiritual issues of the day because we are too busy fighting battles that are not being waged and building straw men so we can tear them down.

"Before I conclude, I would like to mention first of all that I am aware of the fact that many of our churches are interested in their young people, some churches provide truly valuable worship experiences, others do participate with other churches on worthwhile projects, and so on, but these are the exceptions and not the rule. Yet it pleases me to see that people are finally beginning to awake from their slumber of unconcern and maybe a new day will be dawning upon the Churches of Christ everywhere.

"I now join the ever-increasing ranks of those young people who wanted with all of their hearts to find a permanent place within the Churches of Christ, but could not simply because they above all had to be true to the truth as God gave them to see it. We can still be wholeheartedly behind your efforts for good even though you cannot be behind our efforts, since not being fully completely devoted to the Church of Christ as you know it we are thus no longer Christians even if we are devoted to Christ. We are faced with deciding either to stay in the Church of Christ and not be fully accepted or choosing another church which will undoubtedly have as many problems as the Church of Christ.

"I love so many of you who are in the Church of Christ as I know you love me, and I would ask of you only one thing: *DO NOT FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE IF YOU CAN DO DIFFERENTLY!!* For I would be with you now if I could. All I would ask is that you do your part, whether small or great, to help create an atmosphere within the Church of Christ which will draw men and women, young and old alike, to that better way of life both temporal and eternal which was first and most perfectly lived by

a man from Galilee two thousand years ago. Make Him live today in your heart and in your life so that He may still draw men nearer to the divine, and in so doing help to make the Church of Christ truly the church of CHRIST."

The "voice" of William K. Floyd rings forth in his frank and revealing article *Why I Could Not Be A Career Preacher*. Mr. Floyd has served as minister for fifteen congregations of the Church of Christ, sometimes working full-time for them in the summers. At the time of his writing he was a member of and teacher at the Broad Street Church of Christ, Cookeville, Tennessee, and actively engaged in preaching for Churches of Christ in the area.

As a student at Harding College, Mr. Floyd was president of the student body, an outstanding intercollegiate debater, and a member of Who's Who in American Universities and Colleges. He majored in Bible and Speech, receiving his B.A. Degree in 1958. He took his M.A. degree in Speech from the University of Oklahoma and has done graduate work toward his doctorate at Pennsylvania State, Wichita State, and the University of Tennessee.

Mr. Floyd has taught at the University of Oklahoma, at Southwestern State College in Oklahoma, at Pennsylvania State, and at Tennessee Technological University (as Director of Forensics). He has been president of both the Tennessee Speech Association and the Tennessee Intercollegiate Forensic Association. He has sponsored many academic and church youth organizations. He is 29, married, and has two children.

He states to-wit:

"Before I went to the Church of Christ college I chose, I had planned to be a minister. This was partly due to the inspiration of my father, who is himself a career minister in the Church of Christ. He had long ago won my admiration for his courage to think and speak straightforwardly, for his love of people even when it cost him, and for his interest in a cause above a career. But the inspiration waned during my years in that college and I am now a teacher in a secular university. My interest in the ministry remains high and I believe it can be a worthy calling. Still, I chose another means of service, as have hundreds who once felt as I did. The reason undoubtedly lies in part within my personality and theirs, but it also lies in great measure within the very nature of the Church of Christ and its schools. I want to explore this problem.

"Church of Christ journals have been decrying the preacher shortage for several years. While college enrollments have gone

up, the number of preaching students has gone down. Both the Church of Christ and the general population are increasing faster than are the ranks of preachers. It is estimated that there are fewer than half as many preachers as there are congregations in the Churches of Christ. The problem worsens and demands our concern, but concern is not enough. Nor is exhortation. There must be some analysis of the situation in the Church of Christ which causes the problem.

"The articles so far published have made only superficial explorations of the problem. One man of repute among us writes that what we need is more men's training classes! An editor of one of our most influential papers lays out his solution: Encourage our young men to lead in prayer, to read publicly, and to make announcements. Another writer suggests that materialism is drawing young men away, even though he must know with the rest of us that salaries for preachers are better than they have ever been. Still another says that in spite of ample support it is hard to find ministers who have adequately prepared themselves. The unprepared are being used, he laments; the qualified are turning to other forms of service.

"A Church of Christ college president lays the blame elsewhere: 'The picture of the preacher as presented in modern literature and in movies, on television and on radio has certainly been less than noble This image of God's man has been so debased as to cause many young people not to desire the work of the minister.' He does not mention, though he might, that many bright young ministerial hopefuls are appalled to learn that in the larger academic world they are viewed as men committed to dogma rather than truth. Painful as it is, we must confess that the images portrayed are not altogether untrue.

"The *Gospel Advocate*, a Church of Christ publication, has finally hinted at one of the basic causes of our preacher shortage. It notes that there is too much politicking in the church, too many closed minds, and too much apathy to challenge either of these evils. Perhaps the problem of the closed mind is best illustrated, albeit unconsciously, by the editor of the Firm Foundation, another such paper. He made this amazing admission:

"We have often said that among the greatest dangers we face is that of having to send our brightest young men off to sectarian schools for their doctorate work. Most of the work in the doctorate area is under the domination of very liberal forces. We cannot expect to keep it from affecting our own teaching in our schools. I am personally more interested in at least one of our schools becoming able to train teachers to the level of a doctor's

degree, so that it may supply sound teachers for at least the other schools supported by brethren, than I am in any other phase of their development The church can always profit from a better trained minister. Until recently they had had to go to sectarian schools for any such training. In these schools they must constantly be on guard against teaching which would undermine their faith. We have lost any number of good men because they could not stand up under the strain.'

"Why do our 'brightest' leave? The answer is inherent in this editor's view of education as propagandal. The bright young men, sooner or later, begin to wonder what there is to a faith that needs such cloistered protection.

"My own college responsibilities gave me unique opportunity to know the preacher boys and those who had meant to be, and were able, but who had rejected the ministry. It always seemed to me, even before I made my own decision, that those who decided not to be fulltime preachers were the most capable students. Those who chose to stick were, all too often, the pastoral lackeys who were short on imagination. They could speak glibly to little congregations which were dead in their pews. They warmed over sermons from sermon outline books which they purchased in the college bookstore. Their creativity consisted in thinking up new word gimmicks for outlines. They impressed their parishioners by regurgitating revered and stock patterns, and they enjoyed the inevitable praise. They played the sycophant without qualms. They accepted without question. Was it a clear vision of this kind of life that made the others forsake the ministry?

"Since there is a crucial shortage of preachers, my analysis may be helpful. It can do service even for those who disagree with, or deplore, my point of view, for it will acquaint them with the way many young people think today. If some do not agree that the Church of Christ is as I describe it, they may at least become aware that many view it this way and so have not given themselves to the ministry.

"We cannot understand our problems in the church without seeing what is happening in our world. We are in the midst of social and cultural revolutions more drastic and rapid than any generation has experienced. Some of the major problems which have resulted are these: technological and scientific innovations so wide-ranging that we are unable to keep up, new sources of power that demand controls we have not yet devised, new social and ethical values we have not yet tested adequately, the nearing end of white supremacy and the consequent necessity for new modes of thought, disturbing new patterns of work and living

habits, loss of the church and the family as sources of authority, and the loss of a sense of identity and belonging as a result of our amazing physical mobility.

"The world of 2000 A.D. (I shall be 63 years old) will not be merely 1966 with more gadgets. Basic concepts of society will be radically different. There will be new modes of thought. That our religious concepts will be greatly affected should go without saying if we recall the modes of thought and action in our own group fifty or one hundred years ago.

"Young people today read the future by their knowledge of history. They are aware of the larger patterns of change and they put their world in new perspective. They want little part of any movement that is not cognizant of change and progress. Any reverence for the past which seems to them an obvious attempt to maintain the status quo will fill them with disgust. And when they see that their church interprets the ancient message via a nineteenth century mode of thought, they will conclude that it is out of touch with reality.

"Those my age and younger have not despaired of idealism, only of institutions that have surrendered to traditionalism and the status quo. Unfortunately, this has often included the church, so we are finding and creating new forms for the expression of our idealism: civil rights groups, benevolent enterprises, the Peace Corps. In these activities we are not obliged to sit silently while our Church of Christ teachers tell us that the world is only six thousand years old, that there are no textural or canonical problems in the Bible which should worry us, or that biology textbooks are naughty because they present frank and objective truth about human anatomy and procreation.

"The last comment above is no fiction. The editor of a most influential Church of Christ paper indicted biology texts in his state because of their 'graphic descriptions of the male reproductive system, the female reproductive system, stages of human birth' and the like. He said that all this constituted 'Godless, materialistic, atheistic preaching.' It is astonishing how far removed from young men and women this editor is. In or out of the church, young people will not take seriously a high school biology text that has for its section on sex a photograph of a bird, a bee and a stork. Nor will they kindle to any spirit represented in so patronizing a way. When they see church leaders react this way, they lose respect for them, and because they equate (with the abrupt conclusions of the young) the church with its leaders, they lose respect for the church too.

"A Gallup poll in 1965 showed that since 1957 three times as many adults as formerly are saying that religion is losing its influence upon American life. Younger adults (21-29) are even more inclined to take a pessimistic view of the influence of religion upon American society. And among persons now attending colleges, belief in the power of religion is waning even more. These last claim that religion fails to meet the challenge of science and the intellect; that it fails to solve the contemporary moral, social, and economic problems; and that church involvement has not proved itself necessary to the fulfillment of life.

"But it is *institutional* Christianity that has brought the greatest dismay. The church's introversion, her preoccupation with outmoded forms, her use of embalmed theological jargon, her hair-splitting over dogmas, and her refusal to re-examine interpretations in the light of twentieth century knowledge--these are the failures bright young men and women quickly point to. Significantly, religion which expresses itself in terms of social action and improved interpersonal relations is *increasing* its influence.

"It is popular to blame higher education for loss of faith. The truth seems rather that certain religious approaches betray the young men and women who accept them. As one minister put it recently in a national magazine: 'The problem of fundamentalism is that it cannot withstand critical Biblical scholarship and scientific facts And the moment small-town boys go to college, they take a course in biology and their faith is gone. Our great sin is never having offered them a real alternative.'

"The enrollment in colleges and universities goes ever higher. The time is near when the man in the pew may have an education superior to that of the pulpit speaker. In most Churches of Christ a sizeable number of auditors will have received better educations than their preacher. They tolerate warmed-over sermons and generalizations offensive to their minds only because they still believe that loyalty to this particular denomination will eventually save their souls. When they grumble about the meagre fare they get, the preacher generally stiffens and denounces them as liberals and radicals who are not 'sound' in their faith. This tension has already created many serious splits in the Churches of Christ and will create more unless an atmosphere of respect for learning and of insistence upon freedom can be achieved.

"This antipathy toward learning and questioning is widespread in the Church of Christ. In an Oklahoma college town the director of the Bible Chair, where college students took courses for credit under the sponsorship of the local Church of Christ, told a friend of mine that he (the director) was familiar with

modernists and their ways. He said that he had read a question-and-answer book written by a modernist. 'But,' he added, 'I only read the questions because I knew his answers wouldn't be worth reading.' Not many would be so blatantly open, but the arrogance of such a remark is not unusual among some of our leaders.

"I had an experience with some of my relatives once which illustrates the same point. Although the adults in this group (a family reunion) liked to avoid controversial religious issues, we always found the children greatly interested in new ideas. Talking to some of the teen-age boys present, I tried to acquaint them with views about a certain issue which are not normally expressed by our church group. One of the teen-age girls overheard our talks and became interested. She thought of something she wished to contribute, but needed to ask her mother where the Scriptural passage was that she felt would support her point. Her mother said, 'Don't be disturbed over their discussion; just don't listen.'

"This attitude is still far too common among us and children treated in this way sooner or later realize what is being done to them. Their reactions are often violent when they come. And come they must, to many, because these children will be living far beyond the year 2000 A.D. The revolution of thought now taking place will affect them beyond our foreseeing. To present only one view and to protect them from all else will leave them without the tools or temper to analyze their complex world.

"The situation is similar with respect to the cliches spoken so glibly by too many ministers. Today's students are taught to condemn the meaningless stereotypes. What, then, is their inevitable reaction when they hear their preacher solemnly intone such increased platitudes of the party as, 'We speak where the Bible speaks and keep silent where it is silent?' It takes little mental exercise for them to see that what the preacher asserts is violated repeatedly on himself and his auditors. And a bit more reflection will bring them to wonder why the principle is valid even when observed. For does not God still speak? he will ask himself. The first century church was one that looked forward. Today the church that claims to partake in the spirit of the early church looks backward. Has God's relation in Scriptures called us to a closed system, or liberated us and set us on a new road of discovery? Must we see all religious truth limited to the Bible, or see the Bible rather as a means of pointing us to religion as it is everywhere manifest?

"Young men and women of intelligence and sensitivity are not much concerned anymore with the claims of rival sects to be the 'true church.' They grapple, instead, with such basic issues

as the nature of God, the spirit of Christ, the relevancy of the church's message in a world of ever-shifting values. The kind of legalistic preaching which turns the Bible in upon itself and thrills to an introverted involvement with it will never again capture the finest young minds.

"Nor do they want to live in a state of submission and fear. When they raise really significant questions and are met by charges of heresy or 'getting out of line,' they quickly lose hope that they can find freedom to grow in the church. With no vested interests to defend, they can afford to put more stress on integrity than on safety; the result is that many of them simply walk out.

"Alexander Campbell recognized the pressures which authoritarian religion puts upon men. 'It is a rarity seldom to be witnessed,' he said, 'to see a person boldly opposing either the doctrinal errors or the unscriptural measures of a people with whom he has identified himself and to whom he looks for support. If such a person appears in any party, he soon falls under the frowns of those who either think themselves wiser than the reprovor, or would wish so to appear. Hence it usually happens that such a character must lay his hand upon his mouth or embrace the privilege of walking out of doors.'

"Eager to be popular, many Church of Christ ministers must hide their own values and insights, at least until they are convinced of enough support to keep them in service. Some of them find it convenient to learn which side of a controversy has the most influential members, then arm themselves with proof texts and become fearless spokesmen for the 'church's' viewpoint. To act so is to play the hypocrite and to rebel against God by refusing to be the person He would have His minister be--a man of integrity who exemplifies moral courage.

"One cannot but wonder what the Churches of Christ would think of Paul were he to speak to us today. He once (at least) preached a sermon on the existence and nature of God without quoting a single verse of Scripture; instead, he cited pagan poets in making his points. Could we tolerate such 'liberal' tendencies, we who virtually worship the firing of Biblical proof texts at the audience? Would we not charge Paul, also, with ineptness in handling race problems? After all, his associations with Gentiles gave the Jews grounds for stirring up mob action against him. We would likely charge him with 'poor timing' because he insisted on pushing ahead with his universal religion and antagonizing many Jews. And we would be aghast at his audacity in challenging and exposing a 'big preacher' in the 'brotherhood' for following the dictates of expediency in this matter. Doesn't he know,

we would wonder, that the 'social gospel' has nothing to do with the Christian religion?

"In other words, the vibrant, live message of Paul has become a dull, but respectable sermonizing. Ministers in the Churches of Christ find it generally wise to avoid involvements with the great crucial issues of their world. Nationalism, integration, population control, the sexual revolution, war, euthanasia--these and a host of other pressing problems must be ignored lest the congregation brand them as 'unsound.' Yet these are the very problems which today's college student debates vigorously. If his church hides its head from this, he will simply conclude that the church is an embalmed society for the preservation of peace and comfort.

"One of these problem areas, that of racial relationships, is especially vital for Christianity. We live in a world where three out of four people are non-white. No amount of money, prayers, or missionaries will counteract the undermining influence of our segregated churches. In the face of our moral cowardice, God may be passing us by to raise up others more willing to fulfill his redemptive purposes. Many young men and women seem to sense this today and they do not intend to be found wanting. As Dante might have put it: 'The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in a time of moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.'

"The Church of Christ has placed itself on the sidelines of the greatest moral struggle of our times. Without exception, every one of our southern Christian colleges have waited until it was safe before they integrated. And when they finally integrated (mildly), they blew trumpets and waved flags and sent articles to newspapers announcing their courage and humanitarianism! All this, to their everlasting shame, after they had worked for years to stave off integration as long as possible.

"One of our top college presidents told me in private conference that Negroes really want to attend school 'with their own people,' and that he had personally contributed to their educational support elsewhere. But, he admonished me, 'many Negroes have venereal disease,' and we must protect our present students. God did not intend integration, he said, and it was not expedient, anyway, at present because the school might lose monetary support and not be able to teach 'Christian principles' to as many students. Yet when it finally was 'safe' to integrate, in fact imperative lest they be exposed in the newspapers, this president publicized the school's action as an act of Christian witness! One knows little about today's intelligent youngsters if he thinks they are blind to such hypocrisy or willing to partake of it.

"My father ministered to an Alabama congregation during the Birmingham riots. He preached on segregation, his text being: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' He was called a 'son of a bitch' and a 'devil' from the audience while he was delivering the sermon. When the elders defended his right to preach what he believed, the elders were dismissed by the men of the congregation and my father was fired. Why have more Alabama Church of Christ ministers not been fired? Where is the church of our group that is in danger of being burned because of its stand for decency?"

"In another of our 'Christian' colleges, located where all state colleges have been integrated for years and in a city in which other private church-related schools have been integrated for years, segregation has until very recently been an iron-clad policy. At this Church of Christ school, Negroes were excluded from tournament events that involved other schools for on-campus participation. And when faculty members were hired it was made a specific condition of employment that they must refrain from making any public statement (even in the capacity of private citizen) favoring integration. This will shock readers who believe in responsible freedom in integrity for faculty members, but it is a fact easily verifiable from men who formerly taught in this college and are now in respected positions in other colleges and universities.

"When I was serving as president of the student body at Harding College, some students asked me to help them circulate a petition demanding an end to the de facto policy of racial segregation at the school. I suggested that we were not in a position to make demands and asked for time to draw up a *statement of attitude* that would indicate clearly the feelings of students and faculty. With the advice and assistance of some faculty members, the statement was readied. Before any signatures were obtained, the administration was told of the contents of the statement and what was about to occur. The administration immediately requested that the action not take place. I met that evening with the student council and told them of the administration order. They voted to go ahead with the circulation of the statement. The administration announced in chapel the following day that it did not favor the statement's circulation. When an overwhelming majority of people at the college signed the statement, we sent it to each member of the Board of Harding College, along with the following letter:

"November 10, 1957. Attention members of the Board of Harding College: The following is a statement that was circulated on the Harding College campus: To the administration and Board of Trustees of Harding College:

"A number of members of the Harding community are deeply concerned about the problem of racial discrimination. Believing that it is wrong for Christians to make among people distinctions which God has not made, they sincerely desire that Harding College make clear to the world that she firmly believes in the principles of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. To that end, the undersigned individuals wish to state that they are ready to accept as members of the Harding community all academically and morally qualified applicants, without regard to arbitrary distinctions such as color or social level; that they will treat such individuals with the consideration and dignity appropriate to human beings created in the image of God; and that they will at all times face quietly, calmly, patiently, and sympathetically any social pressures intensified by this action.

"Furthermore, the undersigned individuals wish it clearly understood that this statement of attitude is by no means intended as an attempt to precipitate action by the Administration or Board of Trustees of Harding College but that it is instead intended entirely as an expression of the internal readiness of the Harding community to end discrimination, such expression being tendered as one factor for the consideration of the Administration and the Board of Trustees when a re-evaluation of the admission policies of Harding College is undertaken.

"The copies bearing the signatures of those supporting this concept have been sent to the Chairman of the Board and to the Administration of the College requesting consideration of this problem at the next Board meeting.

"Forty-nine faculty members signed, forty-two staff members and eight executive directors. There is a total of nine hundred and forty-six signatures affixed to the statement. There are nine hundred eighty-six regularly enrolled students in the college.

"We appreciate your continued individual thought and expression given to this problem, which is of great concern to us.

"Sincerely, Bill Floyd, President, Student Body."

"In later sessions with the administration I learned a great deal about the power structure of the Church of Christ. The president told students in chapel that the action was improper and that the signatures were not an accurate expression of student feeling. I never understood how he determined this, when such a vast majority signed. His explanation was that 'they didn't understand what they were signing.' Any reader who can believe this does not seem to me to fathom the mind of today's college student. In the same address, our president explained to us that God made

some blue birds and some black birds and that they were not intended to mix, that Negroes in America have more cars than the people in Russia, and that we would lose students and financial support if we were to integrate. I was told in private by one administrator that I had betrayed my trust as student body president, that no employer would ever hire me, that when one works for an institution he should accept all its thinking and keep silent about contrary beliefs, and that if I wanted to crusade for integration I should go where everyone believes in it. Another administrative official told me that the student government should be an agency to indoctrinate the students with the ideas of the administration.

"During this time the State of Arkansas was much in the national news because of its racial problems. The *Arkansas Gazette*, never hesitant to print uncomplimentary stories about Harding College, would have been more than willing to print the story of the student statement and its reception by the administration. *Time* magazine, I feel sure, would have printed the story of a small southern college whose faculty, staff, and students had voted overwhelmingly to end segregation. But it seemed to me that sending the story to these media would not be the proper response, so it was not done.

"So ended the 1957 attempt at Harding to end discrimination. When it was safer, several years later after it had become 'the thing to do' around the nation, Harding at last made a mild, token integration and promptly released stories to news media acclaiming its action.

"Our feeling about the civil rights struggle is akin to our ideological alliance with the political right wing. This alliance should surprise no one who knows us well. The right wing movement is characterized by intolerance under the name of conviction, by suppression of inquiry for the sake of propaganda, by counting expediency above principle, by the principle that the end justifies the means, and by a basic anti-intellectualism. I have seen far too much of all these traits in the church I grew up in.

"One of our colleges is nationally known as a propaganda mill for far-right political groups. It has been called by name and several national publications, including *Look*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Time*. It has been described in complete chapters in three books dealing with the far-right movement in America. It has been discussed by name in articles in *The New York Times News Service*, the *Kansas City Star*, and *The Nashville Tennessean*. Yet amazingly, one of the school's best-known teachers says that when people say this of his school they are bearing 'false witness.' He says:

'The motives of various individuals who do this may differ--they range all of the way from Communists, socialists, and various other degrees of collectivists to the ignorant and the opportunists' This from the *Gospel Advocate*. I must list myself with those individuals who label his school a far-right propaganda mill. I do not think their witness false, and the only appellation above that comes close to describing me accurately is 'ignorant.' But that very kind of name-calling is typical of the radical far right.

"The right-wing spirit is not found merely in our colleges. It is heard on radio from some of our preachers. It can be found scattered throughout gospel papers. In a *Firm Foundation* issue of 1964, one of our best-known preachers said: 'The founder of the Christian religion said: 'The POOR ye have always with you' but these modern pink prophets actually think that the church should launch a campaign to prove that Jesus was a liar. They would turn the sacred hours of the pulpit and holy precincts of the Lord's Table into a discussion of the political and economic problems that face our troubled world Men need to be saved, not from bodily aches and pains; not from poverty and social injustices, but from SIN.'

"Not many intelligent potential young ministers want to be part of a church group that not only tolerates but in general approves that kind of approach to social evils. The great political polls show that young people are moving ideologically in the opposite direction. The talent drain away from Church of Christ pulpits is awesome. We are left with many handsome, glib, extroverted young men, but with too few thoughtful ones.

"One of my most distressing realizations has been this one: that I am expected as a preacher to be an 'answer factory,' rather than a man expected to *struggle* with problems of life and the relevancy of Biblical principles to them. In my Sunday school classes, too many students think there aren't really any serious problems. There just *seem* to be, but answers are available from any good Church of Christ preacher or teacher worth his salt. There is a psychological mania to provide all the answers. Any hesitancy, any deliberation, any confession of alternate possibilities proves that the teacher is not really sound, not really well-prepared with his arsenal of quick answers.

"Since I cannot be a man with a bag of answers, I cannot be a career minister for the Church of Christ. To salvage integrity I must turn to other forms of professional activity and be independent of those who would squeeze me into a party mold and rob me of God-given freedom. As a college teacher I can encour-

age students to think for themselves--something I am not often allowed to do in the party. I can urge them to enter into life and religious experience directly, not vicariously. I can encourage them to be free--a condition fraught with dangers, but glorious beyond all measure.

"I confess, too, that I am dismayed by 'preacher worship' and the dangers it poses. When I go away from home to meetings and songfests where I am not known and meet strangers, I introduce myself simply as 'Bill Floyd.' They give me their names in a bland, uninterested way and prepare to move on (I am not an impressive-looking person). But when a member who attends the church where I preach is with me, he quickly announces with pride: 'This is the minister where I go to church.' Then the quick, schizophrenic change invariably takes place. The stranger brightens up, smiles, often regrips my hand (this time warmly) and shows interest in me.

"Am I not worthy to be shown interest and respect as a human being? Can I not be given respect simply as a person, rather than because of some artificial appellation and status assigned to me? It is not credit to me to have an obsequious sycophant fawning at my feet. I am somebody only because *God* made me. Every other person in the whole world is worthy of every bit as much respect as I am. I glory only in being respected for what makes me respectable--that I am a creature of *God*.

"Preacher worship can be a kind of self worship. If you cannot gain personal status, you give it to your preacher and then identify with him. By insisting that he is intelligent, you can believe that you are intelligent to perceive his intelligence. His rightness makes you right. By and by, this blind worship makes it impossible for one to see clearly that what he has standing before him in the pulpit is, after all, only a man whose words must be evaluated thoughtfully before they are accepted.

"Too many preachers foster this worship and dote on it. They foster it by talking of preachers as a special breed, by writing the kind of articles they write, and by the way they praise other preachers at all the big lectureships.

'Even preachers,' one preacher said, 'sometimes are competitive and find it hard to be free of envy when one of their colleagues is successful.' We think: 'How big of him to admit this; what humility!' 'But the humility is false; pride looms behind the thin veil of pretence.' 'Even preachers,' he says, as if preachers are truly a special breed expected to be above the temptations com-

mon to ordinary men. Such a comment is not humility; it is merely skillful boasting.

"Still, it is hard to blame preachers. They are only responding to the environment created by their members. They want to be prominent and they know how to do it. I once knew a young man who was determined to be president of a Church of Christ college someday. He knew what to do. I have been following his career with much interest. He has the required smooth personality, good looks, and the proper amount of intelligence. He owns the right kind of car, has the right kind of wife, follows the party line. Occasionally he will express an objection to some unimportant party view, to prove he is a free-thinker and courageous, but he knows exactly how far he dares to walk on this dangerous ground. He supports no controversial programs. He reads the church papers to know what to think about issues and to see what is in vogue. He cultivates the right people. He goes to graduate school, for one must have the educator image. He gets a job as dean of students at a Christian college. Knowing that it is also vital to have the 'big preacher' image if one is to become president in our colleges, he gets a job as minister at one of the biggest churches in the brotherhood. He needs the writer image, also, so he blitzes the gospel papers with bland articles (he can write more thoughtfully, but he *must* get the items published). He holds as many gospel meetings as possible. He will be president someday of a Church of Christ college.

"One Church of Christ minister, disfellowshipped long since as a heretic, said candidly that he hoped to see this power structure destroyed. 'Disciples are awakening everywhere, and those of us who preach are losing steadily our power to mold audiences into puppets who rubberstamp all our views. This is long overdue and will be a blessed and wonderful thing when it comes in fullness. Among other things, it will mean that the preacher has a corrective, some intelligent force able to counter his interpretation with others, so that he may be able to check the validity of his own. It is no wonder that so many of us who preach are arrogant and sure of our infallible interpretations when, within our party, there is seldom ever a strong voice to question us.'

"Congregations that insist on thoughtful and provocative lessons will get them from a minister worthy of his calling. Such a minister will devote himself to *wide* reading, careful and arduous study, and contemplative exercises. The sad thing is that there are few congregations who desire deep, honest, free thought from their ministers. The result is that one sees impoverished personal libraries too often. The standard fare on Sundays is still too much

stagnant thought and stale sermonizing. Gimmicks are popular, whether in the form of clever little outlines, alliterative sermon titles, or ingenious 'object lessons.' This is not surprising; when men are penalized for thinking they will cultivate mediocrity.

"I think one of the most penetrating comments I have ever seen about this kind of mental laziness was made by Charles Fort in *Wild Talents*. He said: 'I am in considerable sympathy with conservatives. I am often lazy myself When I'm somewhat played out, I'm likely to be most conservative My last utterance will be a platitude, if I've been dying long enough. If not, I shall probably laugh One can't learn much and also be comfortable. One can't learn much and let any body else be comfortable.' The judgment these remarks makes upon our pulpits need not be elaborated upon.

"With such views as the foregoing, it must be clear to anyone versed in party politics and party thought that I anticipate no calls to large churches or Church of Christ college jobs. I look with some regrets upon the dead-end street, but I console myself with the thought that the cost of success would be too high. I prefer to see Christianity as a stance, rather than as a system. I think no Christian need guard the faith; I think it needs to be exposed, not protected. I believe the truest disciple must live with the courage of faith: calling prophetically for change before the climate is right or safe, throwing himself on the barbed-wire so that other troops may reach over him to victory, knowing that he may not himself survive to see the glory of triumph. This is the courage of love, this defines for me the genuine 'man of God.' I hope that I may find some part of it in my life, despite my failure to see how it can be realized in the present climate of our pulpits."

Having heard from two of our young princes let us now allow the light to shine upon a few of the "voices" of those older and perhaps wiser individuals all of whom were born and bred in the Church of Christ speaking in humility unable longer to remain silent.

First let us hear from Logan Fox. Mr. Fox bears a distinguished name in the Church of Christ. Born in Tokyo in 1922 of American missionary parents, he has attended David Lipscomb high school and college and holds a B.A. from George Pepperdine (1946). He has taught at Pepperdine (1947-48, 1960-63) and at Ibaraki Christian College, a Church of Christ-sponsored school in Japan (1948-60). He has served Churches of Christ as a minister in Aldan, Pa.; in Harvey and Chicago, Ill.; and in San Fernando and Los Angeles, Calif. His wife and five children are presently members with him of the Vermont Avenue Church of Christ in Los Angeles.

Mr. Fox was further educated at the University of Chicago (M.A., 1947) and at the University of Southern California, where he was admitted to doctoral candidacy in 1963. He holds an honorary LL.D from Pepperdine (1959). He has written and edited a number of books, all in Japanese. Currently he is a certified psychologist in California, in private practice since 1962.

"*Destiny or Disease?*" states his position with true clarity stemming from unity in diversity to-wit:

". . . No unexamined religious movement is of any worth.

"Self-knowledge is never easy, but in my experience nothing has been more difficult than the effort to understand my relationship to the religious fellowship in which I was born and reared.

". . . I have seen and talked with scores of others entangled in this same web; I think there must be hundreds of thousands in our fellowship who share this frustration

"Some of our people in the Church of Christ have left it to become members of freer fellowships. Far larger numbers have lost all interest in active church life . . . Even more Church of Christ people are merely marking time

". . . I shall . . . describe the Church of Christ I know.

". . . In thinking back over my experiences I find them dividing into five periods: (1) age of innocence, 1-13 years; (2) sectarian zeal, 14-18; (3) the walls crumble, 19-25 years; (4) missionary activity and church politics, 26-40 years; (5) a layman, 41--.

AGE OF INNOCENCE

". . . I never wondered what kind of Christian anyone was. It didn't seem to matter.

". . . In our brotherhood we teach that people are added to the church only by hearing the gospel, believing it, repenting of sins, and being immersed in water. But while I was not baptized until the age of ten, I was in the church long before that

"The second consequence of my family's Christian commitment is that I did not choose the Church of Christ as preferable to some other religious group.

"When I was ten . . . we children attended the Lipscomb elementary school and we really thought that Nashville was Jerusalem and Lipscomb was heaven

SECTARIAN ZEAL

“ . . . One year in Fullerton, California came next, and this in turn led to three years back in Nashville again at Lipscomb High. These were my sectarian years

“ . . . and they both frightened and attracted me. I found release from my fear and feeling of inferiority by playing the role of the preacher. The elders were delighted and fed me with praise as I ‘courageously’ attacked the sins of drinking, dancing, movies, and petting. . . . It’s a wonder any of our young people grow up to be normal. Fortunately, most young people don’t take all this preaching as seriously as I did.

“It is not easy to describe the power of Nashville. What a strange mixture of warm, southern hospitality and frightening capacity for revenge; of piety and sentimental devotion to the Bible coupled with shrewd, ruthless practicality; of fierce, almost paranoid, certainty coupled with fearful rejection of all differing views as ‘dangerous.’ In few places is the church so dominated by a few men the Church of Christ is the ‘one and only true church’ Like the myth of white supremacy, or the sacredness of the Bible, or the existence of God, it is taken for granted and never questioned And the few who seriously question are first laughed off, then gently warned, and finally ruthlessly cut off as dangerous and beyond hope I . . . came to believe this dogma and to be expert in all the tricky logic used to defend it.

“ . . . I could explain how the church started on Pentecost, grew until the end of the first century, apostatized and did nothing but sin until Luther sort of got things going in the right direction, and finally was restored in its purity by the Campbells

“Much like Paul, I outdid my teachers I went on to condemn tea, coffee, and Coca-Cola.

“ . . . I had become what Nashville believed in

“Then I entered college.

THE WALLS CRUMBLE

As a sectarian boy-preacher . . . I was preaching the typical sermon castigating the denominations and was making a particularly urgent plea that all people caught in the web of denominational prejudice should be open-minded. I insisted that they try to put out of their minds all preconceived ideas and read the Bible as if for the first time. At that moment it was almost as if a voice whispered to me, ‘Have you?’ . . . I knew I had never really questioned my own position and I knew I had no business asking anyone else to be open-minded.

“It was thus . . . I began to take the steps which . . . led me to the position which I have found convincing

“1. The first step was the discovery that truth is self-validating and needs no external supports ‘These statements are not true because they are in the Bible; they are in the Bible because they are true.’ . . . I did not need to carry truth on my frail shoulders, that it could stand by itself or it wasn’t the truth Truth does not need us, we need it. We do not support it, it supports us if we discover that something we had thought true is not true, we have lost nothing but error and are then closer to truth

“2. My next step was the realization that immersion in water is not a *sine qua non* for the regeneration of man we have never been willing to recognize as Christians the unimmersed there is nothing which so blocks the spiritual growth of our people as this position. Just as the Jews misunderstood and misused the covenant-sign of circumcision, so we have taken the covenant-sign of baptism and distorted its beauty and power in our effort to prove its absolute necessity.

“ . . . I now began to feel our inconsistency in singing the hymns and using the Bible reference works of people we considered ‘out of Christ.’ . . . It all boiled down to one simple fact; if God sent His Holy Spirit to live and work in a man who was not immersed, who was I to refuse to recognize him?

“3. Even more of an issue for our people has been the conviction that the Bible is verbally inspired . . . I came to realize that rather than making the Bible live, the verbal inspiration theory was killing the message of the Bible. I saw that while we virtually worshipped the Bible, we weren’t really getting its message . . . we were experts in manipulating proof texts but failed to let the Spirit teach us . . . In other words, we used verbal inspiration to give divine authority to the doctrinal position which we carefully extracted from (or read into) the Bible. I saw that while we claimed ‘every scripture is inspired of God’ we used perhaps ten per cent of the Bible and conveniently let the rest go

“4 . . . I came to see that the Bible really bears witness to God’s activity in history, and that if we are to know Him we must become sensitive to what He is teaching us in the historical arena

“This meant for me the discovery of the church’s history and of our place in it. I realized that we had either ignored history or twisted it to suit our special purposes. I came to see the Restora-

tion Movement as a *historical movement* and to evaluate it from the historical point of view.

“. . . First you take it seriously, seeing the development of the church from Pentecost until the end of the first century, then you ignore history for seventeen hundred years, then you take it seriously again as you see the achievements of your restoration movement. . . .

“5. The next step was the psychological”

“. . . I came to see that *holiness* and *wholeness* are not only linguistically but essentially related, that the unholy is exaggeration of the partial. To be saved is to be made whole

“6. Soon after discovering psychological man, I discovered man

“. . . I know . . . it is not right to feel self-righteous and isolate ourselves so terribly from the people Jesus loved. We have been wrong to cut ourselves off from the world in our efforts to be pure. It has kept us from being the salt of the earth.

“7. Also at Pepperdine I learned the discipline of philosophy

“. . . If we would discipline ourselves more with history and philosophy, we would be able to see ourselves and our beliefs in clearer perspective.

“. . . Unless we can learn to investigate sympathetically new ideas . . . we shall find ourselves fixated to inadequate positions which make all growth impossible

“. . . our faith, . . . must live in the midst of a world where we question, observe, and analyze any and all facts that come to our attention. . . . a faith that is not protected from the best academic research will be purified and strengthened

“9 . . . I learned a new definition of love. All of my life I had struggled with what seemed to me the inconsistency of Love's being commanded . . . I found an answer . . . accept . . . whatever the . . . behavior or feelings. This involves neither approval nor disapproval, but is a deep respect for the person

“. . . I am now convinced that the church is failing in its mission of healing because we have failed to heed Jesus' words, 'Judge not.' We have relied on the power of social disapproval in trying to change people's behavior, rather than relying on the power of acceptance or love

“10. Last of all came the step of ecumenicity . . . in the ecumenical movement not only is the spirit of Jesus very much

alive, but so also is the spirit of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Nothing is more incongruous than the attitude of the Church of Christ toward this effort at Christian unity! Of all the things which we have hammered away at, none has been more attacked than the sin of division. We have been the great advocate of *one church*. Now when this plea is taken seriously by the Christian world and sincere efforts are put forth to achieve unity, we have attacked the effort as dangerous, compromising and sinful!

“. . . We should rejoice in the effort of the ecumenical movement, we should participate with other Christians of good will in seeking ways to realize Jesus' prayer for unity.”

“With these . . . steps . . . , I was no longer a partisan member of the Church of Christ

MISSIONARY ACTIVITY AND CHURCH POLITICS

“. . . To remain with people who find one's views offensive is to be either continually involved in controversy and disturbance or to be vulnerable to the accusation that one's silence proves one either a coward or a dishonest fifth columnist in spite of this, . . . I choose to remain with this fellowship

“. . . I grant that one may choose to worship and serve in a particular fellowship because of opportunities for personal growth or greater usefulness. But . . . the unity of the church will never be achieved by people of like interests and convictions banding together and calling themselves the church. The church is one, and it is made up of all of God's people. We do not choose our brethren; they are given to us by God. Once I thought members of the Church of Christ were the only Christians. Now I stay with them because I cannot deny that they are Christians

“. . . and . . . I should share with them what I believe

“For me this meant returning as a missionary to Japana

“. . . a strange and wonderful fellowship was achieved . . . it was the discovery that we could be different and still work together. Perhaps it is what Campbell had in mind when he said, 'In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; in all things, love.' We discovered . . . our proclamation of the gospel was very similar We found . . . love had nothing to do with the philosophy, or even the doctrine, held by each. And . . . differing convictions did not need to be suppressed.

“. . . On the mission field we cannot escape the painful truth that 'an unbelieving world is the price of a divided Christendom.' . . . But, inevitably, the question of our attitude toward other Christian groups became an issue Ultimately this be-

came the reef on which my excursion into church politics made shipwreck.

“. . . the criticism leveled against us by missionaries in Tokyo, together with the concern expressed by leading brethren from America who visited our work, forced us to back off from the policy of wider fellowship I found myself unable to agree to stay within the imposed limits So I resigned from my church ministry, quit the faculty of Pepperdine College, and brought to an end my effort to achieve spiritual ends by political means.

A LAYMAN'S VIEW OF HIS PLACE IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“It is still my decision to remain within the framework of the Church of Christ

“. . . The Church of Christ is a historical movement. It is one branch of the Restoration Movement, a nineteenth century reform movement in America associated largely with the names of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. The original movement was conceived as being a part of Protestantism and must be classed with other ‘free church’ movements. One branch of this movement likes to think of itself as being the main Campbellian stream while others are ‘disgressive.’ . . . the Disciples are the more rightful heirs of Campbell, while we in the Church of Christ are more the children of David Lipscomb, H. Leo Boles, and other post-Civil War leaders of the church in the South.

“. . . We have taken a negative attitude toward art and culture, as typified by our opposition to instrumental music in the worship . . . we have taken a negative attitude toward education and scholarship, as typified by our opposition to a critical study of the scriptures we have taken a negative attitude toward effective organization of the church, as typified by our opposition to the missionary society. All three of these issues make it plain why we are often called ‘antis.’

“On the positive side we have continued to profess our dedication to the unity of all Christians, although obviously we cannot be very serious about this. We have stressed simplicity of worship, which we have achieved to an admirable degree. We have stood for a study of the Bible, and this, too, has been a genuine interest which has produced a kind of Biblically informed people.”

“Our biggest problem, I think, is our stand on immersion. Our hearts and minds tell us that people baptized by sprinkling are Christians, as witness our use of their hymns in our worship, our

use of their reference materials in our study of the Bible, and our use of their sermon books in the preparation of our sermons. But our doctrinal logic tells us that they *cannot* be Christians because they have not been immersed. So we must continue to refuse any fellowship or recognition to other Christian groups, and this is killing our soul.

“As a *movement* among Christians, I think there is a place for the Restoration plea . . . and can, . . . make a real contribution to the total church. But to claim that we are *The Church*, the exclusive body of Jesus Christ, is unthinkable. . . . By the mercy of God we are Christians, but we are Christians of a particular persuasion and a particular history. In other words, all our protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, *we are a denomination*

“What can a ‘loyal opposition’ among us do? These four things, I would suggest: First, we can be free . . . Christ has set us free and it is ours to act freely. Responsible ecclesiastical leaders have very limited freedom. Instead of judging them and calling them names, those of us who are not burdened with such leadership must exercise our freedom, for ourselves and for them. Second, we can confess what we really believe There is a crisis of faith among our people. Our pulpits are filled with men who do not believe what they preach and who dare not preach what they believe.

“Third, we can act rather than react . . . Some may have chosen to be expedient and to reap the reward of popularity at the price of painful conflict . . . Those who choose one course need not blame and judge those who take the other

“Finally, we can be what we are . . . we don’t decide *what* we will be but only *whether* to be what we actually are I am a member of the Church of Christ, so I must be that I am a Christian, a part of the whole great movement . . . with all other Christians

“. . . we are going down the road the Southern Baptists have traveled, but about fifty years behind them. We are, like them, increasingly liberal in practical matters like Bible school methods, but like them, we are changing very little doctrinally.

“I see a renewal of the ‘lay ministry’ among us . . . we have never recognized the distinction between clergy and laity, but in the twentieth century we definitely developed a clergy This is probably the only way we can have a reasonably free pulpit.

“. . . The world totters on the brink of an atomic holocaust.

America is torn by racial strife. Countless individuals struggle to find meaning for lives threatened by despair. Of what possible significance can be the conflicts on one small religious group?

"My prayer . . . is that we may be given the wisdom and courage to focus our minds on the great central truths which Jesus taught and embodied, leaving partisan strife to die in the deserts where it was born.

J. P. Sanders was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1917. His father was a Church of Christ minister and the family, on both sides, are members of that church. Mr. Sanders attended the Austin, Texas high school for the blind, graduating as valedictorian in 1936. He graduated summa cum laude from Abilene Christian college in 1940, with a major in English and Bible. He earned an M.A. at Vanderbilt in 1941, and a B.D. from Vanderbilt's School of Religion in 1943, where he won the Founder's Medal for scholarship. He studied at Yale in 1943-44.

Mr. Sanders served Churches of Christ in Covington, Kentucky (1944-47) and Cincinnati, Ohio (1947-50). In the Ohio area he preached in most of the Churches of Christ in the Great Lakes region and served the *Christian Leader* as associate editor. From 1950 to 1954 he served the Kilburn Avenue Church in Rockford, Illinois, where he also organized and directed a camp for under-privileged children.

In 1954, Mr. Sanders accepted a call to the First Christian Church in Anaconda, Montana, remaining until 1959. He went next to the First Christian Church in Missoula, Montana and remained there until June, 1964. He moved to the Fruitridge Christian Church in Sacramento, California, in 1964. His strong concern for social justice keeps him involved in many service areas. He works now for the Sacramento Peace Center, is on the board of the city's Society for the Blind, and labors with the Social Action Commission of the Sacramento Area Council of Churches.

Mr. Sanders has written an article entitled *The Failures of Fundamentalism* which further illuminates our problem in which he touches upon the following thoughts; to-wit:

"It was . . . battle for the prophetic faith which brought Jesus to his death. Defenders of the priestly orthodoxy would not let him live . . . His statement that 'the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath,' was itself enough to mark him as a dangerous radical who was distressingly 'free' in handling Scripture and its requirements.

"In our day . . . prophetic Protestant revolt has been conventionalized into a new orthodoxy and rigid creed. This modern

priestly form of Protestantism goes by the name of Fundamentalism.

". . . Fundamentalism has the four inevitable marks of the priestly tradition in all ages, and in our time we have chosen to term these issues as follows: Scriptural literalism, legalism, sectarianism, and social irrelevance

"Scriptural Literalism

"The priest, in seeking a system of faith which can be the unquestioned basis for conformity within the sect, may find authority for the system either through an infallible church or an infallible Scriptural interpretation

"In his conviction that he can discover through the letter what the early church was and taught, the priestly type is persuaded that he can 'restore' that early church by duplicating it detail for detail in our time. Restorationism is the effort to catch a historical process at one moment of its evolution and to fossilize it at that point for eternal duplication. . . . fluid, and dynamic life is too elusive for such capture. The early church was not itself a rigid structure; the development of it, as seen through New Testament letters, shows this clearly. To talk about 'restoring' the early church requires that we designate *which* early church—for example, the one of Corinthians, or the one of the pastoral letters.

". . . The Scriptures were obviously not written to be complete descriptions of anything, or blueprints. Paul, for instance, wrote letters that were needed and addressed himself to the specific problems before him. He did not self-consciously write Scripture. He did not try to portray in detail what the church was; his readers already knew. We do not even have all the letters he wrote

". . . Acts 20:7 says that 'on the first day of the week, when we were gathered to break bread . . .' From this passing reference, some restorationists have tried to develop a pattern as to frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper.

". . . whether it was the Lord's Supper or a common meal is not even made clear we do not know whether it was a common or universal practice

"Restoration, it seems to me, is not only futile but also undesirable. Why should the church of the twentieth century want to be like the one of the first? That church became what it was in order to meet its need and exigencies; to attempt to follow its exact form today is to deny the urgency we ought to feel for meeting the needs and exigencies of our own day.

“. . . The spirit of that early church can still give us life, but trying to live by its letter--which we cannot even discern fully--is lethal indeed.

“Legalism

“. . . the priest seeks an exact system of faith which can be the basis for the sect, and he seeks it through the authority of the church of the authority of literal Biblical interpretations. This system is a code of requirements, or what is often called ‘the plan of salvation.’

“Legalism sees sin as a violation of the written code

“. . . In Christ he found freedom from legalism through a new basis for salvation: his relationship to God through inward faith

“Some, for example, put great emphasis on baptism as ‘essential to salvation.’ They do not usually put the same emphasis on forgiving enemies as ‘essential to salvation’--through Jesus said more about this than about baptism In short, legalism, in its efforts to find justification by works of the law, eliminates the more difficult requirements in order that it might establish a law that can be kept.

“Sectarianism

“Priestly religion seeks to establish a legal system or code for salvation through literal interpretation of Scripture. The code so arrived at must be accepted in detail by all who would be of the ‘in-group.’ . . . The in-group, by definition, becomes a sect, and its accepted interpretation becomes its creed, whether written or unwritten.

“This view of the church is the same as that held by the medieval Catholic Church--the only difference being that restoration marks the church by its ‘true doctrine’ while Catholicism marked it by the ‘true priesthood.’ In both cases the church is seen as a definite organization, exclusivist, infallible.

“. . . there is no one pattern that is convincing to all right-thinking people Thus, far from being a basis for unity today, patternism or restoration may become a sure and certain barrier to unity and has, as a matter of fact, resulted in more divisions. Any pattern we propose becomes divisive, marking those who reject it as the ‘non-church,’ and those who accept it as ‘the church,’

“. . . A group may say that it has no creed, while its very ‘creedlessness’ is its test for exclusion, or its creed. If an unimmersed Christian should seek to enter that church, he might well find the sect’s creed on immersion barring his way.

“Social irrelevance

“The sect, by the nature of its life, is introspective. It has mirrors where windows ought to be . . . In this introspection, it loses significant relationship to the world around it . . . Being absorbed in its own institutional purity, it becomes irrelevant to the social concerns of the world.

“. . . It lives in the backwater of life, talking of old questions and ancient issues but unable to come to grips with the contemporary urgencies. The early church was vital and dynamic, turning its world upside down, because it was valiantly dealing with the problems of its day. To try to live by a literal imitation of that church and its solutions is to be called from the living present to the dead past.

“. . . A world with increasingly crushing problems of exploding populations, urbanization, automation, racial tension, emerging nations, armaments escalation, the constant threat of nuclear disaster, mounting discontent of the world’s poor in the presence of over-abundance--in all this the church must have something more to offer than dry-as-dust irrelevances about the form of baptism, frequency of the Supper, and church policy

“When Jesus talked of separating sheep from goats, he said not a word about sound doctrine, the true sect, or any of the other priestly conditions. On the contrary, he talked about social needs: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, ministering to the thirsty, the sick, imprisoned, and strangers

“. . . Jesus scored the Pharisees because they would carefully ‘tithe mint, anise, and cummin, and leave undone the *weightier* matters of the law: justice, and mercy, and faith.’ . . .

“One-tenth of our brethren in the United States are humiliated from morning until night every day of their lives simply because they are darker than most of us. Their cries for justice have gone unheeded, even by the church which should have been most concerned for this brother beside the road. The cry and demand has been taken into our streets. Still the nation resists, and still the church hesitates to take an unequivocal stand for their rights as men. Could anything be more priestly than for us to continue to baptize, commune, tithe and the rest, while our brethren and their children are daily humiliated? Shall we continue to call the people to solemn assemblies, to religious feasts, to prayers, and hymns, or shall we with Amos say that all these externals are no delight to the Lord but that we must let ‘justice roll down like waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream?’”

Perhaps the most touching "voice" is that of Laurie L. Hibbett who was born in Alexandria, Virginia, the fourth generation of English settlers whose religion was Episcopal with a sprinkling of Quakers. When her father married a Tennessee girl, he agreed to bring his children up in his wife's Church of Christ faith. Mrs. Hibbett was still an infant when her father died and her mother moved to Nashville; from that time forward her history was Church of Christ. She married a graduate of a Church of Christ college; maternal grandfathers on each side were elders.

Although Mrs. Hibbett is now Episcopalian, she says, "I would no more repudiate my Church of Christ sources than would St. Paul his Hebrew culture. Though with St. Paul I found it necessary to press on, forgetting the things of the past, I remain deeply attached to this regional phenomenon and these are the people I claim as most fully my own." Mrs. Hibbett is the author of a charming, widely-read short story entitled, *Fruit in His Season*, and the essay *A Time to Speak* relevant portions of which are herein set forth, to-wit:

"... Why was she, a born and bred member of the Church of Christ, seated here now as an Episcopalian?

"... there were no words to deal with her former church as gently as the isolation of its members deserved.

"Perhaps all I could say to them would be, 'God loves you.' But I would have to add, 'Reach out to Him, above your leaders who plant themselves so squarely between you and God, and who say to you, 'Accept our teaching or reject the Christ.'

"... to be confronted by the cross would be to lose all sense of earned salvation.

"So the baptistery, instead, looms high in the Church of Christ building--as in its teachings made baptism the chief condition of salvation It is a reward, earned by man through obedience in baptism.

"In the Church of Christ auditorium . . . in dead center would be a stage where later a preacher would star as sole performer. He would flex his closed Bible at the congregation. He would say which verse is requisite to salvation, which is not. His sermon would be the core of the service

"She thought the place of the minister in the Church of Christ was overdone the time given his sermon, the songs picked to underscore his theme--all these geared the service to one man and his mood. It was too heavy a burden for him, too passive a role for the congregation

"'Church of Christ,' I shall have to tell them, 'is a misnomer when used exclusively, as this church uses it. Church of Christ is the generic term for all Christian churches of all ages. It belongs equally to all denominations and has always been understood to mean the whole state of Christ's church. As such it is neither identifying nor realistic when applied to a specific regional phenomenon within Christendom.'

"Because of this misunderstanding of its own name, the Church of Christ lacks true identification even among its own members. The Church of Christ person must ask the Church of Christ stranger the age-old question, long admitted by more realistic denominations: 'Which branch?' *Which branch* is still as reasonable a question now as when Alexander Campbell started his movement to make the question obsolete.

"The greatest Christian of all, St. Paul, belonged to a sect and said so. 'I am a Pharisee,' he said in Acts 23:6, although he belonged even then to the Church of Christ. Nor was Jesus superman but typical man He was connected with a region (Galilee), with a race (the Jews), and with a time (under Pontius Pilate). He was not called Cosmopolitan but Nazarene, an unpretentious local name he never denied.

"I am a Southern woman, with an Episcopal father and a Church of Christ mother, one as regional as the other. My theology, such as it is, has been colored by these facts. How could I believe that the denomination, the Church of Christ, transcends history, persons, external influences, errors of interpretation or translation of the Bible, and the limitations of human understanding?"

"If they had called themselves simply Campbellites and had admitted their place in time, it would have helped,' she thought. 'For they are neither the beginning nor the end of Christ's Church.'

"... To her mother church, grace was a dangerous word, a word to be used only when it could be carefully explained away. To mention grace was to follow with a warning of the inherent pitfall of trusting grace fully. Salvation by works, not by grace, was (and is) the teaching of her mother church.

"... it was with astonishment that she had read one day in the Bible, 'For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God--not because of works, lest any man should boast.'

"... for the people of her girlhood, this notion of a free gift of God was incomprehensible

"I could not say that they have a false concept of the Holy Spirit. They have almost no concept of it at all."

". . . The nearest concession made by the group was to admit that the Spirit had dictated the Bible. In effect, they asked this question: Do you follow the Bible along the picked path of Church of Christ teaching, omitting this verse as unessential, exalting this verse as requisite to salvation? If the answer was yes, then one could assume the Spirit was leading him.

". . . The Church of Christ, what ever else it may have discarded or ignored, has the Bible. This simple affirmation probably constitutes the group's chief problem. Here supposed strength turns out to be actual weakness . . . For more of their people will read the Bible for themselves as the educational advantages of the group increase with new prosperity . . ."

"It pleases the Church of Christ, she knew, to say to the world that it stands on the Bible alone, against modernism and atheism, and that herein lies the crux of its quarrel with the rest of the Christian and secular world. But there are many other Bible churches, and they also stand on the Bible alone. One would suppose, in reading Church of Christ literature, that this church has much in common with other evangelical, conservative Christians. Yet the truth is that the Church of Christ allies itself to no such groups, nor permits any of them to link themselves with it. Churches which do not accept the Church of Christ as final authority on interpretation of the Bible meet an insurmountable wall. This is not a Bible church against a non-Bible world; this is a church which claims to love the Bible but determinedly avoids such parts of the Bible as it does not stress in its circumscribed doctrine of selected scriptures.

"Because of its claim to stand on the Bible alone, the Church of Christ will not face the fact that it has, in common with other churches, a body of dogma based partly on scriptures, partly on church authority. In each new generation the young preacher must go through the motions of assembling from scriptures the exact doctrine of the preceding generation. If he discovers new truths in the Bible, he is quickly branded as unsound. *He does not have to depart from the Bible to acquire this stigma. He has only to pick unfamiliar verses within the Bible . . .* The leap of faith from the Church of Christ as Saviour to Jesus Christ as Saviour is a hazardous one . . ."

"Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby

is not to be required of any man . . . that it should be thought requisite to salvation.

This is, in essence, the belief of all Protestant churches, and no church has a monopoly on the idea of Bible authority . . . No one would think of taking them to task for this, but the group should admit that it does act from time to time on church authority, not on Bible authority alone . . .

". . . its people are not free to go about unrestricted even *within* the written word. Its members may speak where the Bible speaks only if the Church of Christ speaks to the subject.

"For example, the Church of Christ rules out such scriptural practices as the ministry of healing, the holy kiss, the washing of feet, mutual edification or the priesthood of all believers, the selling of all things and holding them in common, and the laying on of hands with which the book of *Acts* is replete. None of these items apply today, the Church of Christ states flatly. Yet all may be proved by the Bible.

". . . But its members would be happier if they understood that Church of Christ policy is determined by church authority, not scriptural authority alone. Let the leaders openly announce the church dogma, explain that certain scriptures are disparaged by preference of the group and others emphasized for the same reason. Let them reveal the hidden hierarchy which determines such matters, and then take their place modestly, realistically, with the ranks of Christendom. Many of their followers could then breathe a sigh of relief at being released from the embarrassment of defending an untenable position. One could then respect their denomination as a lately come but welcome part of Christ's church.

"Grace, the Holy Spirit, hierarchy. These are frightening words to the Church of Christ. There is a word of even stronger taboo among its member, however. This is the word "creed." It is denied by the group that they have a creed. Actually, they have a rigid creed known to all of them. They find unaccountable satisfaction in the fact that their creed is not *written*.

"Is a creed any less a creed because it is not written?" she recalled asking an aged seer in the Church of Christ. He gave her a long look but did not answer. These people are timid, wily, cautious of traps. They have the natural cunning of the person who seeks to trap others and is therefore always alert to being trapped himself. To those who do not know them, they appear both suspicious and crafty, actually, they are frightened . . ."

"In the Church of Christ such written prayers, however comforting, are suspect, regardless of their truth . . ."

"In the Church of Christ, however, the Lord's Prayer itself is forbidden. A member of the church may compose his own prayer on the spot, leading the congregation through phrases of sometimes doubtful theology, but when it comes to the Lord's Prayer, the group will not join in. A technicality precludes it, 'Thy kingdom come' is a forbidden petition. Christ's kingdom has already come, they teach. It is the Church of Christ

". . . She had found . . . rigid notions of sound doctrine can be dangerous to homes and even sanity, and this she could not reconcile with the gospel of Christ, which is good news, not bad. To understand this, one must know that the Church of Christ has an order or priority in which church doctrine always takes precedence over ethics, morals, common sense or common weal. Because of its claim to a perfect and unalterable plan of salvation, it may stand adamantly against the common good of the community.

". . . every orthodox Church of Christ minister teaches, *that any Church of Christ congregation under any circumstances is preferable to any other church, and that proselyting is a divine duty at whatever cost to the spirit of the convert.* This may be disastrous when the victim is a child with few words but strong emotional ties to another group"

". . . 'money is the spiritual status symbol. Men are under pressure to make money, in order to give money, in order to prove by money that they love God, and that He loves them. The heroes of faith in this culture tend to be financiers. Whatever shadow of suspicion falls on sharp business practice is covered by the doctrinal verity to which they subscribe: 'He gave it to the Lord.'

". . . There are good people in the Church of Christ who deplore the wrongs done in the name of dogma and the Lord. But the attitude too frequent among them is that the more one silently endures these absurdities, the more pleased God is with the forbearance. Jesus was not so tolerant . . . Blind loyalty is to the church, not to justice; to the church, not to morality; to the church, not to simply everyday *goodness.*

"Needless to say, family relations suffer. The hearts of the sons are turned against the fathers and the hearts of the fathers against the sons. Religion becomes the divider instead of the healer of the breach. Here, in the name of religion, husband and wife are at odds in an eternal triangle--men, women, and God--in which God set against man has placed woman at the base of the triangle. The marital relationship is summed up in Church of Christ doctrine by St. Paul's, 'Wives, be in subjection.' Property rights, personal rights, rights connected with the rearing of chil-

dren--the wife has none if the husband decides to make a test case of this scripture"

The subjection of which St. Paul speaks is elicited by the boundless love of the husband, as Christ loves the Church . . . She is subject to him because he is crucified for her. If he is not the type of Christ, if his role is not saviour through sacrifice, then the wife's subjection to him is neither required nor commendable. The Christian woman worships the Christ image in her husband. If it is not there, she may be worshipping Satan. 'Strong words,' she thought, 'but the Bible is strong meat for those who believe it.'

"Her mind turned to the Church of Christ practice of public confession by one person before the assembled congregation. Lacking any adequate scriptural precedent, the custom stemmed loosely from a verse ('confessing your faults one to another') which suggested person-to-person relationships in private talks, not person-to-audience

". . . An inexorable toll is demanded of the spirit that buries its talent

". . . God's way of changing our hearts and lives is through overwhelming demonstration of love and concern, not through threats and intimidations. We love Him because He first loved us The cross leaves us without excuse; we have no answer for a love like that.'

". . . At last, in the fulness of time, the Church of Christ slipped off her shoulders as a worn cape drops when the last thread breaks. It had not warmed her for years. She scarcely noticed when it fell away."

Unquestionably the "voice" of Norman L. Parks is at once an expression of the most informed, analytical and conservative viewpoint which has spoken, out of deep concern, based on his wide and deep understanding of the historical Campbell--Stone Reformation movement known within the religious groups stemming therefrom as the "Restoration Movement". Norman L. Parks is professor of political science and head of the department of social science at Middle Tennessee State University. He was educated at David Lipscomb College, Abilene Christian College (B.A.), Peabody College (M.A.) and Vanderbilt University (Ph.D.).

Prior to his present position, Mr. Parks taught for eleven years at Vanderbilt Peabody, and served for a time as senior editorial writer on the Nashville Tennessean. He was dean of David Lipscomb College for eight years, and also taught at Freed-hardeman College and Oklahoma Christian College.

Although he has preached and taught often in Churches of Christ, Mr. Parks considers himself anything but a professional pulpiteer. Of his experiences in this field, he writes:

"I have spoken in many churches and on occasion still do, but because of a lack of the pulpit stance and orthodox sermon technique it has not been hard to preserve my non-professional purity. At MTSU I conducted for a number of years a 'laboratory' in fellowship by sponsoring a student magazine called *The Campus Christian*. The editor came from a premillennial church, the assistant editor from a Disciples church, and the staff from other segments of the Church of Christ. It was remarkable how well they worked and worshipped together. Such experiences may sometimes tempt us to say, 'If there were only some way to protect the young from the old.'"

His "voice" is entitled *Thy Ecclesia Come!* which vibrates with concerned love, as he says:

". . . within . . . the Campbell-Stone Reformation movement, . . . fragmentation has reached a crisis stage. One may deeply desire to be a 'disciple at large' but the degree of his acceptance by this or that fragment will depend on his acquiescence in its prescribed parochial loyalties. Preachers are keenly aware of the tests which they must pass, for example, before they can appear on the Church Council ('lectureship') programs sponsored by Church of Christ colleges. Trafficking in reputations is an important business of the lectureship managers. The vigilance of these guardians of orthodoxy ranges far and wide, as the author was recently reminded. A young instructor at David Lipscomb College told him in 1965, 'I became deeply prejudiced against you as a freshman because Dr. . . . held you up in class as an example of dangerous liberalism.' It had been 23 years since this writer had taught at that college! The theory of congregational independence will in no way protect a congregation from proscription if it extends full fraternity to any prominent disciple branded as unorthodox by that faction's ruling hierarchy.

". . . this author has . . . seen its leadership abandon the main goals of the Campbell-Stone movement--unity of all Christians and the reforming of religion by purging it of hierarchy, clergy, institutional machinery, *collegia de propaganda de fide*, non-Biblical terminology, and all post-Biblical dogma, ritual, and trappings which are made measures of orthodoxy

"Viewed sociologically, the Church of Christ is far advanced on the sect-denomination continuum, though there is a spread among its major segments. The Church of Christ (one-cup, one-

book, one-assembly) is closest to the sect pole. In its emphasis on lay leadership, lay teaching, informal services, and its sense of hostility to the 'world', this group is closest to the pioneer spirit of the preceding century. It would probably have a strong appeal to the underprivileged urban masses if its evangelism were directed at the urban slums. The Church of Christ (premillennial) is also closer to the sect pole, though developing colleges and a clergy . . . Both the Church of Christ (institutional) and the Church of Christ (anti-institutional) are near the denominational pole and may be considered together.

"Far from being a sacrificial vocation, its ministry offers some of limited education and ability more than they could command in secular work The church long ago dropped its frontier-inspired hostility to imposing church edifices ('decorated like a theatre to gratify the pride of life,' as Campbell described them), and makes efforts to put buildings in the 'best' part of town.

". . . The successful businessman, provided he is not niggardly with his money, is emerging as the layman hero of the church and the logical candidate for deacon or elder. The board of elders itself is patterned after the corporate board of directors. Nowhere has 'the Protestant ethic' enjoyed a higher endorsement. The social radicalism of the Nineteenth Century pioneer and Red-neck has been replaced by a deep-dyed economic and social conservatism which is hostile to social reform, welfare programs, state intervention in the economy, labor unions, racial integration, disturbers of the status quo, and 'those who have turned the world upside down' (Acts 17:6).

"The Church of Christ appears then as a lower middle class phenomenon 'on the make' at its socio-economic level. . . . Nor is it active at the 'unwashed throng' level, leaving the lower urban classes and slum warrens to the Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses. . . .

"Though the Church meets most of the sociological criteria of a mature denomination, it still remains at the sect stage doctrinally, as reflected in the priority given to doctrinal affairs at the expense of ethical principle. There is a powerful instrument of solidarity and cohesion in the boast, 'We have the truth,' when aimed against other religious groups. Doctrinally it is on a continuous military footing. Its militant state of mind allows little room for love or accommodation and none for unity in diversity. Since it is no longer at war with the secular economic world and infrequently effects confrontation with its denominational rivals, it

tends to turn its sectarian hostilities inward and is presently devouring its energies in internecine conflict.

"In a second respect, the church remains at the sect stage in its claim of 'literal' adherence to Biblical command, example, and 'necessary inference.' In this area it has tended toward bibliolatry. This adherence follows the sect pattern of careful selectivity of Scriptures to support the party's position . . . Examples which are *not* considered examples make up a long list: foot washing . . . speaking with tongues in public or private . . . solos and group singing in assembly, anointing and prayers for the sick by the elders, deaconesses as well as deacons, religious head-coverings (not fancy hats) and uncut hair for females, wearing of jewelry, and congregational participation in decision-making on the Antioch and Jerusalem model. Anyone insisting upon the Biblical pattern in these matters would quickly be termed a troublemaker and would sooner or later be excommunicated.

"But other criteria less clear or certain than some of the above are made the standards for establishing the claim of the Church of Christ to uniqueness: the Lord's Supper every Sunday (and Sunday only), mass singing only and without an instrument, the 'right name,' the 'laying by in store every Sunday, the 'right' baptism where validity is best ascertained by the 'soundness' of the baptizer, and the right 'organization' of the church under a plurality of elders and deacons.

"In its emphasis on the external observance of certain doctrinal formalities and in taking for granted or ignoring the really fundamental questions of religion, the Church of Christ is 'majoring in minors,' . . . one may search literature and sermons of the Church of Christ in vain for concern with such questions as: what is the meaning of life? How does the individual cope with the sense of meaninglessness, with frustration, with suffering? How can one really know God? How does one learn to love, and how does one learn to teach others to love? How do the just live by faith? How can a deeper understanding of the grace of God be won? Can the Christian live a life free from fear? How is the Christian free from law, from sin, from death? How does freedom accord with necessity? How can we better meet man's need for fellowship?

". . . the Church of Christ poses as the most fundamental question of all the 'right church' issue--a matter that is inherently institutional and denominational. The criteria which it advances to identify the 'one true church' among the many claimants are

those which distinguish an organization rather than a people or a way of life

". . . The *ecclesia* of Christ has no name. It is as absurd to emphasize the name of the assembly of Christ as to emphasize the name of the sun With respect to the hard legalism read into the criterion of baptism for the remission of sins, reflection will suggest that baptism is an individual expression of faith in Christ, while remission of sins is God's role, not man's motive.

"The legalistic case for congregational singing without a musical instrument is at best negative--silence of the New Testament on the subject It is remarkable that the legalists stop short of their own logic in refusing to accept solos ('If a man hath a song') or group singing ('speaking one to another').

"The criterion of 'the divinely patterned' organization stated in absolutes leaves too much unanswered elders Why is the suggestion that they be elected by the congregation for a term of one or two years greeted with horror? What is the scriptural basis for a self-perpetuating board of elders and deacons? If the modern church must have deacons, but not deaconesses, why does the New Testament fail to mention a single function they discharge (the explanation that they are 'servants' is not valid, since all Christians are also servants)? If elders are pastors, why do they not do the job instead of hiring a professional shepherd?"

". . . Removal of authority and responsibility from the members and their concentration in the hands of an elite is as dangerous to the welfare of a church as it is to a state. People alienated from decision-making lose initiative, creativity, and obligation. The pews become passive, the services ritualistic, religion professionalized, and influence weak. When elders . . . assert the power of ultimate decision as to what members may believe . . . the result is a dictatorship in defiance of the whole nature of the Christian society. However 'good' individual elders may be personally, the whole system is wrong.

". . . It has nothing fundamental to lose in holding that though the frequency and time of the Lord's Supper is moot, its observance each Sunday is an appropriate response of those who wish to remember Christ. There is no loss in conceding that while there is no 'law' on the church treasury, weekly collections represent a practical way for members to consolidate their giving for specific purposes, provided this practice does not substitute for private alms giving. There would be no loss in granting that there is no merit *per se* in singing with or without an instrument, but there is no

limit to the power, richness, depth, and spirituality of a capella singing when developed by hard practice, mastery of music, and individual specialization . . . There would be no loss except the loss of the cocoon of legalism which has been spun around the entire church.

The redefinition of its identity in non-legalistic concepts will be necessary before the Church of Christ can communicate in the larger assembly of God. The steady attrition that accompanies the increasing education of its members cannot be stopped until the disgracefully mediocre scholarship and shallow legalism of its present pulpit, press, and seminary leadership is modified by a deeper spirituality, a greater magnanimity, and sounder learning. . . . Beneath the surface there is a vast unrest, indeed . . . demanding a religion of grace and a gospel of good news to replace the hardshell legalism of the core church. . . .

"It is ironic that though the American Reformation was a revolt against Calvinistic bodies in the Protestant arc . . . Its code is constantly revised to include new laws on the millennium, biology, institutionalization, fellowship, capitalism, Biblical scholarship, or whatever is the issue of the moment. Legalism and authoritarianism reduce Christianity to a system of law and a salvation by merit, authoritatively proclaimed and enforced. Such a religion presents the God-man relationship in dichotomies of . . . command - submission, and authority - conformity instead of I - thou, friend - friend, redeemer - redeemed, father - son. Its authoritarian God is jealous of his rights and angered when denied propitiation by money, time, service, and ritualistic observance . . .

"Such a view of religion produces two extremes. One is the self-righteous, judgmental, and aggressive person who lives up to the 'law.' The other is the insecure, neurotic, fear-ridden, and guilt-laden individual who, try as he may, is overwhelmed by the possibility that he has not been right enough or done enough to win salvation. For both types the lesson of Romans remains unrevealed. Between the extremes are others, who, for sanity of mind and to escape the plight into which legalism thrusts its victims, find an answer in reducing the laws to formalities within their reach. Others manage in spite of the law approach to find meaning in a religion of grace and faith . . . Needless to say, they are preservers of its candlestick.

"Efforts to enforce conformity reflect the degree of authoritarianism in the Church of Christ. The free man questions, tries, tests. He acknowledges no authority to which he does not freely consent internalized truth. He is subject to no control above his

own conscience. He does not obey because it is commanded, but because it is the way of truth and wisdom . . . The free man defines authority as the *right to acceptance* which is inherent in truth, fact, reality . . . Authoritarianism, in contrast, emphasizes externalized power, superordination and subordination, superiority, rule and submission. It finds lodgment in father-dominated families, class-structured societies, anti-democratic governments, and legalistic religions. It has psychological roots in individual personality: overly-felt need for security, which may be temporarily satisfied by either submission or domination; fear of self-direction and preference for obedience to outside authority; tendency to conform compulsively to the orthodox; preference for 'order' and discipline over freedom and spontaneity in human relations; satisfaction derived from identifying with a superior 'authority'; emotional rigidity and limited imagination; excessive concern with group acceptance; abnormal loyalty to the in-group; insecurity in the presence of out-groups; attraction to the cult of personality--the WHO rather than the WHAT or the WHY; the tendency to look on 'those in Authority' with reverence and loyalty; acceptance of an inferior status for women.

"Certain evils inevitably flow from an authoritarian religion: (1) a passive, submissive membership lacking in imagination and creativity; (2) aggressive, power-hungry leaders who sublimate their own insecurity by speaking as oracles and demanding acceptance; (3) loss of freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech; (4) little identification with God as love; (5) centralization of decision-making in a handful of 'authorities'; (6) growth of coldness, formalism, and ritualism; (7) the use of scholarship to preserve the status quo, thus stopping progress; (8) conflict between rival 'authorities', producing factions and splits; (9) increased pressure for conformity in opinion; (10) growth of suppressed anxiety and guilt in the membership (11) rejection of the idea that a congregation is a democracy or brotherhood of equals; (12) tendency of the leaders to hold the ability of the general membership in low-esteem, making it necessary for the authorities to decide for them so as to avoid 'mistakes'; (13) concentration of control of the church property and funds in the hands of a few; (14) . . . holding the church to be an organism superior to and, in a sense, separate from the individual and for the good of which the individual can be sacrificed; . . . insistence that 'the' faith is a finished system completely known to the authorities, beyond re-examination, and capable of being authoritatively defined and enforced.

"A power structure is an inevitable part of a legalistic religion. Not since Puritan days has as much power gravitated into the

hands of the ministers in the contemporary Church of Christ . . . He speaks ex cathedra for the church . . . He attends the annual council at the nearest church college to help firm up the party line and make contacts for future engagements, and in this capacity serves as the main link between the brotherhood power structure and the congregational power-structure.

"The latter is made up of the self-perpetuating board of elders and deacons who 'rule', control the treasury (\$50,000 a year spells considerable power), grant recognition to complaisant members, and 'silence' the 'dangerous' ones The total elimination of women from the business meeting reflects the conviction that they, like children, are 'subordinate.' A highly educated woman member . . . may make banking and commercial decisions of major importance during the week, meeting men on the basis of equality, but be deemed entirely unfit to pass on the business of the church. However, with the growth of the power system, the mass of male members has, in effect, fallen into the same state of inferiority.

"Viewed either sociologically or scripturally, the Church of Christ is not the church of Christ. Its members, in a sense, are neither 'Christians only' nor 'the only Christians.' Its fragmentation cancels out the first proposition. The arrogance of the second displays an attitude wholly contrary to the genius of Christianity . . . there are great numbers of noble, dedicated Christians in the Church of Christ. He has no desire to be alienated from them . . . Any difference in opinion or understanding of religious truth should never be a barrier. But indifference alone could lead the author to ignore or gloss over the . . . authoritarianism, corroding legalism . . . of power in the Church of Christ.

"There is the plaint that one must not criticize the church lest its 'image' be hurt before the world. The acid language of *Galatians* should be answer enough to this rationalization . . . If the Church of Christ is not capable of self-examination, there is no hope for it. If it cannot accept unity in diversity, there is no place for it. If it cannot deal with differences and new concepts by dialogue, there is no progress in it. If it cannot preach 'good news' instead of legalistic 'bad news,' there is no need for it. If it cannot replace law with love, there is no redemption in it. If it cannot promote the Christian ethics which will reconcile rather than alienate people, there is no vitality in it.

". . . Nor can he (the author) think of a more urgent service than to work for the reign of God to come more fully to the Church of Christ. The difficulties and ostracisms for those who stand for fellowship reconciliation that will bridge differences and allow for

each man his own exploration in the realm of faith may well increase

"The goal is well worth the perseverance: An *ecclesia* which embraces the imperatives of truth while rejecting the law-obeying concept; which is a society of love and trust, not of command and obedience, for this is the will of God; which avoids judgment and promotes free interpersonal relationships, which can hold fellowship with imperfect men without 'endorsing' their imperfections; which views religion as a way of life, with no distinction between the secular and the religious; which holds the church to be people living in confraternity rather than an institution; which accepts the necessity that a Christian society must have organized effort, but views organization merely as a means; which rejects the domination-dichotomy in favor of an order of equality in which the only primacy is that which flows from a superior example and a richer experience. With such a consummation in mind we can still pray, 'Thy *ecclesia* come!'"

Carl L. Etter spoke out some years ago and is one of those unfortunate sensitive souls that did not want to go but in his time was unable to hear or receive support from other "voices" as are available to young men and women today.

Carl L. Etter graduated from Abilene Christian college in 1922 and did graduate work in religion at the University of Michigan and the University of Southern California while preaching for Churches of Christ in Detroit and Los Angeles. He went to Japan in 1928, intending to spend his life as a missionary.

Mr. Etter was offered scholarships at the University of Edinburgh and at the School of Religion in Berkeley, California, but he returned to Southern California. After continued studies at the University of Southern California he began work with the Los Angeles city schools as supervisor of guidance and rehabilitation for physically limited students. He considers the chance to help some 25,000 handicapped students become vocationally adjusted a "compensating experience for one who was dedicated to the ministry and to missionary work in the Church of Christ."

Before leaving the Church of Christ, Mr. Etter declined invitations to serve as minister for churches in California, Michigan, Tennessee, and Texas, and to become president of two different Church of Christ colleges. He earned the Ph.D. degree in 1953 from the University of Hokkaido.

His explanation is contained in the paper *In Search of Freedom* in which he had this to say:

“. . . We are members of Church of Christ families which have been identified with the church for several generations. We are former students of Christian colleges, and I served as head of the Religion Department in one of them. In days gone by I have had opportunities to serve those schools as dean and also as president, and have occupied Church of Christ pulpits from Detroit to Los Angeles

“Therefore, our religious change has not been made in ignorance of the Church of Christ and its teachings. Neither has it been made in haste, nor in anger, but out of deep conviction--a conviction that has grown over a period of many years of university training, prayer, and thoughtful consideration

“First, we do not subscribe to the belief that the Church of Christ, as it is so labeled, includes all the true Christians. To become identified with another religious group is no evidence that one is not a member of the church of Christ in its true and universal sense.

“Second, the teaching of the Church of Christ is based upon a superficial interpretation of the Bible

“Third, the Church of Christ proposes to speak where the Bible speaks and keep silent where it is silent. It does neither.

“Fourth, the Church of Christ claims to have no creed except Christ, but it has over twenty unwritten creeds to one of which one must subscribe in order to have fellowship with that particular wing of the church . . . the Church of Christ is becoming increasingly interested in heresy hunting. How do these heresy hunters determine when they have found a victim? They hear his speech, or read his writings, and weigh what they hear or read against the teaching in the unwritten creed or creeds which they have adopted as their standard. Christ was wise enough to stay out of the writing field, but He was finally apprehended by heresy hunters of His day and condemned on the basis of hearsay

“Fifth, the church of Christ claims to have all the truth, but, in fact, is groping in darkness. It absolutely forbids new light to enter, and perpetuates its own inadequate insights by refusing to hear those who have persisted in their quest for truth. The founder of the Christian religion met the same type of religionists in His day and told them it was a case of the blind leading the blind.

“Seventh, the educational program of the Church of Christ is unwilling to trust the youth of the church with the facts of

life and religion. It exposes its youth to a smattering of superficialities

“Eighth, the leaders of the Church of Christ have placed it in an embarrassing position by continual warfare upon science and the scientific attitude. This fight against science is based upon fear that it will destroy faith in the pet shibboleths of the church. It does. Some of the most cherished doctrines of the church of Christ burst like iridescent bubbles when exposed to the searchlight of the scientific approach in religion . . . Real science does not drive one away from true religion . . . The scientific approach to religion should have a salutary effect in driving out much of the superstition and fear which has haunted religion through the centuries, and will help the Church to retain in its leadership many good men who otherwise would be lost.

“Ninth, the message of the Church of Christ is negative in much of its teaching

“Tenth, the Church of Christ has such great faith in the correctness of its position that it has developed a smugness that borders on that holier-than-thou attitude so well illustrated by certain religious sects who received the most scathing rebukes of Christ in His day.

“Eleventh, the Church of Christ preaches undenominational Christianity, but in reality is the most denominational of all denominations. It is neither Protestant, nor Catholic but a group of small, warring sects which are little denominations within a denomination.

“Twelfth, the Church of Christ preaches unity and practices division more paradoxically than any church with which we are familiar . . . In our opinion the Church of Christ will not espouse such a cause, but will continue to tear itself to pieces over minor issues while the world burns.

“Thirteenth, the Church of Christ refuses to cooperate with its religious neighbors in movements that are designed to make the world a better place in which to live, but compasses land and sea in quest of proselytes on the basis that it has a more certain pattern for reaching heaven

“Fifteenth, the Church of Christ claims to be allied with the religious fundamentalists, but its position is more accurately described by the term incidentalist

“Even a matter which was so incidental that neither Christ nor the Apostles referred to it in any way is included in the creed on the basis that the New Testament is not only inclusive but

exclusive in its teaching. Instrumental music is an incidental which falls in this category . . . It is strange that the Church has not done the same for the washing of feet, because they have a New Testament example for that custom.

“. . . Those same religionists crucified Christ because He discredited other incidentals in their religion and pointed them to the 'weightier matters of the law.' From the viewpoint of His adversaries He was a modernist in His day, but in reality He emphasized fundamentals and they magnified incidentals

“Sixteenth, the Church of Christ has its eyes on the past and is more concerned with 'old paths,' than in directing people to paths they can follow successfully in our modern age

“Seventeenth, the Church of Christ does not encourage growth and has a set policy which opposes change . . . lasting values must constantly be reoriented in a changing world, just as Jesus did for religion in His day. Any other policy leads to an enduring social stratification based on birth, race, religion, or wealth—whether inherited or otherwise acquired.

“Eighteenth, the Church of Christ has no place in its fellowship for one who does not conform fully to the status quo. Even though we cast him out of our ecclesiastical circle, we expect him to remain with us Every man, woman, and child needs a sense of security and a feeling of belonging. It has been my observation for many years that the Church of Christ withdraws these essential requirements of the human spirit from those who manifest a tendency to do independent thinking. This is a subtle type of force

“Nineteenth, the Church of Christ has a double standard for judging persons who are accused of violating what the church considers to be New Testament teaching. Those who transgress the moral code are dealt with on one basis and those who depart from the Church's theological position are dealt with on a different basis The liberal was cast out and forced to seek another fellowship, even though he loved the church with every fibre of his being. The man who had violated the moral law was exalted to the most honored positions in the church.

“. . . Of greater significance is the fact that many members of the church are discontented, discouraged, and starving for spiritual uplift which does not, and cannot, radiate from a church whose message is basically negative, argumentative, belligerent, and antagonistic.

“Having been denied in the Church of Christ a whole-hearted fellowship in which we could raise our family, we have sought the fellowship of the Congregationalists, not because they are perfect nor because they have all the truth. But they encourage scholarship, are in harmony with modern religious thought, practice tolerance within and without their fellowship, earnestly seek and accept new truth, have a rare faculty for discerning fundamentals, do not disproportionately emphasize incidentals, weigh all related facts in their interpretation of the Bible and religion, have neither a written nor unwritten creed, have a constructive and modern educational program for youth, encourage intellectual honesty, take cognizance of the present and look toward the future, cooperate fully with every good cause, encourage growth, are not opposed to change, allow for individual differences in spiritual growth, and fellowship those who have attained different levels of religious thinking in their development.

“It is my feeling that the Restoration Movement was motivated by conditions in the religious world which were oppressive and in need of reform . . . the fabulous cathedrals of Europe are all monuments to the slavery of the poor, illiterate masses and to departures from the simple foundations of all world religions, including Christianity.

“I believe that the attempt to restore the simplicity of the New Testament church was a worthy cause and that the Church of Christ stood in the vanguard of a movement which could have resulted in great good had later leaders in the movement not succumbed to narrow, authoritarian dogmatism which turned it into one of the most denominational sects of our modern age.”

Lastly from among the “voices” chosen to be heard at this time, like a sounding trumpet is that of Robert Meyers. Mr. Meyers has been a minister in the Church of Christ for twenty-five years. He attended Freed-Hardeman College (1941-43) and graduated summa cum laude from Abilene Christian College (1948). He was awarded an M.A. from the University of Oklahoma (1951) and a Ph.D. from Washington University (1957). During World War II he took special courses at Oxford University and at Salisbury, England.

Now serving as a professor of English at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, Mr. Meyers has taught at the University of Oklahoma, at Washington University, at Harding College, and at Stetson University in Florida. He has twice received \$500 awards for excellence in teaching.

Mr. Meyers is entering his sixth year of service as a minister for the Riverside Church of Christ in Wichita. He is a book reviewer for the *Dallas Times-Herald* and writes frequently for religious and educational journals.

The beauty and truth of his plea *Two Worlds* cannot be ignored which he states as follows, to-wit:

"I remember clearly when it all began. . . .

"My father had been a Methodist first. His parents had worshipped with less inhibition than most do now. They 'got the Spirit,' as they explained it, and they were never greatly interested in arguing the logic of it. They put their hands upon their hearts and said, 'Jesus lives here. I know He does. Nothing you can say will make me change my mind about that.' I was taught later to ridicule that way of talking as 'better felt than told' religion, a foolish thing when compared with my own legalistic, argumentative head-religion.

"Uncle Clell, who belonged to the non-instrument Church of Christ, won my father to that church. . . .

"Always a person of strong enthusiasms and deep attachments I became the most loyal Church of Christ youngster imaginable. I liked to read, so I read all the literature that church provided. I learned the arguments by heart and recited them glibly. It was not long before I could vanquish any of my childhood playmates with barrages of prooftexts. What a heady joy it was to dominate them so completely! I was secure and, as I now see, religiously arrogant. I could not imagine the ignorance of people who knew the Church of Christ was right there in their own towns but who persisted in being Presbyterians or Nazarenes. I was discouraged from visiting them, so I knew nothing about them firsthand. . . .

"I began preparing bulging notebooks loaded with points to make in debates with 'sectarians.' . . . There seemed to me to be no more glorious life imaginable than that of defender of the faith against all the diseased Protestant sects that differed from my church.

"In my junior year in High school I began to preach. . . . When Abilene Christian College offered me a four year scholarship. . . . I turned it down and went instead to Freed-Hardeman College, a Church of Christ Bible school in Tennessee. I had heard that ACC preachers spoke too often on 'love' and were therefore, perhaps not so 'sound' as those at FHC. Above all else, I wanted to be sound.

". . . I enjoyed excellent 'appointments' in area churches. H. A. Dixon, a minister in Jackson, Tennessee and later to become president of Freed-Hardeman, once predicted from his pulpit that I would be one of the great defenders of the faith (i.e., Church of Christ interpretations). This heady praise only confirmed my conviction that I was on the glory road. . . .

"Then came Pearl Harbor and, shortly, three years of military service. The experience was cataclysmic. . . . because I moved outside my isolated Church of Christ world for the first time in my life. I met Seventh Day Adventists whose devotion to Christ put mine to shame. I met Presbyterian lads in whose hands I placed my life with full confidence. I watched thirty different religious groups worship together in army chapels, carried above their differences of tradition by a consuming faith in Jesus Christ."

"Suddenly my beautifully structured world began to crumble. . . . It was being shaken to pieces. The friends around me in the army were bound to be lost; I knew this because dozens of preachers had told me so. Yet how had it happened that they had such beautiful faith in Christ? How was it that their characters had taken on more of the Christ image than mine, the defender of the faith? I could beat any of them into subjection in a few minutes with my formidable array of prooftexts and my debate-sharpened mind, but I began to feel hollow after the victories. . . . I saw clearly that my religion did not inevitably turn out superior people. And I saw that religions I had been taught to scorn as hopelessly false often turned out men more Christlike than any I had met before.

". . . Now, with my certainties tottering, I opened up to what I read and discovered a completely new world.

". . . I read a book. . . . It was called *In Quest of a Kingdom*. . . . I think this study of parables by Leslie Weatherhead was seminal for all my later development. In it I caught a glimpse of a kingdom of right relationships which surpassed in loveliness anything I have ever heard about in my boyhood church meetings. . . . I shall always remember gratefully the debt I owe to the London preacher.

"From that time, I read everything of the kind I could get my hands on. And I observed people. . . . And I knew that none of them had ever heard of my Church of Christ, southern style, USA. They might as well have been on Mars.

"How would I be able to return to the pulpit and condemn them all with a wave of the hand? . . . I knew at last that I could

not. I came home to finish my work at Abilene Christian College

"The years of graduate study followed I shared all these things with the Central Church of Christ in St. Louis, a wonderful group who were not afraid to listen and to encourage. We studied the development of the canon, the apocryphal books, the variant accounts in the gospels, the transmission of the English Bible, what inspiration is, and kindred topics. I felt that in such an atmosphere any Christian might live and grow.

"But the time came when I felt I must return to Harding College, where I taught two years before beginning my final studies in St. Louis A twenty-year dream of teaching in a Christian (i.e., Church of Christ) college was not yet dead

"Over a period of three more years I learned slowly but surely that I was no longer party champion enough to be happy at Harding

"I came to Friends University in Wichita where the forty-two different denominations represented accepted me as fellow Christian and teacher the president and dean of Friends asked me only one serious question: 'What is your attitude toward other believers?' I understood at once. They wished to know whether I could work with them and accept them, or feel constantly prompted to convert them to my understandings. I explained that my attitude was one of acceptance, that I did not hold to the infallibility of any pattern of interpretation, and that I could happily maintain my personal convictions while talking without rancor to those who held others. On such a basis the Quaker-sponsored liberal arts college employed me. The Riverside Church of Christ in Wichita engaged my service at the same time and permitted me to talk freely and openly about all kinds of Christian concerns. . . . At the time of writing this essay, I count myself one of the fortunate few who are genuinely happy not in one job, but in two.

"I know now that I suffered tragic losses as an adolescent. I was taught narrowness by those who fashioned me. Deliberately isolated from other religionists, I came to think of them as insincere people who simply did not care enough about being right. By speaking always only to those who approved what I said, I lost the priceless opportunity of receiving correction from older and wiser heads whose religious orientation was radically different from mine.

"I was taught to be so completely sure that my interpretation of the Bible was the only correct one that I could not even

understand that the Bible is one thing and individual interpretation of it quite another. It was excruciating to learn that my interpretation might be as fallible as the next man's and when, one day, I finally knew this, my rigidly authoritarian religion crumbled into dust.

". . . . I accepted happily my amazing good fortune at having been born into a family which embraced this true religion. Sometimes I was puzzled to observe how much of our time was spent in fighting among ourselves over proper interpretations

"It now seems terrible to me that I have no distinct memory of having been impressed, ever, with the extraordinary transformation which the Spirit of Christ may work in a person I had to be grown before I found the full, glorious flowering in the human spirit of the Spirit of Christ. The result was that my religion was a head religion its only rapture was the joy of conquest and of correctness

"Little was said about love in the sermons of my boyhood, except that the vital thing was that if one loved God he would *keep His commandments*. . . . Those ministers who occasionally tried to explore the limitless suggestiveness of the word 'love' were called 'soft' and said to be in danger of losing their doctrinal purity if they were not careful. Little was said of the Spirit and its indwelling power, except that we were warned that it operated only through the written word

"We split terribly once, when I was a lad, over whether it was right to have a kitchen in the church building, or whether it was right to use literature in our classes--I have forgotten which

"Yet I repeat that my tragic loss was not in learning this, that devout men may divide sharply over interpretations. My loss was that I met no singularly gracious human being whose whole life literally sang of Christ And because of this I was into my twenties before I knew that the essential thing in religion is the difference it makes in the character of a man

"This little history is not unique. Thousands have shared it. It is, in fact, of importance only because it is common

"My church's approach to religious unity failed me. . . . A newspaper cartoon . . . summed it up classically. A parson is shown sitting on a stump Beneath the picture is his reflection: 'Christian unity seems simple enough--all it would take is for everybody to agree with us.' Most of us are not quite so honest as this parson is made to be. Instead of saying 'agree with us,' we prefer

to say, 'All it would take is for everybody to agree with the Bible.' That is, we equate our views with the Bible itself, and thus we become unassailable

"When my people talk of unity, most of them really mean conformity The total experience of humanity proves that this is not possible, Only conformity can be enforced. An environment can be created in which it is easier to keep quiet than to express a dissenting view. Once it is clear that men who think for themselves will be persecuted as violators of tradition, all the more cautious men in the group will be careful to keep their true views hidden. This is the unity of conformity It is sterile, and ultimately self-defeating.

"The other kind of unity, unity in diversity, unity of spirit and purpose, is the only sort that works. Everywhere in the world are Christian people who see the true image of Christ in other believers. Spirit is linked with spirit in a holy bond of fellowship. When such Christians find that they differ about interpretations, they are not so much dismayed as intrigued. They seek to learn from one another, respecting convictions on both sides. They talk *with* one another, rather than to one another. I know well what the difference is, for I was trained to use my opponent's comments as welcome interludes in which I might be fashioning my next attack upon his position.

"I have been appalled by the degree of party spirit within my church Like John, we have yet to learn that the Kingdom of God has God's dimensions, and that those who truly do the works of Christ, and bear the fruit of the Spirit, belong to Him.

"John was looking for labels. He wanted to be sure that the man doing good belonged to the right party and wore the right name. Jesus said, in effect, 'Look, instead, for actions, attitudes, and dispositions. When you find the things which delight me--mercy, justice, faith--welcome them. Do not meet them sourly'. How desperately my people need to learn this lesson. We often find it hard to be glad about work done by those missionary enterprises without happily acknowledging the ground-breaking done earlier by Adventists, or Friends, or Methodists. After other religious groups had gone in and gentled the local population, civilized them, and introduced them to Christ, then we went in with what we were pleased to call the 'real truth' and sought to convert them to our own particular set of dogmas. This is painful to confess, but it is the best way to purge ourselves of the shame.

"One of our greatest needs is to realize to what degree most of us are prisoners of our heredity and environment I know

Southern gentlemen of strong religious drives who simply cannot throw off all the racial prejudice bred into them. Other men find it impossible to be completely unbiased about politics Religion is not different. People as wise as ourselves, and quite as sincere, are honestly unable to accept all of our views. If we are to rule all such people out of the Kingdom because they cannot share our interpretations, we elevate ourselves into judges and announce ourselves as keepers of the gate of Christianity.

" . . . Our refusal to measure our best against the best of others, and to confess our weaknesses as no less obvious than theirs, puts the lie to any claim of objectivity which we make.

"But all these things will pass. A great change is in the air. Those who have vested interests, who would have to reverse a lifetime of word and action if they move across to another world, are fighting desperately to isolate my people from these ideas. They must preserve the system, because it is under the system that they have grown powerful and prominent, and it is under the system that they can enjoy the heady excitement of guarding orthodoxy and punishing those who offend. But 'our little systems have their day,' as Tennyson affirmed, and God is greater than they. Our system has had its day and we are, even now, poised between two worlds.

"Our system is our apprehension of God's eternal truth; it is forever partial and incomplete. We are fragments; only our Lord is whole. But once we have humbly confessed this, we may do much good. With a membership of more than two million, the Churches of Christ can exert influence for good in a world which urgently needs all the moral leadership it can get. But no large group will ever listen seriously to an organization which refuses to credit others with Christlike graces. It will be only when we acknowledge readily the sincerity and wisdom of those who differ with us that we shall fulfill whatever destiny God has for our particular group to work out.

"It must be apparent that I am hopeful. The Church of Christ is historically a very young group, still in the adolescent stage of growth. I say this despite the sweeping assertion that this particular group dates itself from Pentecost. The truth is that our traditions have evolved from the Campbell-Stone movement on the western frontier in the early Nineteenth Century, and this makes us young. I realize that nothing quite so angers an adolescent as being reminded that he is one, but sober analysis supports my analogy.

"Like the adolescent, we have been quite unaware of our past and of our debt to those who went before us. Like the ado-

lescent, we have been unaware of those around us. An adolescent tends to be all wrapped up in himself, knowing little of what others do or think. The church I grew up in was like this. My friends and I cared nothing of what other religious groups did, because we were self-contained in our own little world of religious exclusivism. Once or twice we ventured out, but so thoroughly trained had we been that we merely ridiculed what we saw.

"But there is no cause for dismay about adolescence. It passes at length into maturity. Many of the religious groups in America today which pride themselves on their maturity were once just like this. Religious groups are really much like humans in their growth. They begin by being born into a big world which cares little for them, and takes scant notice of them. Consequently, they huddle closely together and formulate their 'group language' and get acquainted with a set of group beliefs. This gives them a sense of security, and is pleasant.

"By and by, as adolescents, they pass through the feelings and attitudes I have just described. But eventually, such groups mature. This is happening now to my own people. It is painful. We have 'growing pains.' But the general rise in levels of formal education, and a wider knowledge of different religious parties, is slowly but surely changing us. We are growing up. Nothing can stop it. And adolescents may think that nothing is better than childhood, but no really mature person would trade what he has for the tyranny of adolescence again.

"Thousands in the Churches of Christ are profoundly disturbed already by the aridity which authoritarianism produces. They are apathetic when their preachers speak to them only with the time-honored platitudes and party cliches. The time is ripe for the beginning of a slow, massive turnover. I have no doubt that it is underway. I am glad to see it begin because I so deeply value my heritage in the Church of Christ. Friendships beyond assessing have come to me through my association with these people. I have no intention of leaving them so long as one of their churches is free enough to hear I join my voice in pleading for that better spirit which is not only possible, but which is already in existence in many places among our people. I echo their plea that we shall learn how to differ from others in mutual love and respect and that God will lead us, together with *all* Christians, into fields of greater Christian service than we have yet known."

The *piercing beam* blinds only the inward look; to all else, illumination of that upon which it shines, so even those who run may see. Hear O Israel.

Volume I

Part 2

ONCE UPON A TIME

Part II

ONCE UPON A TIME

Chapter I

HOW? -- WHY?

The Campbell-Stone Reformation Movement commonly called the *Restoration Movement*^{1/} within the confines of parties, sects or denominations stemming therefrom began with wonderful prospects at the outset of the last century. What transpired to sidetrack it from its original purpose and to turn its heirs into zealous partisans? No simple answer can be given. Certainly any such result is the product of multiple factors. But it has been a case of history repeating itself. Every attempt at reformation or restoration has terminated in formation of another sect, party or denomination. This one is no exception to the general rule.

The first generation of reformers, possessed of vision and courage, make tremendous sacrifices of time and effort to remove barriers and clear away debris. Those who follow them, thinking that the clearing is the goal, settle down and proceed to erect walls and build a fortress about it to protect their gains and discoveries. Opinions are crystallized into tests of fellowship, and interpretations are welded into unwritten creeds. When other reformers arise who challenge the idea that the clearing is the promised land, and who regard it as but a temporary resting place in the wilderness, they are driven out into exile. Those who will not conform to the party norm, but whose eyes are lifted up to the faroff hills beyond which lies the realization of our hopes, are considered dangerous, and regarded as mischief-makers and seditionists. Unless they are possessed of an uncommon degree of love which transcends all partisan considerations they will form a faction of their own sympathizers, regard them as composing the *True Church*, and, in time, proceed to do unto others as it was done unto them. This has happened repeatedly. It is the tragic history of religious reformatory movements.

The greatest error contributing to the sectarianizing of The Church of Christ occurred when adherents ceased to regard the Restoration as

1/ Alexander Campbell used Reformation and Restoration interchangeably. e.g., "... this great and good cause of Reformation, or Restoration of the ancient order of things." *Mill. Harb.* 21, 1850, pg. 7.

a movement and came to look upon it as the church.^{2/} This marked the culmination of progress toward the ideal, and the beginning of the defense of the status quo. They separated, segregated, and isolated themselves from other believers in the Christ, and began to affirm that the party of which they were members was *identical* in name, doctrine, and practice with the New Testament church.

As factions multiplied in the movement, the searching of the scriptures became a fine art of specialists who were rivals in the field of controversy and polemics, and whose purpose was to justify the party. Vital distinctions were glossed over and lost, and other distinctions were made where the Spirit made none. It is inherent in any religious party that it forms its own glossary of terms which are made to mean what the party wants them to mean. Each party has its own definitions.

The segment of the disciple brotherhood to which we belong regards itself as *The Faithful Church*, is composed of wonderful people, humble, unassuming and sincere, except in matters of partisan defense making *Brotherhood* contingent upon agreement in opinion and interpretation.

No faction is the church of God. It is too little, too circumscribed, too exclusive, and too land-locked to confine God's mercy and grace. No one faction growing out of the Restoration Movement is the church of God. That church has always been in existence. The church was in existence when Alexander Campbell was born.

Unless there is a complete revolution in attitude we will doom ourselves to become more sectarian. It will avail little to preach year after year to the same people and talk about those we never see. It is only faith in God, and service to humanity coupled with love of mankind, that will keep us from being just a narrow, bigoted Twentieth Century "sect" or denomination.

I thank God that there are many congregations composed of humble followers of the Christ who are seriously interested in divesting themselves of the sectarian attitude. All of us, without exception, have been involved in factions. No one of us has been wholly free of the party spirit.

2/ Alexander Campbell did not believe the *Movement* was the church of Christ or God. He understood the church already existed. It was never his intention to start a new party or sect but to reform and unite. Campbell often referred to being "forced out" even when he was willing to work within the framework of existing churches. *Mill. Harb.* 5, 1834, p. 105 and on the contrary he insisted that, ". . . they cannot make a sect of us. We will acknowledge all as Christians who acknowledge the gospel facts, and obey Jesus Christ." *Mill. Harb.* 1, 1830, Pg. 146.

I am convinced that the principles which gave birth to the Restoration movement were sound. The movement has run aground because of abandonment of those principles. We must reaffirm those premises. We must re-activate those principles.

The modern system denominated *The Church of Christ*^{3/} cannot save us from the foes that threaten our civilization. With its emphasis upon big programs, big preachers, big money, and big buildings, it will only serve to obscure the program of God for mankind. In a wishy-washy world its arbitrary, dogmatic assertions made with the assurance of personal conceit, will appeal to the ignorant and unthinking, who seek for security in a *creedal basis*, but their souls will still be empty, and their spirits remain a vacuum except for disturbing and recurring doubts. It requires more than belief in water baptism and opposition to instrumental music or orphan homes to satisfy the deep hunger of a soul that pants for God as the deer does for the water brooks.

With malice toward none and charity toward all I respectfully and only ask a careful reading of what is written herein. My love for you will not be lessened if you cannot agree with all of the statements and conclusions.

Thomas Campbell

In the little village of Ahorey in North Ireland is the site of the Presbyterian Church to which Thomas Campbell ministered until he sailed for America in 1807. Inside the door is a bronze plaque sacred to the memory of Mr. Campbell who was the second minister to serve the congregation. The engraved plate designates him as "a prophet of union".

Northern Ireland undoubtedly formed the best background extant for encouragement of that individuality in thought which characterized the mind of Thomas Campbell. It was then, as it is now, one of the most rugged strongholds of aggressive Protestantism on earth. Thomas Campbell was also fortunate in his selection of a companion. Jane Corneigle was of French Huguenot stock. Jane Corneigle met

3/ It is interesting to note that prior to the Twentieth Century there was not a separate party anywhere which was called by the distinctive title *Church of Christ*. Even after the Campbells and their co-laborers were driven out of the Presbyterian and Baptist communions they formed no party under this title. Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone united their forces as the result of a meeting held in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1832. Campbell preferred the name *Disciples* while Stone preferred *Christian*. Eventually the term *Christian Church* predominated. It remained for David Lipscomb in 1906 while writing in reply to an inquiry from the United States Census Bureau to bring about a separate listing under the title *Church of Christ*.

Thomas Campbell who had been born in County Down, in 1763 and when they were married they lived at first on the family estate about three miles from Ballymena. Here Alexander Campbell was born on September 12, 1788 when his father was twenty-five years of age. Years later this son wrote thus of his mother:

"As a helpmeet of my father in the work of the Christian ministry, I think I never saw her superior, if I ever did her equal. He was frequently called from home on protracted tours in his public ministry of the Gospel; but though her cares and solitudes were always on such occasions more or less augmented, I never heard her complain; but rather to sympathize with him in his works of faith and in his labors of love . . . while endeavoring to effect a reformation in his own Synod and Presbyteries, both in the Old World and the New, she stood by him in faith, hope and love, and most cheerfully became a partaker with him in all the trials and consequences incident to . . ."

James Alexander Haldane had seceded from the Church of Scotland and was at the height of his power when Mr. Campbell met him. In 1808 he published his revolutionary work, "A View of the Social Worship and Ordinances Observed by the First Christians." It is difficult to read this volume without forming a conclusion that it planted the seed for much of what was later written by the Campbells. Our concepts always derive their strength and substance from many sources.

Although one of Mr. Campbell's disposition would be greatly disturbed by the appalling state of division in the whole Protestant realm, he was much more affected by the strife within his own immediate communion.

Mr. Campbell was connected with the Anti-Burgher branch of the Seceder division of the Presbyterian Church. He was fully aware of the strife and contention which had been carried on with intensity of feeling.

Mr. Campbell appeared before the Synod of Ireland, convened in Belfast in 1804, to plead for the unity of the Burghers and Anti-Burghers in Ulster. I am convinced that he was formulating those concepts which would later lead to the inception of the restoration movement. He gave a scathing indictment of the evils resulting from religious schism. I cannot resist the impulse to have you read a part of his speech, to-wit:

"This, our unhappy division, appeared to us an evil of no small magnitude . . . has it not exposed the zealous contenders for a reformation, on both sides, to the concept and jeers of the scorners, and filled the mouths of scoffers with reproach and ob-

loquy? . . . Has it not been productive of a party spirit, both among ministers and people, stirring up and promoting an unhappy disposition of evasion and reprisals upon the boundaries of their respective communities? . . . Has it not had a very embarrassing tendency with respect to many of the serious and well-meaning, when they, seeing our division, upon inquiry find that the subject-matter of our difference is not to be found either in the Old or New Testament?"

What forces operated in the life and thoughts of a humble Presbyterian preacher in a remote rural area to fill him with an inner compulsion to act as a champion of unity. Was it the providence of God that ill health drove him to leave Ireland where his reasoning would have been smothered out by a well-entrenched clergy.

The *Declaration and Address* penned by Mr. Campbell two years after his arrival in America which spurred the restoration movement was both fruit and seed. It was not written upon impulse. It was the crystallization of the ideas which had been clamoring for expression in a heart burning with eager desire to see those barriers removed which had long held God's people aloof from each other. Written while still a Presbyterian he stated, to-wit:

"The Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct; and of none else, as none else can be truly and properly called Christians."

What a travesty to realize that today the Church of Christ on earth is not essentially one, it is not intentionally one and it is not constitutionally one. That it is a party and that there are as many *Churches of Christ* in America as there are factions and each party is its own *Brotherhood*; that each has its own exclusive party banner--*Immanuel--God with us*.

Let us examine then the factors which contributed to the inception of the restoration movement.

1. The restoration movement was launched by men who were dissatisfied with the *status quo*. No restoration worthy of the name will be undertaken by those who feel that they have attained perfection or who deceive themselves into thinking that what they have is the ideal state.

2. In its infancy restoration is not a movement of the masses but a dream in the heart of an individual or, at the most a few individuals. Any individual who seeks to further this ideal must have his

own Damascus Road experience. He must be stricken to the dust. He must be made to see the futility of his past life and his present actions. He must be stripped of pride and arrogance. He must be deprived of his trust in all that the world counts of value.

It is useless for one to attempt to promote the unity of all believers while defending the sectarian divisions created by his fathers, or while apologizing for his own partisan attachment.

3. The spirit of restoration must be kindled by wholehearted commitment to a search for truth and an unreserved dedication to follow where it leads. This requires a willingness to alter one's thinking and to amend one's practice to "keep abreast of truth."

No man can further the cause of reformation while striving to be consistent with his past. No greater honor can be bestowed upon a man than to demonstrate that he had the courage to alter his thinking as he grew in knowledge of the truth. Only the densely ignorant or grossly prejudiced boast they have made no changes with the passing decades. Those who say such should hide their heads in shame for their wasted years. All of the gains that have been made in any field of human experience and endeavor have been made by men who dared to rise above the blind conformity of the age in which they lived.

4. The reformer must labor for the approval of God and steel himself against the reproaches of men. No one will be hated more intensely by bitter partisans than the man who refuses to be one. The sectarian attitude is rife in our land. It works in subtle and devious ways. None of us is ever wholly free from its blighting influence. Often it is the price we must pay for continuing friendship but it is too great a price.

5. The heart of him who pleads for restoration must be filled with love for mankind. Much of what passes for love in these days is very selfish. It is a narrow patriotism or partisan feeling, a regard based upon race, face or place. We tend to mistake loyalty to the party for allegiance to Christ.

America

Abraham Altars was not a formal member of the Presbyterian Church. But he was a student of the Bible and he was interested in religion. Thus it happened that his farm home located between Mount Pleasant and Washington, Pennsylvania, became the scene of a meeting held in the summer of 1809 which was destined to directly affect our lives and several millions of others like us.

The central figure in the meeting was Thomas Campbell, until recently a minister in the Seceder Presbyterian Church whose teachings on the unity of believers in Christ and whose disregard for sectarian divisions had aroused much controversy.

After arriving in America, Mr. Campbell, recognizing that he was laboring under a cloud of suspicion and that certain of his brethren were scrutinizing his every word and action, withstood the situation as long as possible, then renounced the authority of the Synod and Presbytery. This meant that while he retained his membership in the Presbyterian Church, he would no longer be regarded as a minister of that communion but he continued preaching as opportunity offered.

The special meeting was convened at the home of Abraham Altars to determine what steps should be taken to encourage the fraternal spirit among those who loved righteousness. Mr. Campbell, in solemn and grave tones led carefully to the climax of his speech. When the time came he announced the foundation upon which reformation should be attempted. "That rule, my respected hearers, is this, that where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." It was from the moment when these significant words were uttered and accepted, that the more intelligent ever afterward dated the formal and actual commencement of the reformation.

Following the meeting at the Altars' home another was held on August 17, 1809, at which the little band of neighbors resolved to form *The Christian Association of Washington*. This was not a *Church* nor was it intended that it should grow into one. It represented no organized revolt against nor secession from any religious society. It was a voluntary association of the concerned ones in the community to promote piety and reverence, to study and evaluate their peculiar problems of a religious nature, and to encourage among all men those moral and spiritual views which the members considered essential to the development of mankind. The first statement of their resolution declared, "That we form ourselves into a religious association, under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington, for the sole purpose of promoting simple, evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men."

It was deemed essential to have a statement of their aims and objectives drawn up in formal fashion. Thomas Campbell was assigned the task and in three weeks completed his "Declaration and Address." On September 7, 1809 he read it to the members of the Association and it was approved.

In my humble opinion it constitutes one of the great *uninspired* documents in the history of the Christian religion. First we propose to hear from the foreward of the document itself.

"Moreover, being well aware from sad experience of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians; tired and sick of the bitter warrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches--as would restore unity, peace and purity to the whole church of God."

The *Declaration and Address* in its body states:

"This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair to find for ourselves or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amid the diversity and rancor of party contentions, the veering uncertainty and clashings of human opinions."

Alexander Campbell looking back upon this preparatory stage of the restoration movement wrote in *Christianity Restored* as follows:

"A deep and abiding impression that the power, the consolations and joys, the holiness and happiness of Christ's religion were lost in the forms and ceremonies, in the speculations and conjectures, in the feuds and bickerings of sects and schisms, originated a project many years ago for uniting the sects, or rather the Christians in all sects.^{4/}"

The restoration movement originated as a project for uniting the Christians in all the "sects." It grew out of a "desire to be at rest" and to "recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches." It was engendered by an awareness of the "pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians." Those who inaugurated the project were "tired and sick of the bitter warrings and janglings of the party spirit." They were convinced that the power, the consolations, the joys, the holiness and happiness of the religion of Christ were all lost "in the feuds and bickerings of sects and schisms."

There are two major segments which have grown out of the "project . . . for uniting . . . the Christians in all the sects." These are commonly distinguished as instrumental and non-instrumental. The former have about five or six groups to their discredit but the latter have more than two dozen factions to their dishonor. No other religious movement is so strife-torn and factional. No other is so schismatic. We must face up to the true picture of the state to which our thinking has brought us.

4/ Alexander Campbell had a rather simple definition of a sect:

"It is a religious system that makes opinions tests of fellowship." The Restoration Movement is today fractured and weakened by multiple "sects" which exclude each other over opinions because of different interpretations over such matters as cooperative projects, agencies, instrumental music, and millennial theories.

As the little band of Presbyterians stood in the *valley of decision* in 1809 so we stand once again in the same place. Shall we continue to promote the sectarian spirit, or shall we restore the spirit of restoration? Shall we plunge on deeper into the quicksands of partisanship and legalism or shall we revive in our generation" the desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the churches--as would restore unity, peace and purity to the whole church of God"? The hour is growing late. The sands are running out of the upper glass. We must decide soon.

We must emerge from behind our sectarian walls and enter anew the fray in the whole Christian arena. We must go back beyond the point where we gravitated into a "sect" and *take up the quarrel with the foe*. And we must be able to distinguish between friend and foe. Jesus declared "He that is not against us is on our side" (Mark 9:40). We must quit assuming that he who is not at our side is always against us.

The Progress of Pride

Alongside the *fundamental* error in our thinking of confusing the restoration movement with the church of God must stand another tragic mistake made when men lost the distinction between the good news of Christ and the apostles' doctrine. It set up knowledge of a system instead of faith in a person as the primary ground of admission to the fellowship. Alexander Campbell early saw the importance of the distinction and wrote:

"Preaching the gospel and teaching the converts are as distinct and distinguishable employments as enlisting an army and training it or as creating a school and teaching it. Unhappily, for the church and the world, this distinction, if at all conceded as legitimate, is obliterated or annulled in almost all protestant Christendom. The public heralds of Christianity, acting as missionaries or evangelists, and the elders or pastors of Christian churches are indiscriminately denominated preachers or ministers; and whether addressing the church or the world, they are alike preaching or ministering some things they call Gospel They seem to have never learned the difference between preaching and teaching."

Campbell was insistent of a proper understanding of the distinction. In *Popular Lectures and Addresses* he said:

"The difference between preaching and teaching Christ, so palpable in the apostolic age, though now confounded in the theoretic theologies of our day, must be well defined and clearly distinguished in the mind."

The difference between the good news which was to be proclaimed and the system of doctrine which must be interpreted and taught is clearly marked in an article in *Millennial Harbinger* for April, 1862:

"We preach, or report, or proclaim news. But who teaches news? Who exhorts it? We preach the gospel to unbelievers, to aliens, but never to Christians, or to those who have received it, Paul taught the Christians; he admonished, exhorted, commanded and reproved Christians, and on some occasions declared the glad tidings to them who had received them, but who seemed to have forgotten them, as he wrote to the Corinthians."

Jesus commissioned the apostles to proclaim the gospel to all creation. He declared that those who believe and are baptised will be saved. Salvation from past sins and introduction into the fellowship is conditioned upon belief of *the gospel*. Many today have been conditioned to think that the entire scope of the new covenant scriptures constitutes the gospel. They regard the letters addressed to churches and individuals as part of the gospel. Since one must believe the gospel in order to be saved it follows that one must understand and accept their reasoning and interpretation of every point of doctrine to be recognized as a child of God. *We must never overlook the fact that the partisan spirit always substitutes the interpretation of God's word for the word itself and demands conformity not just to what God says but to what the party deduces he meant when he said it. This completely alters the Christian system. It makes salvation dependent upon attainment to a certain degree of knowledge rather than upon faith in a person.*

This has been the real root of division within all Christendom. It is the basis of most controversy among religionists. It is the ground of orthodoxy which has been used to stifle all original thought and hound out as traitors all honest dissenters. It is the rock upon which every restoration movement in history has run aground and been battered to pieces. The Campbells clearly understood this and labored to offset it in advance. They did this by two methods. *First, they carefully defined the terms essential to entrance into the fellowship, showing what was involved in faith. In the second place they carefully pointed out that unanimity of opinion, interpretation or knowledge in doctrinal matters could never be made a proper foundation for unity.*

With reference to the first Alexander Campbell wrote in *The Christian System* as follows:

"But the grandeur, sublimity and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this--that the belief of

one fact . . . is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes to salvation. The belief of this one fact, and submission to one institution expressive of it, is all that is required of heaven to admission into the church."

That there may be no question as to what is meant by this language Campbell proceeds to explain further:

"The one fact is expressed in a single proposition--that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah . . . The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Every such person is a disciple in the fullest sense of the word, the moment he has believed this fact . . . and has submitted to the above-mentioned institution; and whether he believes the five points condemned, or the five points approved, by the Synod of Dort, is not so much as to be asked of him: whether he holds any of the views of the Calvinists or Arminians, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists or Quakers,^{5/} is never once to be asked of such persons in order to gain admission into the Christian community called the church."

Secondly, the Campbells made clear that fellowship in Christ can never be made contingent upon conformity in interpretation. Thomas Campbell expressed this idea in his *Declaration and Address*. The careful student will be amazed at the wisdom exhibited in his statement. It places reasoning and research in proper perspective. The right of every individual to go directly to the sacred writings for himself and the concomitant right to form conclusions based upon his personal investigation is asserted, and these concepts are not *formally* binding upon the consciences of other Christians except as they are grasped and understood to be truth.

One could as justifiably demand that Isaac and Jacob understand the epistle to the Romans in order to be saved as to demand that every person in the fellowship of Christ fully grasp all that is implied in Chapter Twenty of The Revelation To John to be saved. Every child of God is *morally* bound by his relationship to Jesus to accept all truth as he becomes aware of it but the relationship we sustain to each other does not convey the right to *formally* bind our interpretations upon each other. Any such coercion and compulsion of spirit will result in faith in the wisdom of men. All that I have thus stated is contained in a few simple sentences written by Thomas Campbell:

"That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of

5/ Or the Church of Christ.

God's holy word, yet they are not formally binding upon the conscience of Christians further than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so, for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but properly do belong to the after and progressive edification of the church. Hence it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the church's confession."

It has been the fate of most religious reformations *conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men in Christ are created equal* to fall into the hands of ambitious men who manipulate them to the achievement of their own ends. Almost without exception every reformation inaugurated to free men from the dominance of a clergy has ended up with a clergy of its own. The clerical spirit thrives on the party spirit and is sustained by it. The clergymen become the authorized interpreters of the oracles of God. By subtle means the average man becomes convinced that he cannot understand the will of the Lord so he relegates this to professionals, trained specialists. By the same token the doctrinal interpretations of these must be accepted without question. To doubt the clergy is to disbelieve God. The Romish church set up an infallible interpreter. Most of the parties growing out of the Restoration Movement believe they have an infallible interpretation. The last is actually worse than the first for belief in an infallible interpreter will at least preserve unity. The Roman Catholic Church today is one of the most tightly knit organizations in the world. *An infallible interpretation substitutes party dogmas for papal decrees and is productive of division every time someone discovers what is considered additional truth.*

Perhaps it was a realization of these dangers inherent in dogmatism and orthodoxy that prompted Thomas Campbell to reject doctrinal knowledge and conformity as the basis for Christian fellowship. Consider the following clear statement as found in the *Declaration and Address*:

"That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of Divine truths and defensive testimonies, in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes the better; yet, as these must be, in a great measure, the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion, unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to communion of the church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment, or are come to a very

high degree of doctrinal information, whereas the church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers."

There is no use denying that the heirs of the great project to "unite the Christians in all the sects" is now *in evil case*. The two great errors in thought with which we have been dealing are not the only ones which foster the partisan spirit that has fragmented and fractionalized us. We have referred to them primarily because *the first confuses the nature of the church of God while the second confuses the nature of the message of God*. These are fundamental. It was because of these two grave errors in the religious world that the *Declaration and Address* was written. That document was clear upon these issues. It is a sad and tragic thing that we have now made a full circle and are once more involved in sectarianism of our own creation because we have lost the truths enunciated so many years ago.

Unless there is a reversal of attitude and a change of philosophy the *Churches of Christ* can only look forward to a grim future of strife, contention and division. These various parties contain within themselves the seeds of schism and they will "multiply and fill the earth after their kind." There will be little of a constructive nature contributed to the distressed and distraught realm of Christendom.

Chapter 2

GORDIAN KNOTS

When the Restoration movement ceased to be a means to an end and became the end, it then and there became merely another religious organization among many others. *It can never be restored to its original aim and purpose until its members are made to realize that the work of restoration was never completed.* Only when these disciples are ready to assume the task of seeking to "unite the Christians in all the sects," can it truly be said that we have resumed where our fathers left off.

I propose to examine the underlying causes contributing to the rise of factionalism and determine if possible when the disciple brotherhood abandoned its original aim.

What caused the will to unite to give way to the will to divide?

Many have undertaken an analysis of this kind in the past. If there is any possibility of this contribution producing results for good it will stem from the following considerations.

1. Many of those who have done research on the outgrowth of the restoration movement have sought justification for the party with which they were affiliated as opposed to other parties.

2. I believe it is a fallacy to conclude that we are divided over the *things* which have been credited with being the cause of our divisions. The actual division was wrought by the *party spirit*. *Unity is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:3); disunity is a fruit of the party spirit (Gal. 5:20).*

3. Most of those who have written have begun with a false premise about fellowship. They have been misled into assuming that fellowship was something extended or withdrawn by the church. Contrary to this view, fellowship is a state or condition into which we are called by God through the Good News concerning Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:9). In reality the body of Christ is the fellowship.

Fellowship is not endorsement. It is not unanimity of opinion or conformity in interpretation. Fellowship is a reality into which we are introduced by God. Harmony is an ideal toward which we strive in that relationship.

4. All too often developments have been treated as isolated incidents wholly removed from the frame of reference in which they occurred. That which was pressed to the point of division in one generation might not be given passing notice in another. Social, economic, scientific and moral factors all combine with our religious views and help to motivate our thinking. It is not wholly by accident that organ music, for example, became a problem when an industrial revolution was transforming America from a pioneer status to a more cultural level.

The pioneer heralds of restoration carried the message into the rude dwellings of the hardy souls who were hewing home sites for their families out of dense forests. So long as these primitive conditions obtained questions such as that of organized mission effort and the use of organ music did not trouble the disciples.

FORGOTTEN FREEDOMS

The restoration movement began to disintegrate only when men forsook its original premise. It was wrecked on the rocks of unwritten creeds.^{6/} In its inception the opinions of men were never allowed to

6/ Alexander Campbell did not object to creeds per se, but only as they are made the basis of Christian fellowship. In *Millennial Harbinger* 26, 1855, p. 74 he quotes the Apostles' Creed which is composed of *Facts* from the Bible and says of it: "This is a bonafide creed; and in every word true". Campbell warned against unwritten creeds as more destructive than written

become tests of fellowship. One of the best examples of this is found in Aylette Raines whose group called themselves *Restorationists* because of their belief that all men would be restored to original purity and perfection.

He began to preach the Good News that Jesus was the Messiah and God's Son and that justification from past sins was achieved through faith in this fact. Meanwhile he still retained his philosophy called *Restorationism*.

Mr. Raines then made application to be received into the Mahoning Association and this provided the first real test of the principle that men can be united in the faith while holding to divergent opinions. Aylette Raines writes as follows:

"... If the disciples could not be united in faith and have fellowship with each other, while holding contrary opinions as respects matters lying outside the circle of faith, then the movement was doomed to dismal failure. But if they could do these two things, the success of their plea could not be thwarted. Thus the most momentous interests were placed in the balance."

Fortunately at the next meeting of the Mahoning Association both Thomas and Alexander Campbell, as well as Walter Scott, were present. Jacob Osborne introduced the matter and asked for a definite settlement of the question whether a man holding the views of Aylette Raines should be accepted. Thomas Campbell was the first to speak on the subject. He expressed regret that such questions should even be introduced or that a man's opinion should be held to be a subject for discussion. He said:

"Brother Raines has been with me during the last several months and we have fully unbosomed ourselves to each other. He is philosophically a Restorationist and I am a Calvinist, but notwithstanding this difference of opinion between us, I would put

ones. In *Christianity Restored* he says at pg. 106, to-wit:

"But the Bible will do no better (than a creed), if men approach it with a set of opinions, or a human symbol in their minds. For then it is not the Bible but the opinions in the mind, that form the bond of union. Men, indeed had better have a written than an unwritten standard of orthodoxy if they will not abandon speculation and abstract notions as any part of Christian faith or duty."

The unwritten creed is the more dangerous because we can deceive ourselves into believing that ours is a *Greedless Christianity* while indeed we separate ourselves from each other over opinions about the Bible.

The effect of creeds is succinctly set forth by Campbell in his *Campbell-Rice Debate*, page 765:

"Human creeds have made more heretics than Christians, more parties than reformations, more martyrs than saints, more wars than peace, more hatred than love, more death than life."

my right hand into the fire and have it burned off, before I would hold up my hands against him. And from all I know of Brother Raines, if I were Paul, I would have him in preference to any young man of my acquaintance to be my Timothy."

The Association voted by a large majority that there was no scriptural ground for rejecting such a person.

The sequel to this account is found in this statement published by Aylette Raines near the close of his long and eventful career in the service of Christ:

". . . the philosophy within me became extinct, having no longer the coals of contention by which to warm or the crumbs of sectarian righteousness upon which to feed."

A further demonstration of the spirit of reform which rose above all factional tendencies is found in the union effected between the forces gathered by the proclamation of Barton W. Stone and those which rallied behind the Campbells. There existed grave differences in the position of Stone and Campbell although both had grown up in the Presbyterian communion. The uniting of the two forces striving for restoration was not easy but finally accomplished by the utter crucifixion of the party spirit. There were two main areas of difference which had to be resolved. One had to do with the name by which the saints should be designated, the other with the nature of Jesus Christ or the doctrine of *the Trinity*.

Stone had long contended that the reformers should be styled Christians, while Alexander Campbell held out for the word disciples. J. B. Briney wrote of their agreement as follows:

"As religious names the early restorers saw that the only thing essential to unity was to discard all human and unscriptural names, and wear only such as are approved by the scriptures--any of them or all of them. It was discovered that a single name was not necessary to unity, for it was noticed that the primitive church was united, although the members were known by various names, such as disciples, Christians, saints, brethren, etc. In this matter and within New Testament limits the followers of Christ are free."

The other problem was more difficult. Stone rejected the Trinitarian formula. After much discussion they agreed each man might retain his personal opinion as to the mode of divine existence but to advocate such an opinion was distinct from preaching the gospel. Again we quote from J. B. Briney:

"But happily they soon came to see that it was wholly a speculative matter that did not pertain either to human salvation or

Christian living, and that it should not be made a test of fellowship among disciples of Christ, nor of controversy among brethren--that it should be relegated to the realm of opinion and every individual left free to hold such opinions on the subject as might seem to each one to be most in accord with Scripture teaching and human reason."

POWER, CONCENTRATION AND EFFICIENCY

The proposal to divest the church of God of all the accretions which had accumulated through the centuries appealed to the rugged frontiersmen of the early Nineteenth Century. There were but few diversions from the unremitting toil of pioneer life. The people were widely scattered and it was difficult to satisfy the craving for human association and fellowship. One means of answering the need was found in the camp meeting. To it people came with their families from distant points. They sang and prayed together and heard the more talented and informed speakers of the day. In their anxiety for their neighbors to share in the messages they frequently selected a gifted man to travel as their evangelist, with the various congregations bearing his expenses. Out of this arrangement arose an insistent demand for greater organization to plan evangelistic work and assure its fulfillment. In 1849, on October 24-28, a national conference was called and more than one hundred and eighty delegates convened in the meetinghouse at the corner of Eighth and Walnut Streets, in Cincinnati, Ohio. During these five days the constitution was drawn up for the American Christian Missionary Society. Some congregations of the saints registered a strong protest against the society. Later this seed would germinate and bear the fruit of division.

James Inglis, an outstanding preacher in the Baptist party, who resided in Detroit, Michigan in 1850, the year following the creation of the missionary society, wrote to Mr. Campbell:

"But, amidst these anticipations, the movement excites apprehensions, too. The body of Disciples is now influential in point of numbers and resources. They have advanced, through severe conflict, to their present prosperity, and now is the time when a denomination spirit will be apt to spring up. The selfish cant of 'our denomination' may steal in under a mere change of phraseology. *The critical period, in this respect, is in the outset of your associated efforts and organization.* My apprehensions on this score are quickened by some features of the constitutions of the several societies formed by the convention at Cincinnati, and by some corresponding features in the proceedings of the convention itself."

To this scholarly and friendly epistle, Alexander Campbell replied in his characteristic form as follows:

"In my first essay in the first volume of the *Christian Baptist*, I took the ground that the church, in her own capacity, was the only scriptural missionary institution known to the primitive church and to Christianity, as propounded by 'its Founder and His prime ministers,' and that no separate and distinct association, composed of other persons than its members, could be regarded as of divine authority, or in harmony with the genius and spirit of the gospel and the church. To this view I am as much devoted today as I then was; and while consenting to a missionary society as a distinct object of contemplation, and as a means of diffusing the gospel, I now regard it as I then regarded it, as the church of any given district, in council assembled by her messengers, to devise ways and means for accomplishing this object with more *concentrated power and efficiency*."

As we think back upon this occasion for the first real cleavage in the ranks of the Restoration Movement, we can all learn some things about the controversy resulting from it and can profit from what we learn.

1. Both those who introduced the society and those who opposed it acted upon honest motives. Unfortunately, in *religious matters*, those who differ soon come to impugn the *motives* of those who hold divergent ideas and the controversy passes from the domain of the *rational* to that of the *emotional*.
2. Satan takes advantage of our disagreements and exploits them for his gain. He employs them to engender the *party spirit*. One way of implementing the *party spirit* is to alienate brethren by false accusation and assignment of base designs. Those who opposed missionary societies were indicted as being opposed to mission work and proclamation of the gospel. Those who favored it were charged with entering into a premeditated conspiracy to willfully betray the cause of Christ.
3. It is the nature of organizations that they seldom legislate themselves out of existence. That which is introduced as an *expedient* today becomes a *necessity* tomorrow. That which was created to meet an emergency in one generation will create an emergency to perpetuate itself in the next generation.
4. In our study of the history of religious movements it is frequently impressed upon us that things are introduced upon one basis in one generation and defended upon wholly different grounds by succeeding generations.

5. Although in their inception it is the stalwart *character* of their membership which forms the basis of distinction for most religious movements, when those same movements grow older and become more sectarian in nature they tend to point instead with increasing pride to their *organizations and institutions*. All too often the accomplishments are actually less than those of a handful of pioneers who had nothing behind them upon which to depend for sustenance and were forced to "look unto Jesus."

When the disciples no longer care for orphans, organizations are created to fulfill this function. When they no longer train every enlistee to be a soldier, organizations are created to train a special *palace guard* to defend the faith. In time the idea never occurs to the average member to put on the *whole armor*. He does not think it pertains to him. When all lose interest in taking the good news to friends and neighbors, organizations are created to do this while those who contribute to the organizations sit in air-conditioned comfort to have the message *sounded in* to them which they should be sounding out to dying sinners. Perhaps one of the greatest errors in the history of Christendom was that of building houses in which to preach the gospel. *This removed the warfare from the battlefield to the mess hall*. It reversed the process of the Spirit which laid upon the shoulder of the believer the responsibility to go and take the message and placed upon the lost the responsibility to come and get it!

The moment we start thinking terms of an organization *sending out* missionaries we *betray our lack of knowledge of God's program* for His People. The church does not send out missionaries, it is composed of missionaries. We are all missionaries and it is precisely because we have lost our sense of mission and vocation that we seek to prepare a professional cast under professional supervision to enable us to hold up our heads among the sectarian groups which surround us. Our organizations are not so much banners of success as monuments to our failure. We did not recapture the spirit of primitive Christianity so we settled for something less — a moral mediocrity. We created a cult of the unconcerned!

6. *Organizations represent inventions created to enable us to go farther and do so with greater speed*. They are facilitating devices. It is because of this that they are regarded as harmless expedients. They can be used to accomplish good or evil. It is reasoned that we ought not to oppose their creation or existence but concentrate on regulation of their use. However, organizational machinery creates a sense of dependency and produces a deadening conformity which is destructive of the individual spirit. After a generation or two man becomes helpless without the organization. The machinery comes to

direct and dominate as men (or congregations) surrender their right of function to it. *Men contribute their capital to the organization and the organization uses this money to gain control* or supervision even of the activities of those who contribute. The Machine *always* breeds machines, but what is a hundred times more dangerous, it artificially creates new needs which demand other forms of machinery. The church, like the government, can become the slave of bureaucracy. Already the religion of the Son of Man is so complex that it requires trained professional personnel to operate the machines.

It is probable that the Cincinnati Convention of 1849 lit the fire in the forge from which the chains were welded that took away our freedom to restore the primitive order.

7. The division which occurred did not settle the organizational question for either side. Those who favored the establishment of the missionary society have since suffered from several cleavages. Those who opposed the society have split into several factions over the charge that they created other institutions in the same category and bearing all the earmarks of the missionary society.

Each division lays the groundwork for *others* to follow. It is the most widely practiced procedure but it is without any scriptural authority.

8. It is possible that the creation of the society in 1849 marked the termination of the original purpose of the restoration movement. I say this not because the society was formed. Its formation was merely a symptom of a much deeper and more subtle change of goals. The restoration movement was launched as "a project to unite the Christians in all the sects." The establishment of *our own organizations* and *our own societies* signalled the crystallization of the sectarian attitude and betokened the fact that a new party had been born with all of its partisan mechanisms to perpetuate *its* power and enlarge *its* gains. Mr. Inglis, the Detroit Baptist preacher, could see this, although Alexander Campbell could not.

MUSICAL DISCORD

Instrumental music in the public worship of the saints has become a symbol of intangibles. To one group it is a token of freedom, to another a badge of apostasy.

The restoration movement gained its early impetus because it appealed to the plain, hardy pioneers by its simplicity and freedom from ostentation. There were no musical instruments in the rude

cabins of these settlers, and such instruments were associated with effeminate tastes.

The restoration during the 19th Century was transformed from a rustic to an urban movement. As the original purpose of "uniting the Christians in all sects" receded, and a desire to *hold our own among the sects* became the chief objective, alterations began to be urged regardless of the feelings of the brethren.

In 1859, Dr. L. L. Pinkerton brought a melodeon into the meeting-house at Midway, Kentucky.

L. L. Pinkerton was born at Baltimore, Maryland, January 28, 1812, but was reared in Pennsylvania and Virginia near Bethany. His Presbyterian father taught him the tenets of Calvinism. In September, 1830, he heard one sermon by Alexander Campbell and immediately requested the privilege of being immersed. After studying medicine he established a lucrative practice in a suburban district of Cincinnati where Walter Scott was laboring. It was because of the insistence of Scott and David S. Burnet that he discontinued his medical profession and began preaching in May, 1838. It was in 1844 that he moved from Lexington to Midway, Kentucky.

After the Civil War, in which he served as a surgeon in the Union Army, Pinkerton returned to Lexington in 1865 as a teacher in Kentucky University.

Dr. Pinkerton declared that he would personally teach and practice immersion but would not deny admission to the congregation to one who did not concur. His position was that he "would not thrust his translation of a Greek word between a man's conscience and his God."^{7/}

I mention these things because they may help to give an insight into the nature and temperament of the man who boasted in 1860 that he was the only preacher in Kentucky who approved the use of the organ and his church at Midway was the only one in the state that had an organ.

7/ Although Alexander Campbell was adamant in his view that baptism was by immersion he refused to exclude those who in his opinion made "honest mistakes". He points this out in his *Campbell-Rice Debate*, pg. 559, to wit:

"I am willing to say that I do sincerely rejoice that simple honest mistakes, where they are not the result of corruption of heart, will not in my opinion preclude any Pede-baptist from heaven, although on earth he should, through his mistakes, never enjoy the full reign of heaven in his soul. The Judge of all the earth will do right. I circumscribe not the Divine philanthropy--the divine grace. I dare not say that there is no salvation in the church of Rome or in that of Constantinople"

F. G. Allen, who became influential as editor of *Old Paths Guide* which he started, wrote thus:

"I regard the use of the organ in the worship a violation of one of the fundamental principles of our plea for restoration and unity . . . the introduction of the organ, since all cannot worship with it, is a violation of this grand principle. All can worship without it; all cannot worship with it. Therefore we can be united and harmonious without it; we cannot be harmonious and united with it. To introduce the organ to the destruction of our peace and unity is a complete renunciation, therefore, of this principle of catholicity characterizing our plea for the union of God's people on God's word."

For awhile men were still able, however, to distinguish between an attitude toward *innovations* and *fellowship*. F. G. Allen said that it was not a question of fellowship. Both J. W. McGarvey and Benjamin Franklin were unwilling to regard use of the organ as a test of fellowship.

Winfred E. Garrison in his book *Religion Follows the Frontier*, writes about the situation in these words:

"But it should be said that much Christian forbearance was practiced on both sides. Franklin (anti-organ) advised the anti-organists to meet separately for worship if an organ was put in over their protest, but not to organize a new church, or create a split. And Errett (pro-organ) advised discarding the use of the organ where there was opposition by a considerable minority."

As more homes began to install organs in the parlor and these instruments ceased to be a luxury, the pressure to have them in the meeting-houses increased. It was the chief subject discussed in the papers from 1864 to 1875. *Character* became no longer the criterion of the Christian walk and loyalty to Christ was judged primarily by an *attitude toward the organ*.

Challenges for debate began to be issued by the opposing groups within local congregations. Each camp secured a champion who had built up a reputation as a party *hatchet man* for his side. The debaters were not always noted for their intellectual ability. They resorted to ridicule, invective, sarcasm and derision and the public gladiatorial combats were held in full view of the delighted sectarians whom the movement started out to unite. They were fights to the death between tribal warriors, the *Digressives* and the *Antis*.

In the heated exchanges the instrument became a status symbol. Those who regarded themselves as in a higher social bracket and who were progressive in thought and action resented the idea of *holding back the church* in the community to please a *bunch of old fogies*.

They saw no reason for catering to the whims of an uneducated segment who would make the congregation always subject to the regulation of yokels and as will be seen the stage was set, the lights dimmed and the curtain rung up on *Separation and Exclusivism*.

Regardless, however, of the spiritual and scriptural implications of the music question, we must never lose sight of the fact that instrumental music in the social worship of the saints is one thing, while division into *two rival parties* over the subject is a wholly different thing. Such questions as instrumental music aggravate the problem of maintaining brotherly and family relationships, but overt division is caused by an *attitude toward brethren*, not by an attitude toward instrumental music.

To maintain that state of division and to make the same accusations and counter-accusations as were made in its inception, when conditions have altered, reveals that we are naive and childish. In past generations those who lived in the remote hill country of our Missouri Ozarks were often superstitious and illiterate. They possessed a high degree of integrity and *family* honor. When insulted they knew but one way to purge the blot from their name and that was by ambushing and killing the guilty person. Often this provoked a feud which was carried on from generation to generation. The *descendants* of these feuding families are now members of the same congregations of the saints. They have *outgrown* the crude methods of their fathers. Shall we learn in every department of life except the spiritual? Will we *perpetuate* the same bitter feuds which made havoc of the restoration plea in past years?

The instrument has lost its importance as a status symbol either in home or congregation. Music appreciation is taught in schools. Congregations which oppose instrumental music have, in some instances, *developed* the *art* of singing until it is conceded by all that an instrument would be a hindrance instead of an aid. Those who do not employ instrumental music are no longer regarded as "old fogies." The implications of the instrument as a social gauge have been completely altered.

The division now existing is an inherited one. I do not know of a single congregation that has been disturbed by the attempt to put in an organ. Brethren who see no harm in the use of an instrument and who do not consider it a sin would never recommend adoption of an instrument in a congregation that did not have one. Others in this category would gladly surrender the instrument in their locality if the decision were theirs to make, and if this one act would secure peace and harmony and reunite the divergent elements in love. Under existing conditions it seems rather absurd to regard all who worship where an organ is used as not in the fellowship of Christ.

CHAPTER 3

LOVE FLED--MERCY HID HER FACE--HATE WALKED IN

THE SAND CREEK CASE

"It is not, therefore, within the province of this court to pronounce judgment upon the doctrines taught by Alexander Campbell and believed and practiced by his followers, or to determine which faction of the Sand Creek congregation, in their practices in their church congregation, from an ecclesiastical standpoint, is correct, as the courts have no concern with the questions whether a religious congregation is progressive or conservative; whether a musical instrument shall be present or absent during the church services; whether the preacher shall be selected from the congregation or shall be a person employed by the congregation for a stated time at a stated salary; whether missionary societies and Sunday Schools shall have separate organizations from the church congregations or not, or whether the funds necessary for the support of the church shall be contributed wholly by its members or raised in part by fairs and festivals. All these questions, and kindred questions, must be left to the determination of the church congregation."

This is a portion of the opinion from the decision of the Supreme Court of the State of Illinois in the case of *The Christian Church of Sand Creek, Shelby County, Illinois, versus the Church of Christ at Sand Creek*. The opinion was filed on February 21, 1906 by Mr. Justice Hand. Technically, the case was an attempt to secure possession of a brick-building erected at a cost of thirteen hundred dollars; in reality it became a gripping battle between two philosophies to gain public favor and legal approbation. Those who brought the suit soon became mere pawns. Their original intent was forgotten even by themselves as a bevy of *experts* sought to establish *the orthodox position* which was to distinguish the *true church*.

The wise and able jurists who composed the Supreme Court saw through the smoke screen created by the counsel for both sides and in the final opinion delivered by Mr. Justice Hand pointed out the divergent philosophies involved. They designated 1849 as one crucial point and 1889 as another. The first marks the year of inauguration of the missionary society; the second the year of the reading of the Sand Creek Address. They also note the partisan use of the terms *Christian Church* and *Church of Christ* by which each party sought to *denominate* (name) the *true church*. Justice Hand further stated:

"The several church organizations formed by the followers of Alexander Campbell and they are numerous--at the time of their organization were, and now are, purely congregational in their government; . . . In 1849 there sprang up among the members of said religious sect different views upon subjects of practice to be adopted by the congregations with reference to matters upon which the Bible is silent, one view being, that in the matters upon which the Bible is silent such silence should be construed as a positive prohibition; the other view being, that if the Bible is silent upon a given subject pertaining to church government then the congregation may formulate a rule in that particular for the government of the congregation. The division along the lines above suggested seems to have grown as the church membership increased and, in 1889 there was wide difference of views between the several congregations, and between the members of the same congregation, relative to many practices in the church, such as to the propriety of having instrumental music in the church services; the employment by the congregation of ministers of the gospel for a fixed time and for a fixed salary; the organization of missionary societies and Sunday Schools as separate organizations outside the regular church congregations; the raising of funds for the support of the gospel by holding church fairs and festivals, and perhaps in other matters of a similar character; . . . The division heretofore referred to, from that time forward seems to have spread, and at the time this suit was commenced the evidence shows the followers of Alexander Campbell had divided upon those lines to such an extent that one faction in the church was characterized as progressive and the other conservative, the members favoring the more liberal view being called Progressive while those entertaining the more conservative view were called Antis. The persons entertaining the progressive view appear latterly to have usually taken in their church congregation the name Christian Church, while those favoring the conservative view have taken the name Church of Christ as the *name* of their church organizations."

THE SAND CREEK ADDRESS

In 1834 John Storm and Bushrod Henry organized a congregation at Sand Creek and erected a log meetinghouse. After many years during which the restoration had become troubled and disturbed by introduction of the *innovations* that were creeping in, it was decided that Sand Creek was the place best suited to make a stand in opposition to these *things*. The annual meeting where many people gathered presented what was considered an unparalleled opportunity.

It was decided to draw up a document which would recognize a formal division and amount to *disfellowship* of those who advocated certain practices. To make it more impressive the statement was to be called *An Address and Declaration*. Peter P. Warren was selected to write and publicly read the statement which was presented August 17, 1889. *The Address and Declaration* began:

"Some of the things of which we hereby complain, and against which we protest, are the unlawful methods resorted to in order to raise or get money for religious purposes, namely that of the church holding festivals of various kinds, in the house of the Lord or elsewhere, demanding sometimes that each participant shall pay a certain sum as an admittance fee; the select choir to the virtual, if not the real, abandonment of congregational singing; likewise the manmade society for missionary work, and the one man imported preacher-pastor to take the oversight of the church. These with many other objectionable and unauthorized things are now taught and practiced in many of the congregations, and that to the great grief and mortification of some of the members of said congregations."

It is interesting to note that the question of instrumental music is not specifically mentioned.

"It is, therefore, with the view, if possible, of counteracting the usages and practices that have crept into the churches, that this effort on the part of the congregations hereafter named is made, and now, in closing up this address and declaration, we state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say, that all that are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, that after being admonished, and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren."

Daniel Sommer purchased the *American Christian Review* and true to his promise he published the *Address and Declaration*. He pointed out that there had long been discussions about "The question of drawing a line of demarcation between the churches of Christ and our innovating brethren."

David Lipscomb endorsed the *Sand Creek Declaration* and gave his commendation to its authors. So endorsed by Daniel Sommer in the North and David Lipscomb in the South, this became the *Orthodox* position of the restoration protestants and has now become *sanctified* by three-quarters of a century of practice and is generally considered the will of God.

It is my opinion based upon research into the factors leading to the adoption of the policy of attempting to preserve purity by division, and upon observation of the consequences resulting from application of that policy, that it is factional in nature and essence. It is my further opinion that this policy pursued regularly as a course of action can only culminate in more divisions, and ultimately will counteract and destroy any real spiritual gains made by those who adopt it. I hold the view that this philosophy is without sanction in the scriptures, that it is contrary to the examples given of the primitive *ecclesia*, and it is in contravention of the purpose of God. *It originates in human wisdom prompted by fear. It proposes to maintain what has been gained by regimentation of thought.* The Restoration Movement today is splintered into more than two dozen antagonistic parties created by application of said philosophy. This type philosophy bars the door to further scriptural research, makes real unbiased study a crime, and places a premium on mediocrity. It throws a dam across the channel of thought, freezes the acquisition of knowledge, and constitutes an unwritten creed. *It makes blind conformity a blessing and en-thrones orthodoxy as the ideal.* If a system, like a tree, is known by its fruits, we should eliminate this one immediately.

A CRITIQUE

I would like to re-examine the decisions made at Sand Creek in 1889 for the philosophy embedded in the Sand Creek Declaration laid the foundation for the subsequent disintegration of the Restoration Movement and voiced the ideas held by so many.

1. The Sand Creek meeting at which the document was signed was essentially a delegate convention. Every one of the signers would have opposed a delegate convention to determine policy and did oppose the convention which met in Cincinnati and inaugurated the missionary society. All such meetings are divisive in their outworkings.

2. The Sand Creek Declaration sounded the death knell for the autonomy of the local congregation. Its very purpose was to reach out and discipline, even to the point of excommunication, those not affiliated with the congregations from which the delegates were sent. It was an ultimatum, adopted and published, which intended to transfer into the hands of *certain ones* the right to determine when others at a distance and not even in their congregations should no longer be regarded as brethren.

Out of this kind of reasoning grew the idea that one congregation could "disfellowship" another congregation and that the elders

of one church could pronounce the sentence of "spiritual death" upon another congregation over which they held not the slightest degree of jurisdiction. Nothing more unscriptural was ever conceived by the minds of partisan men.

Certainly this *declaration* was an innovation for which no one could produce a "thus saith the Lord." Eventually, as it always happens, the power of decision became invested in the editor of the official organ and all nonconformists were cut off without trial or appeal. All that was required to drive one forth from the *party* was a censure by the editor.

The *purpose* of the document written by Campbell was to *unite* the Christians in all the "sects"; the *purpose* of the document written by Peter P. Warren was to call for *division* among disciples.

3. Another feature must not be overlooked. The *Sand Creek Declaration* laid the foundation of brotherhood based upon conformity in matters of opinion, interpretation and congregational practice. The policy as stated at Sand Creek "if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren" is the equivalent of declaring that at a certain time to be determined by human judgment those who did not conform to the written ultimatum would be disinherited from the family of God and no longer recognized as His children.

The official orthodox policy of *the Church of Christ*, stripped bare of all extraneous matters, is a philosophy of brotherhood based on conformity of opinion, *a relationship that is extended only until others deem that one has had "sufficient time for reflection"*. It is brotherhood based on the calendar or clock!

4. Our approach to the problem of securing and maintaining purity in doctrine has been factional in nature. *The Sand Creek Declaration* was written for the specific purposes of recommending separation of a formal nature and the word of God condemns separation from brethren as a means of implementing the divine will. It is regarded as a symptom of sensuality. "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (*Jude 19*). Separation is the resort of the immature and the carnal (*1 Cor. 3:1-3*). Division among the children of God is a sin, a work of the flesh.

Formal division must always create at least two parties of those who have been one. In the type of case before us these will be rival parties. Yet *Galatians 5:19, 20* affirms, "Now the deeds of the flesh are quite obvious, such as . . . dissension, jealousy, temper, rivalry, factions, party-split . . . and the like" (*James Moffatt*). "Anyone can

see the kind of behavior that belongs to the lower nature . . . quarrels, a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, party intrigues, jealousies . . . and the like" (*New English Bible*). Few of us would dare deny that those on both sides of the feuds in the previous century were affected by one or more of these works of the flesh.

5. The *Sand Creek Declaration* was a formal statement of what was believed to be a solution to the problem of innovationism. It was a *human* expedient devised as an emergency measure when other means were considered failures.

6. After being adopted, however, it soon became the criterion for measuring the faithfulness of men. Those who cut across all factional lines and respected brotherhood regardless of innovations were looked at askance and were soon driven out as disloyal. Thus it came to pass that it was not opposition to error but *partisan* alliance which became the *test* of loyalty.

7. The *Sand Creek Declaration* usurped divine prerogatives and transferred them to fallible men. *Only the Father has a right to determine whom we shall regard as brethren*. The purpose of the decision was to set at naught certain brethren. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (*Rom. 14:10*).

8. It is apparent from history that the arbitrary decision to dissolve brotherhood was made with a view to justifying use of the civil courts in property suits. The scriptures are plain on this matter. "I speak to your shame . . . brother goeth to law *with brother*" (*1 Cor. 6:5*). The apostle further declares, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you; because ye go to law with one another" (*1 Cor. 6:7*). By adopting a position which made it possible to no longer regard as brothers those who differed, court cases were inaugurated all over the country. This was one of the most shameful periods in the history of the Restoration Movement. To see those who preach unity so divided they cannot even adjudicate their own disputes is a tragedy beyond description.

HISTORICAL RESULTS

It is no pleasure to review the effects of the factional philosophy but the faithful historian cannot ignore them. By an unbiased evaluation we will be in a position to make correction of our attitudes.

1. Since it was the organization of the missionary society which first gave rise to the charge of innovationism many of those who

opposed it actually came to exhibit but little interest in proclamation of the gospel to other nations. There are many factions which never contribute a cent per year to the proclamation of the word to either Jew or Greek.

2. The philosophy of separation produced an unfortunate and spiritually unhealthful attitude toward the sacred scriptures. These came to be regarded as a repository of partisan material, an arsenal of factional weapons produced especially to bombard dissident brethren in other splinter parties. Passages were warped, twisted and wrested to justify practices to which they had no relation. As a sense of brotherhood disappeared and those who disagreed were branded as apostates, sectarians or false teachers, nothing was deemed unfair in dealing with them.

3. Inconsistency of the most aggravated type characterized all of the factions. This is ever the case when legalism supplants love of truth and when the letter rather than the spirit becomes the canon of approval. Men who passed the partisan test of fellowship were labeled as *sound in the faith* although their lives were often a disgrace to their profession. Consecrated and godly men from other segments of the disciple brotherhood were treated with coldness and indifference when they visited another faction. They were even deemed unworthy of directing a prayer to heaven. Because they did not belong to *the loyal brotherhood* they were ignored with disdain by those who were inferior in both behavior and scholarship. Thus each faction became *inbred* in thought and faithfulness to God was equated with ability to parrot the party line and to repeat the errors and fallacies in interpretation which had been woven into a spotted pattern of orthodoxy.

4. On the ground of witnessing by withdrawing *the Church of Christ* developed a monastic exclusivism which crystallized it into a narrow and rigid "sect." Gradually each faction became blighted by ignorance and intolerance, knowing only the arguments used (or misused) to sustain the party position.

As a whole *the Church of Christ* recognizing no brotherhood beyond its parochial limitations has contributed very little to the universal current of religious thought. Its seminaries have concentrated on producing a factional clergy steeped in pedantry. The administrators of these fountains of knowledge have had one eye focused on the Bible and the other cocked at that particular *brotherhood* from which they drew their support. Motivated by fear they have stifled every teacher who was a non-conformist. It became a *kiss of death* for any student to write home that a professor was advocating an idea or interpretation which did not fit the traditional pattern.

The products of these schools, growing up in such an insular environment, have been incapable of furthering the original purpose of the Restoration Movement which was "a project to unite the Christians in all the sects." They have had no contact with the flock of God scattered over the sectarian hills. Frequently they do not even know the members of other factions of the movement living in the same city. Thus they have built up confined and illiberal *parties* in which real freedom to think, speak and act, no longer exists. Although Jesus intended that there should be one community within whose borders men might dwell in harmony despite divergent opinions, the philosophy of separation created a multiplicity of regimented circles in which intolerance is counted a virtue and forbearance is reckoned as a sin.

There is little difference in essence between *the infallible interpreter* of the Church of Rome and *the infallible interpretations in the Churches of Christ*. The first does make for a united front, whereas the second creates and then multiplies divisions. Both are dogmatic and authoritarian. Both make their traditions as binding as God's revelation. Both are instruments to produce conformity by threats of damnation to those who resist. Both employ the carnal weapons of thought-control, censorship, boycott and excommunication for divergent opinion. Both exercise power over the masses by a top-level dictatorship which stifles original thinking and makes the members mere pawns in the frightful game of political factional feuds.

Truth is the heritage of free men. It is not as we conform to party norms that we either discover or defend truth, but rather it is found or defended through the free exchange of thought. Differences should be stepping stones--not stumbling stones. Every factional leader on earth, driven by aspiration for control of others, has a Messiah-complex and indulges in *playing God*.

I am opposed to every foreign element introduced into the government and worship of the *ecclesia* of God but I shall make nothing a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. We must repudiate and reject the whole concept of trying to unite the children of God by dividing them. *Brotherhood is based on fatherhood, fraternity is based upon paternity*--and I must recognize as brethren all of His children. I am sick and tired of the bitter wrangling and jarring of the party spirit. I cannot answer the prayer of Jesus for oneness by the advocacy of division. The traditional attitude of our various fragments and splinters is mere modern Church-of-Christism and as sectarian in nature as most others *isms*. If this be treason make the most of it! Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." With this as our motto we can truly assert the authority of divine revelation free from the domination of partisan spirit.

With the adoption of the philosophy of family fragmentation to perpetuate purity of doctrine *the decline and fall* of the Restoration Movement was hastened.

Even while the courts were deliberating on the Sand Creek suit, Daniel Sommer was preparing for an attack on what he called the "New Digressives." With the inception of David Lipscomb College, the incentive to launch such schools was furnished and one was started at Odessa. Brother Sommer declared, "My friends, you will find that every argument that he can use in favor of this institution can be used in favor of man-made missionary societies, and every other man-made institution for the purpose of advocating religion." This position committed Brother Sommer to "no longer regard as brethren" those who endorsed such schools. He said ". . . I appeal likewise, to all of my brethren to unite with me in daily prayer that God will save his churches from all their enemies, and especially their college enemies." Members of certain segments of the non-instrument wing of the Restoration Movement are inclined to castigate Brother Sommer for his attitude toward them and their institutions. This comes with poor grace in view of the fact that his attitude was the natural consequence of the separationist philosophy adopted some years before and which is still the orthodox position of those who opposed Brother Sommer. Actually he was allowing them to taste their own gruel.

It was not long until those who endorsed the schools referred to their opposers as *Sommerites* and were in turn designated as *Collegites*. The two parties grew farther apart and prejudice was aroused by articles which inflamed passions. In the non-instrument segment of the Restoration Movement brotherhood was now determined by attitude toward religio-secular schools.

This was merely the beginning of sorrows. As congregations began to mature every alteration in method and procedure brought strife and alienation. Local congregations were thrown into furor when baptisteries were installed in meetinghouses for convenience in immersing. There were those who contended that *the pattern* was for baptizing in streams. Fortunately, an overt break on a wider scale was averted, and the disciple brotherhood escaped the fate of the Menonite movement, one segment of which is known as *River Amish*.

In the early days of the Restoration Movement the members marched forward each Sunday to lay their financial contributions on the table. This tradition based on a misconception of the words, "Lay by him in store," became so ingrained that when some congregations decided to pass a plate to receive the gifts, strenuous objections were

raised on the ground that this was "aping the sects". In some instances members quit attending. In others there were those who ignored the plate and marched to the table after the service to deposit their contribution in stately but solitary dignity.

Other matters, however, actually invoked the severance policy and the age of factionalism came into full flower in all of its shameful consequences in the first part of our century. Division occurred over *the order of worship* when certain ones dogmatically affirmed that Acts 2:42 contained the sequence in which *the items of worship* must be observed to be acceptable unto God. The doctrine of the autonomy of the local church was flouted as it always is by the factional spirit. Congregations which did not follow *the pattern* as to *the order* were branded as disloyal, in turn those who insisted upon it as "the only scriptural way" were designated as hobbyists.

When certain congregations began to have classes on Lord's Day for the purpose of Bible study and teaching, a hue and cry was raised which has not yet subsided. An open rupture occurred. Zealots on both sides pressed their ideas and opinions both by oral proclamation and through the press until membership in the family of God began to be measured, not by the new birth but by an attitude toward Bible classes. Both sides diligently searched the scriptures with a fine tooth comb to find justification for their partisan procedures. One group found sanction for their system in every mention of the word "teach" while the other used the same passages for condemnation. It was not the word of God, nor even the interpretation of it, which caused the division, but rather the philosophy of "preservation by separation" which was adopted in 1889.

There is one aspect of our factional state which I wish to mention. We resent those who have what we oppose more than we do those who oppose what we have because of a psychological quirk. Those who use the organ regard us as *Antis* while we regard as *Antis* those who oppose classes. As so used the word *Anti* has certain connotations and overtones of inferiority. I think we regard those who oppose classes with a sort of patronizing air. They are objects of compassion because they cannot distinguish between things that differ. But this very association of the word *anti* makes us resent its application to us by those who use the organ since by our own definition we assume that they regard us as a little bit queer.

Perhaps the saddest day for the Restoration Movement came when certain ones began to advocate *re-baptism* of those previously immersed as a requisite to *fellowship*. Although there are at least nine *designs* of baptism, or *blessings* accruing from it, set forth in the new covenant scriptures, these arbitrarily fixed upon *one* and made it their *creedal*

test for the *validity* of baptism. By demanding that the believer *know* in advance that his baptism was *for* this specific *design* they *substituted* knowledge of a result *for faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ as the determining factor. In one fell swoop they sought to un-Christianize many of the sheep of God scattered over the sectarian hills. This partisan attempt to stake a factional claim on baptism was unknown to the pioneers of the Restoration Movement. It was valiantly resisted by David Lipscomb and others when it began to be advocated, but the third generation of restoration heirs had become so crystallized in their party spirit that they confused *the Church of Christ* with the church of God.

This doctrine has so affected the judgment of some that they will not even accept into congregational membership those who come from another segment of the Restoration Movement unless they submit to re-baptism. It is not an unheard of thing to see an article in some journals arguing that "Christian Church Baptism" is not valid. The inference is that "Church of Christ baptism" (whatever that is) is valid. Nothing else that has ever happened has contributed more toward making *the Church of Christ* an insular Twentieth Century "sect" than the general adoption of the false premise involved in the dogma of re-baptism.

J. N. Armstrong remarked in these words:

" . . . Texas brethren are setting at naught one another on many questions. Brother Rice is building up a sect over 'the order of worship,' then, there is the re-baptism question over which so much strife has been caused, and so many brethren set at naught. There is actually church property in Texas with a restrictive clause in the deed concerning 'sect baptism.' Now, Brother Sommer and I agree on the re-baptism question, the classification of children, the order of worship, etc., but he disfellowships me on the school question."

In the mad surge of factionalism the voices of moderation were drowned out. Those who pleaded for unity despite divergent opinions were branded as compromisers. They were ridiculed as being "soft". Love for the party was substituted for love for mankind. Division became the accepted mode of resolving every difficulty. It was defended and glorified as the will of God. *Gospel meetings* became the excuse for bitter partisan attacks. The advent of radio made it possible for factional orators to dispense their propaganda on a wider scale. The Restoration Movement, harassed and hagridden, became the *most* divided of any religious group on the American scene. The philosophy of separation and exclusivism had burst out in full bloom.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ORGANIZATION--
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST PARTY

At the outset I want to share with you the following statement with which Alexander Campbell introduced the *Christian Baptist*:

"It is a rarity, seldom to be witnessed, to see a person boldly opposing either the doctrinal errors or the unscriptural measures of a people with whom he has identified himself, and to whom he looks for approbation and support. If such a person arises in any party, he soon falls under the frowns of those who either think themselves wiser than the reprover, or wish so to appear. Hence it usually happens that such a character must lay his hand upon his mouth, or embrace the privilege of walking out of doors. Although this has usually been the case, we would hope that it would not always continue so to be."

In the face of these predictions as to what will happen, I propose to analyze certain aspects relating to the status of *a people with whom I have chosen to identify myself*. I am affiliated with *one* segment of the Restoration Movement. My position is that generally speaking, it is not a restoration of the primitive church of God, but rather exhibits the nature and characteristics of a *party*, or "sect." My purpose is to *arouse* those who are members of it to visualize it in its true light, so they may divest themselves of their sectarian tendencies, rise up, and begin anew the restoration program which was abandoned in order to defend the status quo. As it now exists, rent, torn, and divided *the Church of Christ* can never unite the world. It will complicate, rather than solve the problems of a divided Christendom.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The covenant people in the aggregate have no official name or title. The terms used by the Holy Spirit to describe them, are merely common nouns. To select one of these as the exclusive title, discarding all others given by the same authority, and to elevate that one as the *recognized designation* of a group is to sectarianize that term. To denominate simply means to name. To choose a title such as *The Church of Christ* makes of those doing so a denomination as certainly as such terms as *The Baptist Church*, *The Christian Church*, *The Methodist Church*, or *The Church of God* designate denominations. Any religious group wearing a specific name is a denomination in the true meaning of that term. It is just as easy to sectarianize a name that is *in the Bible* as it is one that is not.

The church of God existed before Alexander Campbell was born. It lived in the days of John Wycliffe, John Huss, John Calvin and John Wesley. There was no separate party in their day known as *the Church of Christ* but the church of Christ was on earth. There has never been a time when Jesus was a shepherd without sheep, a king without a subject, or a head without a body. John declared, "And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (*Rev. 17:6*). To what Church did these saints and martyrs belong? There was no group calling themselves the "Church of Christ" such as we have today in Nashville, Dallas and Lubbock. There are those who think that the name "Church of Christ" has been the one proven and approved designation of God's people ever since Pentecost. Candor and honesty forces us to admit that as an exclusive party title, as now used and defended, it stems from 1906, when, in a letter to the Director of the Census Bureau, David Lipscomb called for a special listing under this heading.

The saints, in a corporate sense, are most frequently designated simply *the church*.

1. From the standpoint of ownership the church is called the church of God (*1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; Gal. 1:13*, etc.). He purchased it. The Authentic Version renders *Acts 20:28*, "See to it that you tend God's community, which He has acquired with the blood of his own Son." I am persuaded that this is correct. The Lamb "didst ransom men for God . . . and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God" (*Rev. 5:9, 10*).

2. From the standpoint of constituency it is a church of Saints (*1 Cor. 14:33*). It is composed of the Holy ones, those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.

3. From the standpoint of heirship, it is the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (*Heb. 12:23*).

4. From the standpoint of divine relationship, it is the church of God in Christ Jesus (*1 Thess. 2:14*).

5. From the standpoint of its head, it is the church of Christ (*Rom. 16:16; Gal. 1:22*).

6. From the standpoint of government it is the kingdom of heaven (*Matt. 16:19*). I remind our readers that it is called the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the Son of man, and the kingdom of God's beloved Son. It is not strange that someone has not settled upon one of these as *the name* for the kingdom and sought to establish it to the exclusion of all the others?

7. From the standpoint of organization and unity it is called the body of Christ (*1 Cor. 12:27*).

The church, church of God, churches of the saints, church of the firstborn, churches of God in Christ Jesus, churches of Christ, kingdom of heaven, body of Christ--which one of these is the official designation or title? Who will dare to choose the one and say "This is it" and defend that one as *the name* of the church? Who will be so rash as to capitalize one of these as the scriptural designation to be used on all the road signs, and in all advertising mediums? Do you realize that one of these has become the stereotyped trademark of a modern party to the extent that if a congregation made no change in doctrine, practice or worship, but simply erected a sign reading, "A church of God meets here," they would be avoided like the plague and assailed as *unfaithful*? Yet the expression *church of God* is found in the scriptures, whereas the term *The Church of Christ* appears not once in that form. In spite of this, the latter is "the scriptural name of the church" in the contention of modern party defenders.

The ecclesia of God has no special name. It is the church, the congregation, the assembly, the community, composed of all those who have been called by the grace of God. To give it a special title for the purpose of separating, segregating, and dividing it from other believers is to make of that portion so titled a "sect", and nothing else! The expression *The Church of Christ* is used by its adherents today exactly as others talk of The Baptist Church, The Presbyterian Church, The Lutheran Church, or The Methodist Church, and for the same reason.

CREEDS

The greatest difficulty we face in analysis of *the Church of Christ* is to designate which *Church of Christ* we are talking about. There are more than twenty separate and distinct groups among the non-instrument churches, and each of these claim to be *The loyal church or the faithful church* with but few exceptions. In some cities, such as Dallas, Texas, there are as many as ten different factions, no two of which will admit being in *fellowship* with the other. Yet each one claims to be the church as it was set forth in the New Testament.

While spokesmen for *the Church of Christ* assail the religious world for their creeds, no group of people now in existence have devised or enforced more unwritten creeds. Whatever a man believes is his creed. Certainly whatever is required by any group as a test of admission to its fellowship is the creed of that group. All of the

factions under consideration claim to have "no creed but the Bible." A favorite slogan is "We speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where it is silent." This claim is proven to be ridiculous in the light of events. How can there be twenty divergent and non-cooperating factions, if all follow the Bible as their only creed?

The truth is that it is not the Bible, but opinions of it, and interpretations of it, which constitute the real creeds of all the warring factions. *Revelation is what God said; interpretation is what men think he meant by what he said.* The exaltation of interpretation to the place of authority, not only supplants the divine revelation, but creates a human basis of belief and worship, and the demanding of unvarying conformity to such a basis is popery undisguised.

The Church of Christ is divided over colleges, orphan homes, old folks homes, benevolent societies, Sunday schools, lesson leaves, quarterlies, women teachers, evangelists, pastors, communion cups, leavened or unleavened bread, breaking the bread, fermented wine or grape juice, the time of serving the Lord's Supper, the coming of Jesus, whether pre-millennial or post-millennial, marriage and divorce, radio and television programs, the method of support of missionaries, re-baptism, fellowship, order of worship, and a host of other things, including such items as whether the cup for the Lord's Supper must have a handle on it, or not. Every one of these has at some time or place been made a test of fellowship and has thus been elevated as the creed of some faction.

Time would fail us to enumerate and analyze *all* of the current factions and no good end would be served in doing so. Perhaps the best means of identifying them for the average reader is by the papers which, in most cases, are actually official party organs and mouth-pieces.

1....*Gospel Advocate* This is the largest and wealthiest group. It is pro-college, pro-church supported orphanages, pro-Herald of Truth, and for this reason it is described as "liberal" by the next faction, which attacks it in print and on the air in a constant barrage of propaganda.

2. *Gospel Guardian.* This faction is not opposed to extra institutions. It endorses Bible colleges, orphanages, etc., but objects to supporting these from the public treasury of the church. It opposes "The Herald of Truth" radio and television program because of centralization of support and control.

3. *Firm Foundation.* This paper originated as the mouthpiece of a faction championing the idea of re-baptism of those who came from sectarian bodies and who had previously been immersed, in

opposition to the writers of the *Gospel Advocate*, who recognized that there were children of God in the various sectarian bodies. In the present controversy, it champions a "middle of the road" position which has actually resulted in a distinct third party in the institutional war.

4. *Apostolic Review.* This paper traces its origin to the *American Christian Review* published by Benjamin Franklin. The influence of the paper, also called *Octographic Review* and published by Daniel Sommer, is still felt in many sections. Originally the official organ of an exclusive party opposing Bible colleges, church orphanages, the hireling ministry system, etc., its score of impact was principally in the northern states.

5. *Macedonian Call.* This paper, first started as a mimeographed periodical, well before 1932, by D. Austen Sommer, a son of Daniel Sommer, was used after that date to promote a division in the ranks of those previously adhering to the position of the *Apostolic Review*. Contending that the editors of the latter were guilty of a compromise movement, the editor vigorously opposed members of his own family, including his aged father, and built up a considerable following, swaying many congregations.

6. *Spiritual Call.* The paper, resulting from a change in the name of the *Macedonian Call* was used by D. Austen Sommer, in what has since proven to be an abortive attempt to further split the movement which he built around his editorship of the *Macedonian Call*. This faction virtually disappeared upon the death of Brother Sommer.

7. *Word and Work.* Published by a segment of the brotherhood which holds to view of the pre-millennial and forthcoming earthly reign of Jesus, not generally acceptable to other factions among the non-instrumental group. The faction is pro-college.

8. *Old Paths Advocate.* The official organ of a large faction composed of those who oppose classes for Bible study, women teachers, individual cups, etc. Due to an extreme legalistic attitude these brethren suffer from almost constant agitation and turmoil. The question of how to support foreign missionaries created a recent stir, and they are now torn asunder in many places over the problem of divorce and re-marriage.

9. *The Truth.* The only journal known to us within the Restoration movement whose editor contends that Acts 2:42 constitutes a divine mandate as a specified "order of worship." Adherents of this segment are generally opposed to classes, individual cups, etc.

10. *Footprints of Time*. A small monthly publication representing a faction of extreme legalistic views, whose members make a test of fellowship on the subjects of Bible classes, women teachers, colleges, orphan homes, etc. and who also recognize no congregation that uses individual cups, breaks the bread before passing, uses leavened bread or unfermented grape juice. It is possible that this faction is strongest in Texas, as most factions.

11. *The Church Messenger*. This party is opposed to classes but believes in the use of individual cups. It is very dogmatic and arbitrary, exercising control of the membership to the extent the communicants are forbidden to attend elsewhere under threat of expulsion. This spirit has isolated a considerable segment who are branded as "liberals" because they do not seek to restrict the membership to such a degree as the original party.

12. *The Christian Appeal*. Members of this faction are among the "liberals" mentioned in the preceding group. In general they are in fellowship with those who support *The Gospel Tidings*, a Texas Journal.

In addition to these splinter groups there is another which makes a test of fellowship out of the manner of breaking the loaf. The one presiding at the table must break the bread in pieces and pass it to the assembled communicants before he personally eats of it. Another recent party has appeared among the no-class advocates, the break coming over the idea that there are no evangelists today, although there may still be elders and deacons.

That our readers may see the real extremes to which the party spirit will carry men, I reproduce herewith an appeal from "The Warrior."

"Brethren: We wish to compile and publish a list of LOYAL congregations. We want to make a directory of loyal congregations for the benefit of the traveling brethren who wish to worship with loyal congregations; secondly for the benefit of brethren who are desirous of moving to a loyal congregation. To compile this directory we need the following information. Describe every act of worship in your assemblies. Describe your position on the communion. Do you have one or two communions on Sunday? Do you use only one cup and one loaf? Do you fellowship the Sunday School or cups brethren? Do you fellowship the Old Paths Advocate? Or other digressives? Do you advocate any doctrine or act of worship that is called a hobby by most of the brotherhood? If you want to be counted among the honored few, give us correct answers to all of our questions, otherwise you will be left out

of our directory Are you living in a state of division, having pulled off from another congregation? Please answer all questions. Do you contend that the cup must have a handle on it? Do you contend the cup must not have a handle on it?"

While it may seem amusing to some of our readers that there are congregations which have divided over drinking the fruit of the vine from a glass, because a cup must have a handle, and Jesus took *the cup*, this is but a tragic demonstration of the extent of division. Perhaps members of some of the largest and wealthier factions will look down upon those who go to such extremes, *but it is altogether possible that the same root evil has produced them all, great and small, and the difference is merely one of degree, rather than of nature*. The fruits of strife, division, and separation are coming to the harvest, but the seed was planted long ago, and not one single group in "the Church of Christ" is innocent in the matter.

Like Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, David Lipscomb, Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, and Daniel Sommer, I believe there are children of God among the various "sects". I do not equate the Restoration Movement with the church of God. There may be hundreds of God's children who never heard of that movement.

The *party* spirit is in the same category as adultery, idolatry, and drunkenness (*Gal. 5:20, 21*), "I forewarn you, that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 21).

It will be charged that I over-state the case. Only the naive and ignorant will so contend. Take, for example, the largest factions among the non-instrument churches, those whose views are expressed through the *Gospel Advocate* and *Gospel Guardian*. These parties are in open combat with each other. In the *Gospel Guardian*, appears the following:

"*The Gospel Advocate* and company of writers are determined to take the church into apostasy. If the Christian Church followed the social gospel route, *The Advocate* and supporters are on the social gospel route for their attitude is identical to the Christian Church."

The bitterness and animosity manifested by these brethren who *bite and devour one another* is revealed in almost every issue of their periodicals. In the *Gospel Guardian*, the editor speaks of "the humiliating spectacle of Brother Reuel Lemmons groveling at the feet of the *Gospel Advocate* hierarchy." Bro. Lemmons edits *Firm Foundation*. In the same issue, a staff writer speaks of abundant "proof that

a great host of timeservers and moral cowards will follow Goodpasture down the road of popularity regardless of how crummy his logic(?) may be." He further says, "To see turncoats like Earl West, John Cox, Rex Turner, and several others bow down in Goodpasture's 'confessional' kiss his toe, and confess that such reasoning as displayed in his recent article has caused them to 'change' is more than nauseating."

The editor of *Gospel Advocate* has not remained silent. An illustration is found in an editorial saying, "Now throughout the brotherhood it is generally known that the head of the college is pillowed on the uneasy and unsteady lap of the *Guardian*. The names of nearly all the *Guardian* 'top brass' from Cogdill down or up, as you care to view the matter, appeared on the FCC lecture program last spring."

It is with no sense of pleasure I must spread these exhibits of the party spirit before the readers. *My only aim is to show the real spirit manifested toward each other by those who boldly assert they are "the one body of Christ" and "the faithful church."*

Each one of the parties in *the Church of Christ* considers itself as having arrived. All have lost the meaning of *Restoration*. The only *unity* which is now proclaimed is *partisan unity* based upon conformity with the norm of the unwritten creed. The various factors in *the Church of Christ* are so many miniature "sects", in the fair import of that term.

I do not intend to imply that every congregation designating itself Church of Christ is sectarian. Many have steadfastly refused to become narrow, intolerant, and partisan. I believe that there are brethren in every one of these factions who are not as sectarian as the faction with which they are allied. They hope, work, and pray for better days. But it is my firm conviction that most of the ardent laborers in every faction enumerated are striving to build up a narrow, bigoted, exclusive party of conformity. Each of these has its own unwritten creeds, its clerical domination, its coercion and compulsion of membership by threat and mental force. The Church of Christ has entangled and enslaved the hearts of men and women in a welter of hate, and has thereby destroyed the dignity of the individual. There is no real attempt to restore the primitive ecclesia of God founded upon love for all. Representatives of each faction seek to plant a reproduction of their own party wherever they go. The non-sectarian spirit cannot be tolerated. One must be taught to hate, sneer at, ridicule and revile those who differ, regardless of their honesty and sincerity. These are the stock in trade of the party spirit. They are the brand marks and the stigmata of the holier-than-thou attitude which God denounced and decried as a smoke in his nostrils.

Members of *the Church of Christ* have always castigated "the denominations" for having a special clergy,^{8/} and for creating a distinction between *clergy* and *laity*. But they also have a special clergy system. *The minister in the Church of Christ* is nothing more or less than a clergyman. These take advantage of reduced rates in travel fares and encomiums bestowed by business upon *the clergy*. They use *clergy certificates* on the bus and railroad lines, albeit most of them apply for such as "Ordained *clergymen* acting as *evangelists*." In the hope the last word will cancel out the implications of the first.

The Church of Christ seminaries have special classes for "ministerial students," and they talk of "entering the ministry" as a profession. In *Firm Foundation*, April 8, 1919, under the heading *A First Class college*, appeared this announcement of Abilene Christian College:

"In addition to the College of Arts and Sciences we will have a complete, thorough seminary, in which work for preachers and others who desire to become efficient church workers will be given. This work will lead to the B.Th. and Th.M. degrees."

It is no surprise to read, therefore, in *Abilene Christian College Lectures*, under the heading *Our Educational Program*, this statement:

"The church today demands and deserves a trained minister. Statistics show that our educated ministers received their early education in Christian colleges. The age calls for great preachers well-trained . . . The small college must train for the church Christian laymen; . . . Another great need of the church today is a large number of trained laymen."

Here is a distinction between "the trained minister" and "the trained laymen." You cannot create a laity out of the many, without creating a clergy out of the few.

8/ Alexander Campbell believed that his enemies were those clergymen who wished to hold their people in ecclesiastical bonds. The views of Thomas Jefferson and Campbell as to this point were almost identical. Jefferson said in *Cousins*, at pg. 151:

"The Presbyterian clergy are loudest and most intolerant of all sects, the most tyrannical and ambitious; ready at the word of the law-giver, if such a word could now be obtained to put the torch to the pile, and to rekindle in this virgin hemisphere, the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed poor Servetus, because he could not . . . subscribe to that of Calvin, that magistrates have a right to exterminate all heretics to Calvinistic Creed. They want to re-establish, by law, that holy inquisition, which they can only infuse into public opinion."

David Lipscomb saw this in his earlier life, and it prompted him to write these words:

"We think the most fatal mistake of Alexander Campbell's life and one that has done much and we fear will do much to undo his life's work, was the establishment of a school to train and educate young preachers."

Brother Lipscomb explained why he thought this was a *fatal* mistake:

"Brother Campbell . . . probably conceived the idea in his vigor that he could have the Bible taught to men who would teach others also without them becoming a separate order of clergy. If so, the result proves how sadly mistaken the great man was." (*Gospel Advocate*, 1875, page 345).

J. N. Armstrong, President of Harding College, realized in his latter years, the following:

"I feel distressed sometimes over the condition of the church everywhere. For instance, I think that our schools are all in line to build up the clergy . . . I do not know what can be done, maybe nothing, but I do think there is a need for us to put on the brakes, and warn the brotherhood about the definite trends of these times. I am not pessimistic, but my optimism does not keep me from facing facts. I think, as I said above, that all our schools are set for the training of professional preachers."

The one-man hired minister in a congregation *with bishops* occupies exactly the same position among them as the *pastor* in other religious organizations. He is morals adviser, counselor, consultant, business manager, and program director. He has exclusive right to the pulpit.

Once upon a time some congregations emphasized the spirituality, zeal and Biblical knowledge of the whole membership. David Lipscomb wrote of one such congregation, in this fashion:

"A church that has to send to others for help to conduct its services in worship or work is not a self-supporting and self-edifying church. This is true, no matter how great the number, the talent or the wealth of the congregation . . . We have scarcely a male member who will not lead in the worship if desired . . . Such a band of earnest, working Christians is much more effective for converting the world than a rich church of a thousand wealthy, fashionable members supporting one of the most learned and eloquent preachers in the land to study, teach, pray, exhort, and admonish for them, while they live at ease and support him . . ."

The congregation is the school for educating and preparing men for any and all the work God has commanded to his church."

It is significant that modern religious leaders are beginning to lay great stress upon the importance of *the laity*. Perhaps the moral and spiritual decadence which is so prevalent points up the futility of trying to save the world by the ministrations of a top level echelon of professionals who are paid to assume the responsibility which belongs to all. *The clergy system has been with us for centuries but has made little impact upon the world at large for the simple reason that it has been apart from the world of mankind.*

The real strength of the primitive church of God lay in the total commitment of the whole membership. Every member was a priest. Every member was a minister. Each one, in imitation of the pioneer and perfection of the faith, came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and if need be, to give his life. Everyone had enlisted as a soldier. All were active fighters. They encouraged and strengthened one another but they did that while running. The whole realm of nature constituted a library from which the untutored mind could draw lessons of life, and these lessons, delivered in homely language destitute of the embellishments of oratorical phraseology struck home to the hearts of the listeners and inspired them to imitation.

But a great change was wrought with the creation of the clergy. Now the majority no longer actually worshipped but a ritual was performed in their behalf. The bulk of God's people became an audience. *Their chief contribution became one of money.* The scriptures were twisted and wrested to make a public donation a corporate *act of worship*. It could never have arisen if men had not lost their first love.

That which was started to strengthen the church of God has weakened it. Men can no more worship without a clergyman present in most places than an amputee can walk without a crutch. The body has become dependent, helpless and senile. Thousands of enlisted soldiers mill about aimlessly, in utter ignorance of their duty or of the proper use of their weapons. Thousands who have been called to the vineyard of the Lord sit on the fence and pay another to gather the fruit. The ship of Zion has more paying passengers than crewmen. *The majority did not come aboard to save but to take a conducted tour or summer cruise to heaven.* The church has more spectators than servants. The slaves now sit on cushioned seats and demand service.

It will not be easy for modern religion to remove the gulf between clergy and laity. *The system appeals to the pride and ambition of the*

few and pampers the spirit of indolence and indifference of the masses. It is easier to hire a skilled professional to do a job than by, painstaking effort develop yourself to a point where you can do it. But there is an irony about doing this in the domain of the spirit, for the one who takes your money also gets the benefit. He grows while you shrink and shrivel through disuse.

We need to make clergymen out of all laity. If some are able to bear the message to the world, and have no other means of support, let us share with them according to our means and their needs, but let us restore the ideal of a self-edifying, self-perpetuating church. God's plan is person to person—not parson to persons. It is not necessary that we reduce the clergy to the status of the laity. *Let us elevate the laity to the status of clergymen. That will free preachers to go into all the world, for there are few clergymen who would hire another preacher to preach to them.*

CONVENTIONS

The Church of Christ declares that it has no conferences, synods, or conventions to instigate procedures, or to formulate and influence policy. In order to evade criticism these conventions are placed under the sponsorship of humanly-organized church-related institutions. The college *lectureships* have been converted into conventions for the church. There is not one phase of a *sectarian* convention that is not present in such lectureships.

Home and foreign mission statistics are revealed, with the missionaries being summoned from the field personally to make their reports. Special honorary dinners are arranged for the clergymen with extended service. Questions of church extension are discussed and committees appointed to further such. Choirs, glee clubs, and choral groups render special programs. Bands and orchestras give secular concerts. There are pageants, plays, and junior theatricals for visitors. The faculty wives arrange teas for visiting women. There are exhibits and displays put on by various large and successful congregations, and other exhibits of wares by charitable, eleemosynary, missionary, and educational foundations and organizations. Publishers and suppliers of Sunday school materials have booths to display their latest offerings. There are classes for preachers, elders and women, as well as panel discussions on the problems and work of the church. Missionaries are selected and special funds raised for missionary and other endeavors.

“The reality of the responsibility placed upon us by the great commission was emphasized by many of the speakers . . . in har-

mony with the emphasis of Harding College class work On Thursday morning at the close of the service President Benson asked for those who definitely decided to work in foreign lands to come to the front and eleven young people made their way through a packed auditorium to stand and make their intentions known One said it was in reality a unity meeting, bringing together so many preachers from so many parts of the brotherhood. Over five hundred dollars was given to the church building fund for Germany and eleven hundred and twenty dollars was given to build a school building in Africa. (*Harding College Bulletin*, Dec. 15, 1945, page 3).

That you may see that I do not misrepresent when I say that the college *Lectureship* has been created to take the place of denominational conventions, we quote from an editorial by Joseph W. White, in *Firm Foundation*:

“This is not stated to glorify Pepperdine College. The college is not the church, neither is it trying to do the work of the church. I do not believe that anyone there wants to ‘run’ the church. However, for a people who have no sort of denominational connections, no headquarters on earth, and no conventions, the college lectureships have grown because they fill a need. Here a free, undenominational people can come together in huge numbers to share their joy, their faith, and their ideas.”

It is more significant to learn that among those who have “no conventions” this type of lectureship has risen to fill a need. It is *Church of Christ* propaganda to refer to itself as undenominational, with no headquarters on earth, and having no conventions. Actually, this movement has been promoted into a large denomination. Each faction has a headquarters in the United States, a center from which those in control can reach out and regulate congregations and force preachers into line. Most of these have a directory of preachers, a directory of churches, an official journal, and conventions disguised under terms more palatable to the constituency.

CONCLUSION

The Church of Christ is a kingdom and house divided against itself and if its actions, attitudes and mind set toward the universal church of God remain unchanged it is destined to fall and be laid waste. Christ: “Knowing their thoughts . . . said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and no city or house divided against itself will stand” *Matthew* 12:25. Such is the case.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS POWER

THE UNIFYING CROSS

Only the power of the cross (Gospel) is sufficient to unite the people of God. We have sought unity by conformity instead of community, by organization instead of by personal reformation and consecration. We have not planted the cross (Gospel) as a rallying standard but we have planted churches made after our own image and likeness, and then designated them as the body of Christ.

God has already demonstrated a power to unify divergent elements much more widely separated than those which today profess faith in Jesus Christ. The Jews and Gentiles were filled with animosity toward each other. They regarded each other as dogs. They did not recognize the same God. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (*Ephesians* 2:13, 14). If the barrier existing between Jew and Gentile could be dissolved through the blood of Jesus there is no existing hostility between us which cannot be terminated.

The world will never accept the testimony of the divine Sonship from a divided church.

We have been seeking for unity through means which make it impossible of attainment. We have sought to bring it about by coercion, compulsion, dogmatism and debate. We have been trying to envision it while we had a veil of partisanship over our faces. We cannot have the unity of the Spirit until we have the spirit of unity. This can only be produced in us as we are personally transformed by the Spirit. "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (*2 Cor.* 3:18).

Our skepticism about attaining unto unity is an indication of human weakness. Because we cannot see *how* this will be done we conclude that it *cannot* be done. "And the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly" (*Matthew* 17:18). The disciples privately asked why they could not cast the demon out and Jesus informed them, "Because of your little faith." Simply because the *Evil Party Spirit* appears too strong for us is no indication that it is too great for God.

The fact that the Holy Spirit is working mightily in the hearts of men in this very generation, leading toward unity and oneness, is amply evident to everyone who sees with unveiled face. The signs are evident and manifest to the interested observer. Certain factors have combined to prepare us as instruments of the spirit to achieve the divine purpose. Let me list a few of those things which contribute to this state or condition. There are by no means all of the factors and they may not be the most important.

THE CRUMBLING WALLS

1. Many of us no longer regard any faction as the church of God. We do not try to defend separation as the divine means of securing unity.

We should not become discouraged because there are still those who proclaim unity and practice division. The party spirit is subtle and enduring. Satan will release his hold upon us with great reluctance. His greatest weapon has been the divisive spirit and he will not surrender it readily. It can be wrested from his grasp only by humility and confession of guilt.

2. All of us are becoming convinced that no one faction or party will be able to absorb and assimilate all of the others. In the past we have split over every matter of difference that has arisen. The cleavage was augmented by the agitation of preachers on both sides. There was no real exchange of thought on a rational basis. The only procedure was public debate in a tension-charged emotional framework.

3. There is an increased educational scope with training in the art of thinking. The greatest enemy of parochial and provincial thought is education. The narrow sectarian spirit fears true liberal education more than anything else for education is truly the handmaid to reform. Our young people are being exposed to knowledge as never before in our history. The great thoughts of the ages are filtering through and are affecting the consciousness of our generation.

Those factions which desire to maintain their identity should retire behind barricades and refuse to educate their young. *The party spirit simply cannot survive under the searchlight of naked truth.* Through the medium of the educational process the walls of sectism are being battered down.

4. There is a depreciation in value of those things which have been credited with division in the past. Ours is an era of greatly augmented travel. People are brought into contact with each other and

become convinced that there are many who are sincerely seeking to serve God besides those in the faction to which they belong. At home they would not dare attend another congregation of divergent practice because to do so would bring down upon their heads the suspicion and wrath of those with whom they are allied. Away from home they feel a greater sense of freedom and are thus given a better insight into the attitudes and motivations of others.

The proof that additional contact and exposure is detrimental to the maintenance of the party spirit is found in the attempts of factional leaders to keep their adherents from going to hear those who differ with them. They employ threats, coercion, boycott, and false accusations to hold their members "in line." There is increasing evidence that many are beginning to think for themselves and are coming to resent the dogmatic and authoritarian whip-cracking tactics of those who wish to be regarded as the authorized interpreters for the splinter party. We have but one high priest and he is not on earth. Factions are maintained by factional leaders and survive only through rigid exclusivism.

5. There is a feeling of urgency relative to the world situation. As our world grows smaller our hearts must grow larger if we are to survive. Gone are the days when oceans were private moats around our national fortresses.

The whole Christian concept is being challenged and we are made to realize we are just a small part of the world. It seems a rather feeble performance to make a great ado about whether Jesus wants the fruit of the vine in the communion of his blood to be fermented or unfermented while the savage forces of atheism surround us crying that there is no God. The world ferment in the winepress of wrath has reduced to the realm of the trivial our little contentions about communion, cups, classes, colleges, clergy, conventions, cooperation and the like.

6. The things about which we have fought and argued begin to appear of little weight in the light of the eternal purpose. It seems incongruous that God spent thousands of years preparing mankind for the coming of Jesus, that our Lord suffered, bled and died at Calvary, and that he arose from the dead, all for the one purpose of planting a small "sect" confined to one nation (or to two or three states in that nation) to carry on a constant warfare for a particular way of breaking the bread or passing the fruit of the vine at the Lord's Supper. The amazing perspective of some has become so shortened *the kingdom of heaven* now consists of a dozen or so small conformist groups in which *the faithful preachers* can be numbered on the fingers of one hand.

7. We are now becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that there may be a great difference between the church of Christ and *the Church of Christ*. The first has always been catholic and timeless; the second is somewhat indigenous to America. It helps us to realize that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and that there is no indication that we know them all. We are awake to the fact the kingdom of heaven is not an English-speaking institution and does not have its headquarters in the United States.

THE GROWING HOPE

We are standing at the threshold of a brighter era for the heirs of the Restoration Movement.

Many are sympathetic to the crusade for brotherhood recognition but they dare not express it openly at present. They would only arouse fierce animosity in the party of their allegiance and would be ostracized by those whom they dearly love and cherish. They are secretly thankful for the plea that is being made although they cannot declare this publicly. Their prayers ascend for the ultimate success of the effort to restore the spirit of restoration and these prayers are very essential to our wellbeing. It is encouraging to them to know that there are others who cherish and share in the same concern as expressed *herein*.

Men of courage are arising whose thinking transcends the narrow partisanship of the groups with which they are affiliated. The historians of the future who record the events of this age will not be able to ignore the contribution toward kingdom extension made by those congregations which have dared to blaze the way by arranging for rallies consisting of brethren from all the splinter parties who have met in love and mutual regard to open up new vistas of service and sainthood. The sheep on the hills are lifting their heads and starting to come toward each other so that they may, in some future day, form one flock under one Shepherd.

It is time for all of us to rise above the narrow partisan approach and to restore the spirit of the restoration movement. It means a recapture of the true sense of brotherhood in Christ Jesus based on the new birth. It does not mean the adoption of a single thing that you regard as an innovation or which you cannot conscientiously condone. It does not involve a change of procedure where you worship. It does involve a change of heart toward those baptized believers who do not proceed as you do. It does not require surrender of any truth you hold, or of anything you hold to be a truth. *It only involves re-*

nunciation of the greatest error Satan ever palmed off upon us--the fallacy that we can untie ourselves into unity, split ourselves into harmony and divide ourselves into oneness.

I regard as my brothers in the Christ every sincere baptised believer in the Lord Jesus. Our differences I will approach as differences between brothers, not as occasions of strife between aliens. I deplore the adoption of the false premise that those who were my brothers yesterday are no longer my brothers today. I renounce as untenable the very idea that brotherhood in Christ Jesus is based upon any other consideration than the mutual Fatherhood of God. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and not by conformity on matters of opinion or interpretation.

In quiet effective ways the leaven of unity is working. The magnetism of the Holy Spirit is drawing the hearts of the concerned ones closer together. Like attracts like! We have lived to see the ebb tide of factionalism. The churning waters of hate are receding. The divisive spirit is being conquered by the love of God and love for the brethren. Great things await the children of God. Look up, take heart, the best is yet to be!

There remains one fear. It is expressed over and over. By what means do we propose a reformation of the restoration without the effort terminating in a new party or another division. In the light of history no question is of greater importance.

Forgive, O Lord, our severing ways,
The separate altars that we raise,
The varying tongues that speak Thy praise!

Suffice it now. In time to be
Shall one great temple rise to Thee,
Thy church our broad humanity.

White flowers of love its walls shall climb,
Sweet bells of peace shall ring its chime,
Its days shall all be holy time.

Thy hymn, long sought, shall then be heard,
The music of the world's accord,
Confessing Christ, the inward word!

That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One faith, one love, one hope restore
The seamless garb that Jesus wore!

John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807-1892