

**The History  
of  
The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada  
(Christian Disciples)**



*(revised 2011)*



# Preface

It is my privilege to have been leading *The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples)* since 1990. As we have experienced changes throughout the years, it has led me on a quest to discover our roots. What started as a simple “look to find” became a most interesting adventure in learning the richness of our history – a history shared with many.

It is humbling to discover our connection with men like Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell, and to share in the history of the abolition movement. It is more than fascinating, it is who we are!

It has been intriguing to trace the common threads through history, like following the threads in a tapestry as they become part of one beautiful masterpiece – one that is still in the works. It is my prayer that as we look at our rich heritage, we keep it in mind as we move forward, making our mark on Christ’s Church, to the glory of God!

- *Dr. David P. Lavigne*  
*Bishop, The ECCC*



*Celebrating our Bicentennial*  
*(1810 – 2010)*



# Index

1. The ECCC Logo .....	1
2. Our Spiritual Heritage as Christian Disciples .....	3
3. History Library Archives .....	9
4. Founders & History Archives .....	13
5. Alexander Campbell: Biography .....	17
6. Barton Stone: Biography .....	23
7. Springfield Presbytery Archives .....	29
8. The Abolition Movement .....	31
9. Prussian Union .....	35
10. The ECC (Weslyan) .....	37
11. The Kentucky Revival .....	39
12. The Restoration Movement .....	43
13. Canadian History Archives .....	47
14. Timeline .....	49



# The ECCC Logo



The Evangelical Christian  
Church In Canada 

The communion chalice and bread represent the key channel of health and wholeness for all God's people who partake it in faith, while believing in the most powerful words of Christ, "This is my body, this is my blood" (1 Cor. 11:24, 25; John 6:35). The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada believes in the importance of spiritual unity, (Eph. 4:3) liberty, (2 Cor.3:17) and diversity (1 Pet. 2:9) in the body of Christ. Our 200 years of history has recorded those miraculous healings that were released around the Lord's Table during the Second Awakening when Christians from all denominations came together in faith to break bread together. The cross represents the finish work of Christ for the forgiveness of all sins. This has become the fundamental ordinance reflecting our unity and freedom in Christ found in the words of Jesus on the cross, "It is finished" - forever! (John 19:20).

After centuries of Christianity, men tried to cause change from inside of the system, they have formed groups honestly trying to be God's movement. These forerunners who tried to return to the Bible must be appreciated for their faith, their conviction, and determination. In these days, we are facing those denominations, who rest on doctrinal systems that are full of compromise, and that ultimately are not based on God's word. Nevertheless, there is a continuous call for all men and women to make the scriptures their sole authority. The restoration of Christianity as it was in the first century is possible when we abandon the other systems and their foundation. We are convinced that the perfect model of the church is found in the holy scriptures and that we have the solemn task to be this same church in the 21st century. If we want to be this church, established by our Lord, Jesus Christ, it is necessary to make the effort to know the church through the study of the holy scriptures, prayer and daily application. What was asked of people of the first century is very simple, to believe and trust in the Lord, Christ Jesus, and to obey him in all things. What Jesus asks, is written in the gospels, and also in the writings of the apostles. These teachings and His commands are accessible to everyone. All we need to do is take hold of these precepts, and put them in practice.

This is who we are as Christians, while seeking nothing more than to serve Christ and follow His word as the truth of God. This is the meaning behind the logo of The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples) world-wide.







**The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada  
(est. 1804)**

## Our Spiritual Heritage As Christian Disciples



The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples), as a mainstream *Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement* denomination in North America, traces its historic roots to the formal organization of the Christian Church in 1804 in Bourbon County, Kentucky, U.S.A., and in 1810 near Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada under the leadership of Barton Warren Stone (1772-1844), a former Presbyterian minister. The Barton-Stone Movement later merged with the efforts of Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) and his son Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) to become the Restoration Movement that gave birth to the Churches of Christ (Non-Instrumental), the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and The Christian Connection.

The emphasis on religious freedom became strong enough that Barton Stone avoided any man-made ecclesiastical traditions that resulted in a movement that was “largely without dogma, form or structure”, committing only to a primitive Christianity. This movement sought to restore the whole Christian church and the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament. In a nutshell, it was believed that the church had departed from the New Testament preaching and teaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. On June 28, 1804, they adopted the “Christian Movement” to identify their group with Barton Stone, based on its use in Acts 11:26 which became the remnants of the Springfield Presbytery. Of the majority of independent churches that aligned with the “Disciples Movement” which identified

with the Campbell's group, decided to use the name the "Christian Disciples", until it was renamed The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples) in 1860.

The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples), as a restructured group within the Restoration Movement tradition in North America, made significant contributions to evangelical Christianity by becoming a Fundamentalist movement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that has a position that is conservative theologically, and focused throughout Canada, United States and world-wide on radical biblical congregationalism, and traditional Christian Church thinking with a unique contemporary approach. This movement sought to end the divisiveness that had arisen within denominational differences, while appealing to all Christians to disassociate from the lunacy of denominationalism and religion, and return to Kingdom principles. Barton Stone's concept of unity grew from a belief that Christians could extract the Bible's truths by reason of the scriptures, they approached it without presuppositions. These truths, in turn would displace human forms of order, leading to the unstoppable result that Christians would start "flowing together" and others would come to faith because of the biblical model of unity. Both groups were opposed to the use of creeds as tests of faith for membership, and believed that a simple confession and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior was sufficient to unite all Christians around the world as Kingdom citizens.

The Evangelical Christian Church, also known as the Christian Church (Christian Disciples) or (Christians), became the Stone-Campbell Movement of early nineteenth-century North America, that based its Biblical mission on the Great Commission found in the gospel of Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 and 19, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."* This group looked to the whole Bible to discover practices and Kingdom principles that united the early church in substance.

The term "the Restoration Movement", has been used to describe their interest in restoring the New Testament church in the biblical pattern that was found in the book of Acts. In their examination of the Scriptures, this group found that the early church gathered on the first day of the week to partake of "Holy Communion". They began to celebrate the Lord's Supper once a week for their healing and wholeness. They also determined that baptism by immersion, as portrayed in the New Testament, was for adult or mature Christians only. They adopted this biblical practice in their churches and abandoned the ritual of infant baptism while adopting child dedication.

Separation between Church and State was believed and practiced unlike the modern church today, which believes in incorporation, charitable status, building permits, etc. to claim its historic roots. This practice ended in the early 1900's. However, while the principles of the Restoration Movement exist today, many Evangelical Christian Church clergy continue to enjoy many freedoms in their ministries and churches without human dictatorship.



In 1832, many Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans and others that became followers of the Alexander Campbell's group made an effort to unite in purpose with Barton Stone's group in Kentucky. They discussed their concern about divisions among Christians, and proposed that unity could be restored by taking the Bible as the only standard for faith and practice. These leaders sought to reform the church along non-sectarian, non-creedal lines. The Stone-Campbell movement began as two separate threads, each without knowledge of the other, during the Second Great Awakening in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. When the question arose as to the name to be adopted, the Alexander Campbell's group took the name "Disciples" while Barton Stone's group favored the name "Christians". This name was taken because the first disciples were called "Christians" in Antioch. Walter Scott and Thomas Campbell sided with Stone. As a result "Christian Disciples" was taken and used, becoming the most powerful movement in American and Canadian history – and a uniquely world-wide religious body, known as The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples).

Through the early twentieth century, many Restoration churches, not otherwise a part of the three larger Restoration bodies, existed under such names as the Canadian Evangelical Christian Churches, the Evangelical Christian Churches, the Christian Churches of North America, the Christian Missionary Churches, the Bible Evangelical Churches, the Community Churches, Evangelical Congregational Churches, Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical Protestant Churches, which traces its roots to various Lutheran and Reformed churches from Germany in 1720. The Congregational Christian Church itself was the product of a merger in 1931, between the Congregational Church and a number of Christian Churches. The Congregational Church developed in England while migrating to the United States and Canada. Some of these came together in 1966 as the Evangelical Christian Churches (Farmland, Indiana). The majority of these congregations that have not been otherwise absorbed, continue as the Evangelical Christian Churches, Albany, Indiana.

Beginning with the Old Prussian Union of 1817 and existing mainly at the national level, united churches have been formed from a combination of Protestant (esp. Reformed, Congregational, Methodist, Evangelical Christian Church, Baptist and Anglican) churches. Reform and Congregational churches entered into what was the largest number of unions recorded. The broadest diversity so far brought into union of the Church of North India (formed in 1970), incorporating Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Congregational, Disciples, Methodist and Presbyterian elements. United churches formed a very diverse group linked not so much by a uniform ecclesiology of church life, but by a commitment to a visible structure of unity of Evangelical Christian Churches within American-Canadian church history.



The Evangelical Christian Church attempts to continue the Restoration tradition as embodied in its several slogans: "Call Bible things by Bible names"; "The Church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one"; "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak. Where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent"; "In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, love"; "We are not the only Christians. We are Christians only"; and "No creed but Christ. No

book but the Bible"; "No head-quarters but heaven, no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no plea but the gospel, and no name but the divine".

The Evangelical Christian Church believes that ecclesiastical traditions divide, but Christians should be able to find common ground by following the practice (as best as it can be determined) of the early church. Throughout history, it was found that names of human origin divided the church, but Christians should be able to find common ground by using biblical names for the church (i.e. "Christian Church", or "Church of God or Christ", as opposed to "Methodist" or "Lutheran", etc.). It seeks to perpetuate the message first preached by Barton Stone and his colleagues. This includes an emphasis on the Bible as the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice in every area of the Christian life. The Evangelical Christian Church did not officially accept decisions by the early Church Councils, particularly in the third and fourth centuries. Those matters were left to individual interpretation. It only accepted the Trinitarian approach to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, while considering itself a conservative, non-creedal Christian movement that shares the distinctive view that the authentic primitive church order is being restored to the whole church in the power of the Holy Spirit, using only the early church as a model.

**The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada acknowledges as its Sole Head, Jesus Christ, Son of God and Saviour.** The Evangelical Christian Church is a community of believers who through baptism by faith in Jesus Christ are bound by covenant to God and to one another. The Evangelical Christian Church draws inspiration from the truth of scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit, celebrating around the Lord's Table the life, death and resurrection and continuing presence of Jesus Christ. It also looks to the presence, power and energy of the Holy Spirit to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world without the control of human dictatorship. The basis of this Christian fellowship is found in relationship with one another in accordance with the teaching of our Lord and practice among evangelical Christians. It recognizes two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Another practice (not a sacrament) included in the Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples) is the *washing of feet* as illustrated by the Lord.

The Evangelical Christian Church is not only non-denominational in structure, but it is an ecclesiastical religious body that reflects a rich variety of theological, cultural, and sociological perspectives and backgrounds. The early participants in this movement consisted of those who came away from a variety of fundamental, evangelical denominations and religious groups. They insisted on using Bible names. They did this, not in an attempt to reform any particular denomination, but rather in an effort to "restore" the "original" church along non-sectarian, and non-creedal lines, embracing Barton Stone's motto, "Let the unity of Christians be our polar star".

The Campbell movement was characterized by a "systematic and rational reconstruction" of the early church, in contrast to the Stone movement which was characterized by "radical freedom and lack of dogma". The Campbells also had designated themselves as "Reformers", and other early leaders also saw themselves as reformers, seeking Christian unity and restoring apostolic Christianity. Despite the differences, the two movements agreed on several critical issues. Both



men saw restoring apostolic Christianity according to a biblical pattern found in the New Testament as a route to Christian Liberty, while stressing Christian unity and fellowship under God. One of the basic goals of the English Puritans during the Restoration Movement was to restore a pure “primitive” church that would be a true apostolic community. Barton Stone believed that unity among Christians could be achieved by using apostolic Christianity as a true model in the interest of peace, love, mercy, and kindness.

All Evangelical Christian Churches are self governing in the tradition of congregational polity. **This movement is not "just another denomination" but an "assembly of believers" who have agreed together to love God, love each other, and serve the world.** As Christians, we are given the keys of the Kingdom of God. That is why Evangelical Christian Church leadership is never static and fixed but is fluid and dynamic. *It is never program-oriented but is people-oriented. It is never building-oriented but a builder of community, never in control but is able to shift from being leader, to a peer or follower.* Leadership is never "qualified" but demonstrates godly qualities, never one person but multiple persons. It is never an office holder or an officer, but leadership is a servant among servants of God.



The Evangelical Christian Church encourages diversity when we gather, and desires discussion with those who agree to disagree. We're distinctly Christian and our love for Jesus is communicated clearly, but aside of having no creed, we have a specific statement of beliefs that is truly biblical, and we enjoy freedoms that are not under authoritarian control. We see our role in the Body as providing a safe place for those ministers who can't seem to find their voice in a more traditional setting. This is the right to private judgment, interpretation of scripture, and liberty of conscience. We will be the first to tell our brothers and sisters that we don't have all the answers, but we are heading toward deep uncharted waters, traveling where the wind of the Holy Spirit blows, and waiting on the Holy One who is leading us to adventures yet unknown.

As a result, all Evangelical Christian Church ministers come from evangelical, charismatic, mainline, and post-Christian intercultural backgrounds. The religious and philosophical views represented are equally varied. This provides occasional tension and awkward moments, but also incredibly rich and beautiful dialog, which stretches us and causes us to grow in humility and maturity. We embrace one another fully as beautifully flawed, unique individuals in the family of God who are called to rule and reign with Christ as world changers and history makers within the Kingdom of God on this earth.

*In essentials, unity.  
In non-essentials, liberty.  
In all things, love.*



# History Library Archives

Our history began on the American frontier within the various "Christian" church and American and Canadian Restoration Movement which were founded by Barton Warren Stone, (*pictured here*) and is rooted in the formal organization of the Christian Church, June 28, 1804, in Bourbon County, Kentucky.

Initially, churches in and adherents of the Restoration Movement identified themselves as:

- The Christian Association
- Free Christian Church
- Campbellites
- Baptists
- Christian Baptists
- Unitarian Baptists
- Restorationers
- Baptist Reformers
- Reforming Baptists
- Republican Methodists
- Primitive Christians
- Church of God
- Disciples
- Disciples of Christ
- Christian Church
- Church of Christ
- Open Brethren
- Campbellite Baptists
- The Christian Society
- New Lights
- The Christian Connexion
- The Christian Congregation
- Reformers
- Church of Disciples
- Restitution Church of God
- Christadelphians
- Christian Disciples



*Barton Stone*

In Laura, Ohio, in 1854, an anti-slavery remnant of the Christian Disciples organized as The Evangelical Christian Church taking the message of Christ to the black community. A number of The Evangelical Christian Churches invited black ministers to preach in their pulpits. Many white ministers preached to mixed congregations. Ministers and members were strong supporters



of and workers in the Abolition Movement and participated in the Underground Railroad. These views reflected those of Barton Stone.

The early Christian Church was non-creedal and stressed the basic beliefs that represent our Statement of Faith that is simple, Biblical Christianity. In addition to Stone, the early Christian Church also had its origins in the work of two other former Presbyterian ministers, Thomas and Alexander Campbell.

From these men sprang the present day Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), The Churches of Christ (non-instrumental), and the International Churches of Christ. Unfortunately most of the churches of the American Restoration Movement abandoned many of the teachings of Stone and became more and more Campbellite. The Evangelical Christian Church remains true to the basic teachings of Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell.

Several church bodies identifying with the Stone-Campbell movement today are very creedal, and range from ultra-conservative to ultra-liberal. This can be seen in the United Church of Christ, which is an attempt to unite all Christian denominations into one national body, as well as the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, which merged English Christians with American Christians in 1931. Another group, The Christian Congregation, claims direct lineage to the early Stone movement.

In 1905, nearly all congregations of The Evangelical Christian Church, after great revival activity in Indiana and Ohio, assimilated in the Evangelical Christian Churches of America, Cleveland, Ohio; the Congregational Church, Boston, Massachusetts; and The Christian Congregation, Kokomo, Indiana. The remainder was absorbed into the Disciples of Christ and various independent Christian churches of the American Restoration Movement.

During the First World War, many Evangelical Christian Churches became independent and a formal organization ceased to exist until 1966. Churches calling themselves Evangelical Christian Churches, Christian Churches of America, Christian Missionary Churches, Bible Evangelical Churches, Community Churches and Evangelical Congregational Churches were chartered and incorporated as members of the Evangelical Christian Churches (Farmland, Indiana).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Evangelical Christian Churches were beset by a number of separations. One group formed the California Conference of the Evangelical Christian Churches, Long Beach, California, now defunct. A number of Pennsylvania congregations eventually ceased to exist as they united with the Evangelical Christian Church, which became Wesleyan, and a small holiness denomination, formed in 1892, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The Mid-West Congregational Fellowship, Modoc, Indiana, absorbed a few churches and another group became Trinity Fellowship, Williamsburg, Indiana. The majority continues as The Evangelical Christian Churches (Albany, Indiana).



The theological history of the Evangelical Christian Churches traces its origin to the teaching and preaching of New England Congregationalist, Horace Bushnell, who is generally recognized as a theological liberal. A few former ministers of The Evangelical Christian Church, disagreeing strongly with the theology of Bushnell, and wanting to return to their Restorational roots, desired to reorganize as The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples).



# Founders & History Archives



*Barton Stone & Alexander Campbell*

## Champions Of The Second Great Awakening



The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples) stands out in church history as the "Stone-Campbell Movement". It is a Christian reform movement rooted in the "Christian Church" and traced to the 18th century in the United States and Canada during the Second Great Awakening. The movement in the United States focused around two major leaders in particular – Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. In 1824 Barton W.

Stone and Alexander Campbell met in a time when churches tended towards legalism, authoritarianism and exclusivity. These two diverse movements came together in what was known as the famous handshake of 1832, and a period of definition and consolidation followed to unite these movements together. The first century was a time of significant growth and the Christian Church became the fifth largest church to merge together other religious movements of significant size that became the most powerful movement in American and Canadian history.

Leading up to the 19th century, the Calvinist and Wesleyan revivals became also known as the champions of **The Great Awakening**. They established the Congregationist, Presbyterian, Baptist and new Methodist churches on competitive footing for social influence. The numerical strength of the Baptists and Methodists rose relative to that of the denominations dominant in the colonial period - Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Reformed. Other primitivist movements including the Paulicians, Hussites, Anabaptists, Landmarkists, and the Quakers have been described as examples of restorationists. That is why many of Barton Stone's followers were found throughout the globe, claiming to "concentrate on the essential aspects of the Christian faith, allowing for a diversity of understanding with non-essentials". Scholars combined rationalism in biblical studies with the philosophy developed during the second Great Awakening as an evangelical religious revival movement (1790-1840). As the Bible became the centre of evangelism, many autonomous congregations emerged as members who embraced the simple lines of this church body.

The Prussian King Frederick III (1797-1840), wanting to achieve religious unity in order to present a stronger, more united face to his chief political rivals, the Catholic Hapsburgs of Austria, enacted a royal decree bringing about the union of Lutherans and Calvinists in what was called the "Evangelical Christian Church," known more popularly as the "Prussian Union Church." With this edict, Lutheran and Reformed were placed under the authority of one department of the state, and the two churches were to be "de-confessionalized" in the sense that pastors were to subscribe to their particular confessions only insofar as they agreed with approved Reformation confession which was later rejected by the Calvinists because they felt the Lutherans did not go far enough in rejecting Roman liturgical forms in order that revival may come to the people.



**The Second Great Awakening** (1790-1840's) was a period of great religious revival that extended the antebellum period of the United States, with widespread Christian evangelism and conversion that made its way across the frontier territories, fed by an intense longing for a prominent place for God in the life of the new nation, and a new liberal attitude toward fresh interpretations of the Bible, and a contagious experience of zeal for authentic spirituality. As these revivals spread, they gathered

converts to Protestant various sects. The revivals eventually moved freely across denominational lines, with practically identical results, and went further than ever toward breaking down the allegiances that kept adherents to these denominations loyal to their own. Consequently, the revivals were accompanied by a growing dissatisfaction with Evangelical churches and with the teachings of the Reformation in particular, which was normally not accepted in most Evangelical churches at the time. This has been revisited and is now accepted by The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples).

The leaders of the restorationist movements did not believe that God intended to simply support the pouring of new wine into old wineskins. They witnessed God miraculously changing the hearts of every man, woman and child of their old mindsets, old attitudes and old ways. They perceived the new religious awakening as the dawn of a new church age, preaching a simple gospel stripped of "dogma" and "creeds." Restorationists sought out to re-establish or renew the whole Christian church on the pattern they held to be set forth in the New Testament. They insisted on Bible names for Bible things. Barton Stone wanted to continue to use the name "Christian" while Alexander Campbell insisted upon the name "Disciples." The name "Christian Disciples" became widely used as a result. They had little regard for creeds that developed over time, and criticized Roman Catholic traditions in terms of both history and Scripture, which kept Christianity divided.



The Second Great Awakening at Cane Ridge, Kentucky helped advance the liberation of both black slaves and women's rights within American cultural society. Several African American Christians who were born in slavery went on to become prominent figures in society. This became the "central and defining" moment in the development of Afro-Christianity. In Laura, Ohio, in

1854, many African American ministers were welcomed to preach in the pulpits of various

Evangelical Christian Churches while many white Evangelical Christian Church's clergy continued to minister to mixed congregations which was formerly unheard of in the United States. In the midst of shifts in theology and church polity, the Evangelical Christian Church became the first institution where both women and blacks made an important contribution in leadership roles. Women in many black churches became, to an even greater degree than in white churches, the backbone of church life; many became preachers. Black women so reared upon joining integrated churches, found it difficult to accept less crucial tasks where white men dominated. The Evangelical Christian Church exercised its independence under God by becoming one of many Restoration Movement denominations to recognize the ordination of women.

The Great Western Revival was a tidal wave of religious interest, and a new phenomenon which began in about 1800, reaching its crest in 1803, and then gradually diminishing as it merged with the normal stream of evangelism. Its principle expansion fields were in Tennessee and Kentucky. On Sundays of May and June 1801, there was a succession of Great Western Revival meetings at churches in the region around Lexington, Kentucky. At the last three meetings, the attendance ran to 4,000 for the first, 8,000 for the second, and 10,000 for the third, according to contemporary estimates. The "May communion appointment" at the Concord Church, of which Stone was a member, brought together between 5,000 and 6,000 people of various sects and many preachers of different denominations that flocked to Cane Ridge to experience a touch from God.



The Bluegrass portion of the Great Western Revival climaxed at a Cane Ridge meeting which lasted from Friday to Wednesday, August 7-12, 1801. An estimated crowd of 20,000 gathered from miles around in the wilderness encampment for four days to a week to hear great preachers. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist ministers preached, often simultaneously at different stations throughout the neighboring woods. As the rival interest grew, and as the meetings became larger and longer, unexpected and spiritual manifestations, called "exercises," began to occur. The fray preaching started at sunset and didn't stop until the night. Many people fell to their faces as the weight of their sins struck them cold as preachers shouted to the crowd and urged repentance. Worship continued well into the week following the serving of Holy Communion on Sunday, in fact, until provisions for humans and horses ran out. Stone, in his autobiography, listed visible manifestations of the direct action of the Holy Spirit. There they engaged in an unrelenting series of intense spiritual exercises, punctuated with cries of religious agony and ecstasy, all designed to promote religious fervor and conversions. These exercises ranged from singing of hymns addressed to each of the spiritual stages that marked the journey to conversion, public confessions and renunciations of sin and personal witness to the workings of the Holy Spirit, collective prayer, all of which were surrounded by sermons delivered by clergymen especially noted for their powerful "plain-speaking" preaching. The major variant of the new revivalism consisted of the "protracted meetings" most often associated with the "new measures" revivalism of Charles Finney, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield. They became very well known as a result of changed American life in areas such as prison reform, abolitionism, and temperance. News of their new found hope spread like wildfire through Kentucky, and people in nearby regions began to attend the camp meetings, and were convinced

that they were experiencing and witnessing the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit such as the early church had known at Pentecost.



In the midst of shifts in theology and church polity, the revivals followed an arc of great emotional power, with emphasis of the individual's sins and need to turn to Christ, restored by the sense of personal salvation. The sheer exhilaration of participating in a religious revival found crowds of hundreds and perhaps thousands of people *praising, groaning, weeping aloud in prayer and song, shouting, laughing, speaking in unknown tongues, falling down to the ground speechless, and dancing while coming face to face with the living God*. The noise of the meetings was so great that some said "the noise was like the roar of the Niagara". These revival meetings swept through Kentucky, and it was also reported that those who came to scoff were not immune to these life changing experiences. The movement which Barton Stone had started soon began to take on larger dimensions, and thousands (men, women, and children) were saved by the power of the Holy Spirit. A fourth pioneer in the United States, Walter Scott, made a unique contribution to the movement with his rational evangelistic emphasis. His "five-finger exercise" – faith, repentance, baptism, the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit – provided an order in which people could come to Christ and membership in His Church.

Soon the greater part of Kentucky was influenced by this movement. Stone never ceased to rejoice in the success of the truth of the gospel as this movement continued to affect the lives of many people around the world even to this present age. Both Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell made lasting contributions to the cause of New Testament Christianity. Stone's pursuit of unity is worthy of our attention, uniting two groups, calling them the Christian Disciples. We have dreamed of the church united in essentials, tolerant in non-essentials and loving in all things – so that the world might really believe and Christ's community might come. May God bless us as we seek to be that church that Jesus established in the New Testament.

Barton W. Stone was laid to rest at Hannibal, Missouri, in November, 1844, and buried at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, while Alexander Campbell died on Sunday March 4, 1866 in Bethany, West Virginia.

*The movement...soon began to  
take on larger dimensions, and  
thousands...were saved by the  
power of the Holy Spirit.*

# Alexander Campbell: Biography

Alexander Campbell  
(1788–1866)

**“Primitive” Christian**



The following biography of Alexander Campbell is printed as it appeared in the *Christian Standard*, April 7, 1866, written by Isaac Errett.

"Before our first number reaches its readers, they will have learned that the beloved and revered Alexander Campbell has been gathered to his fathers. He fell asleep in Jesus, on the 4th of March, near to midnight, at his home in Bethany, West Virginia.

"It was an event not unexpected. Coming in 'a good old age', when his work was done, and his tired faculties craved rest from the incessant anxiety and toil, of half a century; coming slowly, attended with but little suffering, allowing his last years to be spent pleasantly in the scenes he loved best, and his last hours to be cheered and soothed by the fondest ministrations of conjugal and filial affection. Death has appeared in a milder form, and granted a gentler descent to the tomb, than is often permitted.

"Alexander Campbell was born September 12, 1788, in the county of Antrim, Ireland. But though born in Ireland, his ancestors were, on one side, of Scotch origin, and on the other, descended from the Huguenots, in France. Inheriting a vigorous and well-balanced physical and mental constitution, and trained from his earliest years, by his learned and accomplished father, to habits of severe application, he grew up to manhood a constant and laborious student--completing his course of study in the University of Glasgow. Blessed with an exceedingly intellectual and pious parentage, and reared in one of the strictest schools of Presbyterianism, he early formed and cultivated habits of piety and a taste for theological studies, which gave shape to his entire life. A profound reverence for the Word of God was a marked feature of the character alike of the boy and of the man.

"Coming to this country in 1809 and settling in Western Pennsylvania--whither his father had preceded him--he closely scanned the condition of religious society. Both father and son became deeply impressed with a conviction of the evils and inherent sinfulness of sectarianism. Their first movement as Reformers was the repudiation of human creeds as tests of fellowship, and a proposal to unite till the disciples of Jesus in one church, with the Bible as the only authoritative standard of faith and practice. Pursuing the study of the Scriptures, as free as possible from party bias, they, and those in association with them, were soon convinced that infant membership in the church, and sprinkling, were unauthorized of God. They were accordingly immersed, on a



confession of faith in the Son of God, and united with the Regular Baptists--stipulating, however, that they should not be required to subscribe to any creed or articles of faith, other than the Bible. The prejudice and passion of some excitable and intolerant men, who then held a leading influence in the Redstone Association, rendered it prudent for Mr. Campbell to withdraw, after a few years, from that connection. Against his own wishes, he was compelled, by the force of ecclesiastical opposition, to act separately from the Baptists, seeking fellowship only with those who were willing to be governed by the Bible alone. Thus cut loose from his former connections, and with a fierce opposition stirred up against him, he gave himself supremely to the advocacy and defense of his plea for a return to primitive Christianity. For half a century he gave his strength to this work, making tributary to it all his treasures of learning and eloquence. For forty years--from 1823 to 1863--he never failed to publish monthly, a religious magazine, laden with varied information, rich thought, keen argument, and pious sentiment. This was published, the first seven years, under the name of *The Christian Baptist*. In 1830, it appeared in enlarged form, under the title of the *Millennial Harbinger*. These publications, although enriched with contributions from many gifted pens, were principally occupied with editorial essays; and on this mainly depended their popularity and power. The earlier years of his editorial career were distinguished by lively and earnest controversy--the arguments and criticisms of his opponents being given in full on his pages, and the replies exhibiting a completeness of information on the topics discussed, ripeness of judgment, strength of argument, keenness of retort and withering exposures of sophistry, that render them admirable models of polemical theology. Seldom is such playfulness of wit and keenness of satire joined with such gentlemanly dignity and logical power. We have always regarded the correspondence with Bishop Semple as one of the finest specimens of the epistolary style of discussion, anywhere to be found.

"Afterwards, when the heat of controversy had somewhat abated, there is traceable in his journalism, a gentleness and mellowness which, while admitting of no compromise with error, dealt more forbearingly with opposition, and delighted more in the sweetness of piety, and in the practical aspects of Bible doctrine. Seldom, however, even in the hottest of the strife, were sentences written unworthy of the dignity and benevolence of the religion of Jesus. We doubt, in going over these forty volumes, and noting the wide range of subjects--doctrinal, critical, ethical, historical, and literary--whether the same amount and variety of writing can be found in any controversial author with less which, when dying, he would wish to erase.

"In addition to these forty volumes, Mr. Campbell published several other works. A translation of the New Testament, by G. Campbell, Doddridge and McKnight, with Prefaces, Emendations, and Critical Notes of his own; the Christian System; Infidelity refuted by Infidels; Baptism: Its Antecedents and Consequents; a volume of Literary Addresses; a life of his father, Thomas Campbell, etc. He also held several public discussions, which were reported and published: A debate on baptism in 1820, with Rev. John Walker; one on the same subject in 1823, with Rev. W. M'Calla; one on the evidences of Christianity in 1829, with Robert Owen; one on Roman Catholicism in 1837, with Bishop (now Archbishop) Purcell; and one on the points in dispute between Presbyterians and Reformers in 1843, with Rev. N. L. Rice. This last discussion occupied eighteen days. He had also a written discussion with Dr. Skinner, on Universalism. In all these he maintained a high reputation for learning, dignity, and logical and critical acumen.



"Christ the only Master: involving a rejection of all human names and leaderships in religion. The Bible the only authoritative book: Faith in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God, and repentance toward God, the only scriptural pre-requisite to baptism and consequent church membership: thus dismissing all doctrinal speculation and all theological dogmata, whether true or false, as unworthy to be urged as tests of fitness for membership in the church of Jesus Christ. Obedience to the divine commandments, and not correctness of opinion, the test of Christian standing. The gospel the essential channel of spiritual influence in conversion: thus ignoring all reliance on abstract and immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, and calling the attention of inquirers away from dreams, visions and impressions, which are so liable to deceive, to the living and powerful truths of the Gospel, which are reliable, immutable and eternal. The *truth* of the Gospel to enlighten; the *love* of God in the Gospel to persuade; the *ordinances* of the Gospel, as tests of submission to the divine will; the *promises* of the Gospel, as the evidence of pardon and acceptance; and the Holy Spirit, in and through all these, accomplishing His work of enlightening, convincing of sin, guiding the penitent soul to pardon, and bearing witness to the obedient believer of his adoption into the family of God.

"He was intensely Protestant, steadily cherishing throughout his life the cardinal principles of what is called evangelical faith and piety--the divinity of Christ, His sacrificial death, as a sin-offering, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. A Trinitarian in sentiment, he repudiated the unscriptural technicalities of Trinitarian theology as involving a mischievous strife of words. A devout believer in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God, he would not teach, as Gospel, any theory of atonement. A stout advocate of spiritual influence and special providence, he was the enemy of all theories of abstract spiritual power, as tending to ignore the Word of God, and leading to a deceptive trust in psychological peculiarities as the voice of the Spirit of God. Sternly opposed to baptismal regeneration, he still insisted on the baptism of the believing penitent 'for the remission of sins.' Educated in Calvinism, and always inclining to that school, he was so fearful of the tendency of all speculative theology, that it is difficult to trace his own proclivities on these questions anywhere in his voluminous writings. Deeply sympathizing with evangelical Protestantism in its grand ideas and principles, he nevertheless looked on its present.

"As an educator, he is entitled to the honor of successfully instituting a college course, with the Bible as a text-book, and as the basis of the entire curriculum of study. He gave the ripest years of his life to the erection and endowment of Bethany College, from which hundreds of young men have gone forth, bearing the impress of his spirit, and the moulding influence of his noble Christian life.

"In estimating the character of this illustrious man, it ought not to be forgotten that he possessed eminently practical talents. He was no recluse, shut out from sympathy with the activities of life. He was diligent in business, as well as fervent in spirit, seeking to serve the Lord in the former as religiously as in the latter. He had splendid business capacity, and employed it to a great advantage; so that, while traveling and preaching at his own expense, entertaining generously the throngs that gathered at Bethany, and meeting the constant demands on his purse which every public man of generous nature is plied with, he was still enabled to accumulate considerable wealth. He once told us of his standing at an early day on the site of the present city of

Cleveland, when engaged with his father-in-law in locating lands. His quick perception took in at a glance the advantages of this site, and he urged the propriety of purchasing in a locality which it was evident would one day be a great commercial center. His father-in-law did not readily accept the prophecy, and their lands were selected in Holmes County.

"Once only did he venture on the stormy sea of politics. In 1829, at the earnest solicitation of the people of West Virginia, and with a special pledge from his friends that he should not be required to take the stump, he consented to be a candidate for a seat in the Virginia Constitutional Convention. He was elected. He bore a prominent part in the proceedings of that Convention, acting on the Judiciary committee with Chief Justice Marshall, on intimate terms with ex-President Madison, and coming into conflict with John Randolph and other leading minds of Eastern Virginia, in his advocacy of the interests of the Western portion of the state. In all this, he never for a moment forfeited the dignity of his character as a Christian minister.

"His reputation was without spot. His bitterest enemies failed to find a flaw in his character for truth, integrity and goodness. But to those who knew him well, he was most cheerful, gentle, genial, just, and devout; and as dearly loved for his goodness as he was venerated for his greatness. It will ever be remembered to his honor, that with an almost unbounded personal influence over a religious community, numbering hundreds of thousands, he never sought the least ecclesiastical control. Although the telegram from Wheeling announcing his death spoke of him as "Bishop Campbell," it will surprise many to learn that he was merely *one* of the bishops of the congregation meeting in Bethany, and that outside of this, he never sought and never exercised, the least ecclesiastical authority.

"He was a profound admirer of American institutions. His heart ever beat with the impulses of freedom. The communities of disciples grew to be large, both North and South of Mason and Dixon's line, and in earnest desire to preserve their unity unbroken, led him sometimes to lean over towards slavery in apology and defense, many of us thought, too far. Yet he was always in sympathy and practice, an anti-slavery man. The best proof of this is found in the emancipation of all the slaves who, by marriage came into his possession. His tract to the people of Kentucky, urging them to adopt a system of gradual emancipation, was an earnest and powerful appeal. Although it fell on ears that were dull of hearing, the people of that state, who rejected his counsels, will learn how true he was to their best interests, as well as to the noblest instincts of his own nature.

"For many years he was possessed of the conviction that the year 1866 would exhaust many prophetic dates, and witness great changes in ecclesiastical and spiritual affairs.--It is not unpleasant to think that this has become to him the year of years, and to his ransomed spirit will unseal many of the mysteries of apocalyptic vision which, here, even his piercing intellect failed to penetrate.

"He passed away on the Lord's day--the day in which he so much delighted--to the peace and bliss of an eternal Sabbath. We have not yet learned the particulars of his last hours, only that it was a kingly triumph. In his later years, the personal dignity and official relations of the Son of God was his constant theme of discourse. Who can imagine the reverence and rapture that shall

fill his spirit when beholding the glory of Immanuel, whom, unseen, he loved so well, and at whose feet he laid, adoringly, the gifts of his nature, and the toils of his life.

"He is gone. We pause and drop a tear of affection to his memory.--We knew and revered him from our boyhood up. In the earlier years of our ministry, we owed much to his counsel and encouragement. In riper years, it was a joy to co-operate with him in his labors in the kingdom of Christ. Sunny are all the memories of our intercourse.--We hope to greet him in a brighter world, and renew, on the heights of Zion, the recollections of many a happy scene in the path of our pilgrimage. *He* is gone; but the *truth* lives; and the God of truth lives and reigns. The principles for which Alexander Campbell so nobly and steadfastly contended, will assert their living power more successfully, now that he is gone, than during the period of his personal advocacy. He has left no human leadership. His brethren will never wear his name. Nor will any other succeed to the same influence and power which he wielded. Those who have expected to see the cause he plead die with him will now learn how little trust in a human arm has belonged to it, and how firm is its grasp of the truth of the living God. Yet his name will be bright in history, after many of the leading men of his times shall have been forgotten; bright, too, we trust, among the immortals in the paradise of God."



# Barton Stone: Biography

Barton Warren Stone  
(1772–1844)

**“Bible-only” Man**



That was a great century in the last quarter of which Barton W. Stone was born. It was the century in which the United States of America was born; the century of Washington and Jefferson; of the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the Constitution. It is not surprising that, as he says, "From my earliest recollection I drank deeply into the spirit of liberty", and "learned to hate the British and Tories."

His parents were poor, but it was the poverty of the frontiersman, not of the city. There was hope and opportunity in it. Almost everyone shared the same hardships. It was a poverty that rather ennobles, for the conflict with the savagery of the wilderness tended to develop all that was best in him, and fit him for his future work. His earliest place of worship was God's first temples, and in the solitude of the wilderness he learned to listen to the voice of God in his soul; to partake of the purity of the water which gushed from the hillsides, which was his chief drink. For him the wilderness had no terrors, for often he in after years, like Jacob, had merely a stone for a pillow, as he slept out beneath the silent stars; and who can say that he did not see visions of heaven opening?

Born near Port Tobacco, Maryland, December 24, 1772, while yet an infant he was left fatherless. In 1779 his mother moved to the backwoods of Virginia, near Dan River, Pittsylvania County. "From the time I was able to read I took a great delight in books", but books were scarce in those days, and his means limited; however, he said "I determined to qualify myself for a barrister, and to acquire a liberal education to accomplish this, I stripped myself of every hindrance, denied myself of strong food and lived chiefly on milk and vegetables, and allowed myself but six or seven hours sleep out of the twenty-four".

While thus engaged a great religious revival swept over that part of the country. Many of the students of the Academy "got religion", but he would have nothing to do with it, believing it would interfere with his studies. At last he was persuaded to go to hear Mr. James McCready. He was brought under conviction, and after a hard struggle between duty and inclination, finally decided to give up all his cherished plans, his friends, everything, and accept Christ.

This was easier decided on than accomplished. The spirit was willing but he could not *feel* that he was saved. "For a whole year I was tossed on the billows of doubt, laboring, praying, and striving to obtain saving faith, sometimes almost despairing of ever getting it". A sermon on "God is love", by Wm. Hodge, finally brought him peace, and when he had studied his Bible alone in the woods, "The great truth finally burst upon me. I yielded, and sank at his feet a willing subject. I loved Him; I adored Him; I praised Him aloud in the silent night in the echoing grove around".

This was the turning point in his life. He now resolved to devote his life to the ministry. "The study of the dead languages became a pleasure".

In 1793 he became a candidate for the ministry in the Presbyterian church in Orange county, North Carolina, but before the meeting of the next presbytery changed his mind on account of his inability to reconcile the theological doctrines of the church with the Bible. While in this state of indecision he paid a visit to his brother in Georgia and was chosen Professor of Languages in the Methodist Academy, near Washington. Here he remained for a year, but could not crush out his desire to preach the gospel. He accordingly resigned his position, again applied for license to preach, which was granted. After preaching a short time in Virginia and North Carolina, he, in 1796, made his way through the wilderness to Kentucky, and commenced preaching at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County. His preaching was so acceptable that in the fall of 1798 he received a call to preach for the churches at Cane Ridge and Concord and settle among them.

They were a religious people, and had not, like so many in these last days, left their religion at home when they left for other fields. In fact, they had hardly completed the erection of their homes before they built Cane Ridge church and a seminary nearby. That part of Bourbon County was settled largely by persons from North Carolina, Georgia and Virginia. They were nearly all Calvinists of the strictest sect. They might be, as Froude says of John Knox, "hard, narrow, superstitious and fanatical, but who, nevertheless, were men whom neither king, noble nor priest could force again to submit to tyranny". They believed the Confession of Faith to be the authorized test of a man's fitness for and right to the Kingdom of God, and those who could not conscientiously subscribe thereto, had no lot nor part with them; brave indeed must be the man who would dare to teach otherwise. The ban of the Presbytery was almost as powerful as the bull of the Pope in the time of Luther. Imagine, then, if you can, what courage it took for the young preacher, who was to follow the eloquent and learned Dr. Finnley as minister of these churches, when the time came for ordination to call together some of the Presbytery and inform them that he had decided that he could not conscientiously accept this Confession of Faith and would not be ordained. "Doubts had arisen in my mind on the doctrines of election, reprobation and predestination as there taught. Also I stumbled at the doctrine of the Trinity. After laboring in vain to remove my objections and difficulties, they asked me how far I was willing to receive it. I told them, as far as I saw it was consistent with the Word of God. They concluded that was sufficient. I went into the Presbytery, and when the question was proposed, 'Do you receive and adopt the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible?' I answered aloud, so that the whole congregation might hear, 'I do as far as I see it consistent with the Word of God.' No objection being made, I was ordained".

How like the echo of that great reformer of the sixteenth century it sounds, as he stood before the Diet of Worms, who were to make him recant--"On God's Word I take my stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen". He did not know what a dramatic picture he was making for the future historian, or that he, too, was to become God's messenger of liberty and light; that those immortal words were to become the motto of over a million men and women marching on to victory. They might not know the source of their inspiration, but the fact would remain.

His work at Cane Ridge and Concord was from the start a great success, but the doubt had entered his soul; not that he doubted God, but that the doctrines of Calvinism he was expected to teach faithfully represented him. He doubted the system of Calvinism. "How can they believe? How can they repent? How can they do impossibilities? How can they be guilty in not doing them?" To solve these questions he made the Bible his constant companion, and was finally relieved by the precious Word of God. He saw that God did love the world, the whole world, and that the reason men were not saved was because they would not receive the Word of God and believe on his Son.

He had been preaching for Cane Ridge and Concord about three years, when the great camp-meeting was held. In 1801 he had been attending some meetings held in Southern Kentucky and Tennessee, and witnessed the strange phenomena of the "jerks". On his return to his home, and while relating to some his experiences, they were also similarly affected. These experiences paved the way for the most remarkable meeting the world has, perhaps, ever known.

On July 2, 1801, he married Elizabeth Campbell, of Virginia, and immediately afterwards hurried back to Kentucky to be ready for the camp-meeting, which had been announced to begin the "Thursday or Friday before the third Lord's day in August, 1801". At this meeting a Revolutionary officer estimated that there were 30,000 people in attendance. Take into consideration the population of Kentucky at that time, and you can have some idea of the religious interest that brought so many together. It lasted about seven days and nights, and was discontinued on account of the difficulty in furnishing food for so vast a multitude. During the meeting it is estimated about 3,000 persons fell with the "jerks"; sometimes they would be laid out in rows appearing as dead men. The influence was widespread and had its effect upon him. He here saw demonstrated the possibilities of the union of all Christians, as all denominations participated, and four or five would be preaching at one time.

The preaching by the various denominations during and after the camp-meeting had an unexpected effect--some began to go away from the Presbyterian Church to the Methodist and Baptist. This raised a feeling of alarm in the ranks of the Ultra-Calvinists, and party lines were more closely drawn. Objections were made to the liberal doctrines preached by Stone, McNemar and others. McNemar's case was taken up by the Springfield, Ohio, Presbytery, was transferred in 1803 to the Lexington, Kentucky, Synod, and was clearly a test case. Before the Synod could take action, five preachers then determined to withdraw, which they did, and organized the "Springfield Presbytery". An address to their congregations was prepared setting forth their reasons for leaving and their objections to the Confession of Faith and "against all authoritative confessions and creeds founded by fallible men". We expressed our total abandonment of all authoritative creeds but the Bible alone as the only rule of faith and practice". They continued to worship under the name of the Springfield Presbytery, "but we had not worn our name for more than a year when we saw it savored of a party spirit. With the man-made creeds we threw it overboard and took the name *Christian*". They then issued the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, in which they "will that all names of distinction such as Reverend, etc., be forgotten; all delegated authority to make laws for the church cease; candidates for the gospel ministry study the *Bible* and obtain license from God to preach; each particular congregation to be independent; that the people take the Bible as their only sure guide to heaven", etc. This was



signed by Robert Marshall, Jon Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, B. W. Stone, John Thompson and David Purviance, and signed and dated June 28, 1804. It reminds us of another remarkable address issued five years later by Thomas Campbell and others, in which they agree to take the Divine Word alone for "our rule of faith and practice, the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, and Christ alone, as exhibited in the Word, for our salvation," and of the motto of Thomas Campbell, "where the Scriptures speak we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent".

These two movements, so similar in aim, were destined to become one in the not distant future. In launching out into unknown seas the mariner is liable to encounter many dangers. The movement started by Mr. Stone was no exception to the rule. The "Shakers" invaded his territory and drew off two of the five who originated the movement; later two others returned to the Presbyterian fold, and he was left alone. Most men would have faltered or failed, but he only strengthened his armor and continued the fight until the victory was won. Then came the question of the Atonement. In endeavoring to steer between Calvinism and Arminianism, he came near establishing a theory of his own as a test of fellowship. From this he was saved by a correspondence with Alexander Campbell in 1827, who taught him the folly of being wise above that which is written, and that things revealed are to be accepted not because proven by reason, but simply because God has revealed them."

Another question that had to be adjusted was the question of Baptism. It kept continually coming up and would not settle down. Even before the great camp-meeting he had become convinced, through an argument with Robert Marshall, that immersion was Scriptural; but as he attached but little importance to it, he permitted other things to crowd it out of his thoughts, but others would not suffer him to ignore it. His co-laborer, David Purviance, had submitted to it, and taught that infant baptism was unscriptural. The practice of immersion became quite general, Mr. Stone himself being immersed, and upon one occasion exhorting those who had come to the mourners' bench to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins", but the effect was the opposite of what he anticipated--"it served to cool their ardor. They were expecting fire, and I brought them water". Like Mr. Campbell, he taught it as Bible doctrine, but did not appreciate its importance. It remained for Walter Scott to practice what Mr. Campbell and others had taught, and to give the present order of conversion, as late as 1827, when he performed the first baptism for remission of sins. Mr. Campbell had taught it, but had not begun to practice it. Stone afterwards accepted Mr. Campbell's views of it.

In 1809 he lost his wife and only son, leaving him with four little daughters. Placing his children in the care of the brethren, he devoted all his time to evangelizing with great success, visiting Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee and several Western States.

In 1811 he was married again to his wife's cousin, Miss Celia W. Bowen.

For a time he was principal of the Rittenhouse Academy at Georgetown, but resigned upon the earnest solicitation of his friends, to devote all his time to the ministry.



In 1826 he began the publication of the *Christian Messenger*, a monthly periodical, at Georgetown. He continued to publish it for eight years, when he removed to Illinois. Mr. Stone's energetic labors soon began to produce fruit in other States, especially in the West. Here they encountered two similar ones, and the three combining, formed what was known as the "Christian Connection". Their object is stated to have been, not to establish for individuals any peculiar or distinctive doctrines, but to assert for individuals and churches Christian liberty; to escape the thralldom of human creeds; to make the Bible the only guide; to secure the right of private judgment and follow the simplicity of the primitive Christians."

The movement, while in many respects was similar to that in which the Campbells were engaged, had some fundamental differences. They seemed to seek to solve the problem of Christian union by permitting all men who believed in Christ as their Savior to unite in one fellowship; they granted membership to the unimmersed and free communion to all. They were zealous, liberal and pious, and made many converts from all classes. The Campbells movement laid greater stress on *teaching*, they on *preaching*. The one demanded conformity to the primitive faith and practice, the other a conscientious desire to serve God as they were led by the Spirit.

With the greater familiarity as to each others' views afforded by an exchange of papers, the *Christian Baptist* and the *Christian Messenger*, it was soon discovered that there was but little fundamental difference between the two bodies, and as both were pleading for Christian union, why not unite with each other?

During Mr. Campbell's visits to Kentucky he became personally acquainted with Mr. Stone. They discussed the points of difference, and found that baptism for the remission of sins was one of the main things that divided them. Notwithstanding this, advances began to be made towards a consolidation of the two bodies. In 1831 the two churches at Lexington, Georgetown and Paris united, and others following their example, soon made them practically one body. Under the preaching of the evangelists sent out they soon became one in every respect. The united body agreed to accept the name Christian as the designation by which they were to be known. At this time Mr. Stone's followers numbered nearly 10,000.

In 1834 he removed to Illinois, locating at Jacksonville. Here the same spirit that had animated him cropped out again. He found there two churches, a "Christian" and "Reformer's" church. A union was soon effected between the two.

In 1843 he paid a farewell visit to the scenes of his earlier labors in Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. August, 1843, he paid his last visit to Cane Ridge. Those who were present never forgot the scene. From Kentucky he returned to Missouri, where at the home of his son-in-law, Capt. Samuel A. Bowen, November 9, 1844, he entered into rest. He exhorted his friends to the last to be Christians. He died triumphant in the faith he had so nobly preached.

In the merging of his movement into that of others, he was, to some extent, lost sight of in after years, but he was content to decrease if that should increase. His one great desire was to teach the people liberty and love as taught in the Word of God, and to persuade them to take the Word as

their guide through life and to heavenly rest. He lived to see his principles triumphant, and the church he did so much to establish a mighty power for good in the world.

*Where the Scriptures speak we speak;  
and where the Scriptures are silent,  
we are silent.*

# Springfield Presbytery Archives

## The Last Will And Testament Of The Springfield Presbytery



In 1803 Barton W. Stone, along with several other men, organized the Springfield Presbytery. The document denounced all human creeds and appealed to the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. However, the Springfield Presbytery did not last long because its proponents soon discovered that the New Testament contains no more reference to a Presbytery than it does to a creed. They, therefore, met and agreed to dissolve what they considered to be an unscriptural organization, publishing at the same time its Last Will and Testament. The document was signed June 28, 1804 by six people, one of whom was Barton W. Stone.

### ***Imprimis***

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

### ***Item***

*We will, that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name one.*

### ***Item***

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

### ***Item***

*We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the holy scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, without mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

### ***Item***

*We will, that the church of Christ assume her native right of internal government-try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them. We will that the church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those who say they are Apostles, and are not.*

**Item**

*We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same Spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will offering without written call or subscription-admit members-remove offences; and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.*

**Item**

*We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose: for it is better to enter to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.*

**Item**

*We will, that preachers and people, cultivate a Spirit of mutual forbearance, pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up and confidently expect that redemption draw nigh.*

**Item**

*We will, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the rock of ages, and follow Jesus for the future.*

**Item**

*We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member, who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such suspected heretic immediately; in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of Gospel liberty.*

**Item**

*We will, that Ja-----, the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in his zeal to destroy partyism-We will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil of things which they know not.*

**Item**

*Finally, we will, that all our sister bodies, read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.*

**WITNESSES:**

*David Purviance  
Robert Marshall  
John Dunlavy  
Richard M'Nemar  
Barton W. Stone  
John Thompson*

# The Abolition Movement



## The History of Evangelical Christian Church and The Abolition Movement in the U.S.A. and Canada Archives

**T**he Evangelical Christian Church in Canada believes from church history that the first U.S. abolitionist was Samuel Sewall, who published *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* in Boston in 1700. However, the first abolition organization formed in the United States was the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, originally known as the Society for the "Relief for Free Negroes unlawfully held in Bondage", in 1775.

It is determined by the Evangelical Christian Church that runaway slaves sometimes used safe houses on their way to Canada; a few hundred made it there. From this reality emerged much exaggerated stories about an Underground Railroad.

The first American abolitionist movement in the United States was transformed by William Lloyd Garrison and reached its peak 1840-1850. The movement had little to do with the actual abolition of slavery, which was a war measure carried out by Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party in 1862-65. The forces that were lined up for the continuation of slavery were strong and numerous; the abolitionists were few in number and had no political power before 1860 but were guided by a strong religious belief and the moral need to right a horrible wrong.

We believe that abolitionists argued that the action of capturing Africans and selling them as slaves was as bad as the capture and selling of Joseph had been, and that it was against the

fullness of the ethos of holy Christian love. Pro-slavery spokesmen pointed out that the Bible repeatedly sanctioned slavery and denounced the abolitionists for trying to start a race war that would kill many thousands of blacks and whites, as happened in Haiti in the 1790s.

Over the years of history, the Evangelical Christian Church historians still debate whether the abolitionists ignited a frenzy that led to a war with 600,000 deaths that could have been avoided. Neo abolitionists are 20th century historians who used the moral themes of the original abolitionists to rewrite history in terms of the evils of slavery and racism.

The Second Great Awakening at Cane Ridge, Kentucky helped advanced the liberation of both black slaves and women's rights within American cultural society. Several African American Christians who were born in slavery went on to become prominent figures in society. This became the "central and defining" moment in the development of Afro-Christianity. In Laura, Ohio, in 1854, many African American ministers were welcomed to preach in the pulpits of various Evangelical Christian Churches while many white Evangelical Christian Church's clergy continued to minister to mixed congregations which was formerly unheard of in the United States.

In the midst of shifts in theology and church polity, the Evangelical Christian Church became the first institution where both women and blacks made an important contribution in leadership roles. Women in many black churches became, to an even degree than in white churches, the backbone of church life; many became preachers. Black women so reared upon joining integrated churches, found it difficult to accept less crucial tasks where men dominated. The Evangelical Christian Church exercised its independence under God by becoming one of many Restoration Movement denominations to recognize the ordination of women.

Barton Stone wanted to end the slave trade in the United States. Many blacks had to hide in the basements of many of its Evangelical Christian Church churches until the time came before it was safe to hide them in another church location until a right time came to take them to Canada through the Underground Railroad.

The Second Great Awakening should be seen as the greatest stimulus (ironically) to the coming of the 1861-1865 Civil War (called by its historical nomenclature, because of its brevity). The continuous agitation of the abolitionists threatened the United States with great civil conflict. The three most influential and greatest denominations split over the cause of abolitionist agitation and the issue of slavery: The Methodists split in 1844, the Baptists in 1845 and the Old School Presbyterians in 1860 when the Northern region of the Old School chose to support the Union against the secession of South Carolina decided in the General Assembly ("the Gardiner Spring Resolutions"). The Old and New School of the Presbyterian Church had already divided in 1837. The Northern president of the United States Abraham Lincoln, along with Horace Bushnell and Philip Schaff saw the war as God's punishment to America because of the refusal to repent of slavery. The Southern churches, particularly the Southern Presbyterians were strict subscriptionists to the WCF and did not want to see the church, a spiritual institution, involved in the civil sphere. As well, they thought the Bible implicitly and explicitly taught that slavery was ontologically a God-ordained institution. There were some revivals in the Federal and

Confederate armies during the War but toward the end of the war, with a great amount of casualties never before seen by Americans, the religious faith of some grew dull.

The 1860 presidential victory of Abraham Lincoln, who opposed the spread of slavery to the Western United States, marked a turning point in the movement. Convinced that their way of life was threatened, the Southern states seceded from the Union, which led to the American Civil War. In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed slaves held in the Confederate States; the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1865) prohibited slavery throughout the country. Slavery was abolished in most of Latin America during the Independence Wars (1810–1822), but slavery remained a practice in the region up to 1888 in Brazil, as well as having long life in the remaining Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico. In some parts of Africa and in much of the Islamic world, it persisted as a legal institution well into the 20th century.

In 1784, William Wilberforce became converted to Evangelical Christianity. He joined the Clapham Set, a group of evangelical members of the Anglican Church, centered around John Venn, rector of Clapham Church in London. As a result of this conversion, William Wilberforce became interested in social reform and was eventually approached by Lady Middleton, to use his power as an MP to bring an end to the slave trade.

Society of Friends in Britain had been campaigning against the slave trade for many years. They had presented a petition to helped form the Society for the twelve members on the committee the evangelical movement, William Middleton's request. In his letter of great importance of the subject and I allotted to me." Despite these doubts, Middleton's request, but soon after not until 12th May, 1789, that he made his first speech against the slave trade.



Parliament in 1783 and in 1787 had Abolition of the Slave Trade. Of the nine were Quakers. As a member of Wilberforce was sympathetic to Mrs. reply, Wilberforce wrote: "I feel the think myself unequal to the task Wilberforce agreed to Mrs. wards, he became very ill and it was

The Evangelical Christian Church acknowledges that Wilberforce, along with Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp, was now seen as one of the leaders of the anti-slave trade movement. Most of Wilberforce's Tory colleagues in the House of Commons were opposed to any restrictions on the slave trade and at first he had to rely on the support of Whigs such as Charles Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, William Grenville and Henry Brougham. When William Wilberforce presented his first bill to abolish the slave trade in 1791 it was easily defeated by 163 votes to 88.

It was acknowledged that William Wilberforce refused to be beaten and in 1805 the House of Commons passed a bill to that made it unlawful for any British subject to transport slaves, but the measure was blocked by the House of Lords.

In February 1806, Lord Grenville formed a Whig administration. Grenville and his Foreign Secretary, Charles Fox, were strong opponents of the slave trade. Fox and Wilberforce led the

campaign in the House of Commons, whereas Grenville, had the task of persuading the House of Lords to accept the measure.

Lord Grenville made a passionate speech where he argued that the trade was "contrary to the principles of justice, humanity and sound policy" and criticized fellow members for "not having abolished the trade long ago". When the vote was taken the Abolition of the Slave Trade bill was passed in the House of Lords by 41 votes to 20. In the House of Commons it was carried by 114 to 15 and it became law on 25th March, 1807.

*The abolitionists were few in  
number...but were guided by a strong  
religious belief and the moral need to  
right a horrible wrong.*



# **Prussian Union**

## **(Evangelical Christian Church)**

Beginning with the Old Prussian Union of 1817, and existing mainly at the national level, united churches have been formed from a combination of Protestant (esp. Reformed, Congregational, Methodist, Evangelical Christian Church, Baptist and Anglican churches). Reform and Congregational churches entered into what was the largest number of unions recorded. The broadest diversity so far brought into union of the Church of North India (formed in 1970), incorporating Anglican, Baptist, Brethren, Congregational, Disciples, Methodist and Presbyterian elements. United churches formed a very diverse group linked not so much by a uniform ecclesiology of church life, but by a commitment to a visible structure of unity of Evangelical Christian Churches within American-Canadian church history.

The Prussian Union (Evangelical Christian Church) (Unionsurkunde) was the merger of the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church in Prussia, by a series of decrees by King Frederick William III. These decrees were the culmination of the efforts of his predecessors to unify these two churches after John Sigismund declared his conversion from the Lutheran faith to the Reformed faith in 1617.

One year after he ascended to the throne in 1798, Frederick William III issued a decree for a new common liturgical agenda (service book) to be published, for use in both the Lutheran and Reformed congregations. To accomplish this, a commission to prepare this common agenda was formed.

Major reforms to the administration of Prussia were undertaken after the defeat to Napoleon's army at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt. As a part of these reforms the leadership structure of both the Lutheran and Reformed Churches was abolished by the Prussian government. Authority over both of these churches was given to the newly appointed Minister of Religious Affairs and Education.

In 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon, a consistory was reintroduced for each province. This differed from the old structure in that the new leadership administered the affairs of all faiths; Catholics, Mennonites, Moravians, Jews, the Reformed church, and the Lutheran church. On September 27, 1817, Frederick William announced that on the 300th anniversary of the Reformation the Lutheran and Reformed congregations at Potsdam would unite into one Evangelical Christian church. Frederick William expressed his desire to see the Protestant congregations around Prussia follow this example, and become "Union" congregations. In the years that followed, many Lutheran and Reformed congregations did follow the example of Potsdam, and became single merged congregations.

A number of steps were taken to effect the number of pastors that would become "Union" pastors. Candidates for ministry, from 1820 onwards were required to state whether they would be willing to join the "Union". All of the theological faculty at the University of Bonn belonged

to the “Union”. Also an ecumenical ordination vow was formulated in which the pastor avowed allegiance to the Evangelical Church.

In 1821 at Christmas time, a common liturgical agenda was produced, as a result of a great deal of personal work by Frederick William, as well by the commission that Frederick William had appointed many years before in 1798. The agenda was not well received by many Lutherans, as it was seen to compromise in the wording of the Words of Institution, to a point where the Real Presence was not proclaimed. The Protestant congregations were directed in 1822 to use only the newly formulated agenda for worship. This met with strong objections from Lutheran pastors around Prussia. Despite the opposition, 5343 churches out of 7782 were using the new agenda by 1825.

Debate and opposition to the new agenda persisted until 1829, when a revised edition of the agenda was produced. This liturgy incorporated a greater level of elements from the Lutheran liturgical tradition. With this introduction, the dissent against the agenda was greatly reduced. In June 1829 Frederick William ordered that all Protestant congregations and clergy in Prussia give up the names ‘Lutheran’ or ‘Reformed’ and take up the name ‘Evangelical’. The decree was not to enforce a change of belief, but was only a change of nomenclature. In April 1830 Frederick William, in his instructions for the upcoming celebration of the 300th anniversary of the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, ordered all Protestant congregations in Prussia to celebrate the Lord's Supper using the new agenda. Rather than having the unifying effect that Frederick William desired, the decree created a great deal of dissent amongst Lutheran congregations.

In a compromise with dissenters, who had now earned the name “Old Lutherans”, in 1834 Frederick William issued a decree which stated that Union would only be in the areas of governance, and in the liturgical agenda, and that the respective congregations could retain their confessional identities. In addition to this, dissenters were forbidden from organizing sectarian groups.

In defiance of this decree, a number of Lutheran pastors and congregations who believed that they would be acting against the Will of God by obeying the king's decree, continued to use the old liturgical agenda and sacramental rites of the Lutheran church. Becoming aware of this defiance, officials sought out those who acted against the decree. Pastors who were caught were suspended from their ministry. If suspended pastors were caught acting in a pastoral role, they were imprisoned.

By 1835 many dissenting “Old Lutheran” groups were looking to emigration as a means to finding religious freedom. Some groups emigrated to Australia and the United States in the years leading up to 1840. The latter emigration led to the formation of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, today the second largest Lutheran denomination in the U.S.

With the death of King Frederick William III in 1840, King Frederick William IV ascended to the throne. Frederick William IV released the pastors who had been imprisoned, and allowed the dissenting groups to form religious organizations in freedom.

# Evangelical Christian Church (Wesleyan)

The Evangelical Christian Church was born in the holiness revival that occurred spontaneously in various parts of the United States during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1882 L. Frank Haas, along with four others, conducted open-air and hall meetings in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These efforts resulted in the conversion of many people. Haas and his coworkers assumed spiritual leadership for this rapidly growing fellowship of new Christians. While the organization of a church was not the original plan, the necessity of organizing was soon realized. The converts needed to be established in holiness of heart and life and opportunities were opening for the expansion of the work into other communities. The name Heavenly Recruit Association was chosen and the new organization was granted a charter by the city of Philadelphia in 1884.

The evangelistic ministry spread rapidly into the areas surrounding Philadelphia. Churches were soon established in Chester and West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, and Wilmington, Delaware. New missions were organized at other locations in eastern Pennsylvania and in the state of Indiana. At the Annual Conference held at Linwood, Pennsylvania, in 1889, resolutions were passed to establish an itinerant ministry, elect a presiding elder, and station pastors. Haas, president of the association was elected the first Presiding Elder.

Articles of Faith and Bylaws were adopted by the Annual Conference of 1892, which convened at Reading, Pennsylvania. At this time the publication of a church paper was approved. It was called The Crown of Glory, and it was first published in Pennsylvania but later was moved to Indiana and was succeeded in 1906 by a new publication, A Voice From Canaan. Previous to these publication efforts, Good News and The Heavenly Recruit had been printed and circulated by the association.

At the tenth Annual Conference, held at West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, in 1894, the denomination, which had outgrown the limitations of the original charter, voted to reorganize. At this time the church at Philadelphia withdrew, claiming the original charter and name. The conference then adopted the name Holiness Christian Association, elected Rev. C. W. Ruth as Presiding Elder and continued their sessions as the first Annual Conference of the reorganized denomination.

The Annual Conference of 1896, held at Reading, Pennsylvania, authorized the organization of a second Annual Conference in Indiana and a General Conference. The Indiana Conference was duly constituted that same year at Tipton, Indiana, under the direction of Rev. Jonas Trumbauer, the Presiding Elder. The first General Conference convened at Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1897. At this conference the organization modified its name to Holiness Christian Church.

In the period of 1907-1908, the Pennsylvania Conference considered consolidating with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (the word "Pentecostal" was dropped in 1919). Release was requested from the General Conference and was granted. In 1908 several of the churches and ministers did unite with the Church of the Nazarene, forming the nucleus for their Philadelphia

District. About an equal number of churches and ministers declined merger, reorganized, and continued as the Pennsylvania Conference of the Holiness Christian Church. In 1916 this conference reunited with the general church then centered in Indiana.

In 1919 at the General Assembly convened in Cincinnati, Ohio, the Holiness Christian Church, with the exception of the Pennsylvania Conference, voted to merge with the International Apostolic Holiness Church. The Indiana Conference, which provided much of the strength of the new organization, was joined by the Kansas and Oklahoma Conference and the Illinois and Missouri Conference in the union, which selected the name International Holiness Church. A subsequent merger with the Pilgrim Church formed the Pilgrim Holiness Church, which in 1968 united with the Wesleyan Methodist Church to become the Wesleyan Church. The Pennsylvania Conference continued as the Holiness Christian Church.

Annual camp meetings were conducted at various locations throughout the church's history. In 1921 a camp meeting ground was purchased at Seyfert, near Reading, Pennsylvania. This continues to serve as the Conference Center for the denomination. The growth of the church led to the development of congregations beyond the original boundaries of the conference. Presently there are churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New York, and Virginia, as well as Jamaica. A denominational camp meeting has also been held at Fruitland, Maryland, since 1950. Publication of a church periodical, first called The Holiness Christian Messenger, and now The Christian Messenger, was begun in 1937.

The church was incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1945. The corporate name, Holiness Christian Church of the United States of America was changed to Holiness Christian Church in 1969. The present name, Evangelical Christian Church (Wesleyan) was approved by the Annual Conference in 1976 and was legally authorized on January 1, 1977. The Evangelical Christian Church is a member denomination of the Christian Holiness Association and the National Association of Evangelicals. Supportive and cooperative ministries are also addressed through affiliation with the Evangelical Wesleyan Fellowship, an association of similar holiness denominations.

Throughout its history, the church has been involved in missionary endeavors. Work was conducted in Central and South America, Africa, and other world regions. In 1945, a movement which had begun in Jamaica twenty years previously, united with the Holiness Christian Church. The Jamaican church was incorporated in 1949 and was the focus of evangelistic and missionary activity through the years. Recognized as a District Conference in 1969, the Holiness Christian Church in Jamaica continues its ministry under that name while remaining fully a part of the Evangelical Christian Church.

Missionary outreach has also been accomplished through cooperation with selected international mission organizations. Through its present affiliation with World Gospel Mission, the Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples) is part of a global thrust to bring Christ's love to the nations.

# The Kentucky Revival

The Kentucky Revival and The Evangelical Christian Church (Christian Disciples)

At the Cane Ridge (Kentucky) revival of 1801, Barton W. Stone revealed his new found conviction of faith as prerequisite for salvation to the chagrin of the Presbyterian Church. He was quickly accused of Arminianism after which his association with the Presbyterian Church was severed. In 1804 the Springfield Presbytery was formed by Stone and others with the same theology. After reexamination, Barton and others in the presbytery were compelled by the scriptures to dissolve the organization for fear of Romanization. This led to the famous, "Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery."

In 1824 Barton W. Stone met with Alexander Campbell which would eventually lead to the unification of the "Christian" (Stone) movement and the "Reformed Baptist" (Campbell) movement into what is commonly called the Restoration Movement.

It all began, not at Cane Ridge, but two years earlier at the emotionally charged communion service at Red River church when a woman at the extreme end of the house, gave vent to her feelings in loud cries and shouts. Only after the movement has spread did Barton W. Stone "learn how to do it" and organized the Cane Ridge ecumenical communion service The Kentucky Revival or the Second Great Awakening

It began in the Summer of 1799. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered at the church of Red River (near the Tennessee-Kentucky border), which was ministered to, in connection with the Gasper and Muddy river congregations, by the Rev. James McGready who had recently come from Orange county, North Carolina. This meeting was held from Friday until Monday morning, as was then the custom. Mr. Rankin, Mr. Hodge and William McGee, Presbyterian preachers, and John McGee, brother of William, a Methodist preacher, were present. The McGees were on a mission to Ohio, and stopped in their journey to be present at the meeting.

At this meeting nothing remarkable occurred until Monday, when Mr. Hodge was preaching, When a woman at the extreme end of the house, gave vent to her feelings in loud cries and shouts. When dismissed, the congregation showed no disposition to leave, but say, many of them silently weeping in every part of the house.

"Wm. McGee soon felt such a power come over him that he, not seeming to know what he did, left his seat and sat down on the floor, while John sat trembling under a consciousness of the power of God." (Bangs). John McGee felt an irresistible urge to preach and the people were eager to hear him. He began, and again the woman shouted and would not be silent. Davidson (a famous church historian) thus describes the scene:

"Too much agitated to preach, he expressed his belief that there was a greater than he preaching and exhorted the people to let the Lord God Omnipotent reign in their hearts, and to submit to him, and their soul should live. Upon this, many broke silence and the

renewed vociferation of the female before mentioned, were tremendous. The Methodist preacher, whose feelings were now wrought up to the highest pitch after a brief debate in his own mind, came to the conclusion that it was his duty to disregard the usual orderly habits of the denomination, and passed along the aisle shouting and exhorting vehemently. The clamor and confusion were increased tenfold: the flame was blown to its height: screams for mercy were mingled with shouts of ecstasy, and a universal agitation pervaded the whole multitude, who were bowed before it as a field of grain waves before the wind."

Every settlement along the Green river and the Cumberland was full of religious fervor. Men filled their wagons with beds and provisions and traveled fifty miles to camp upon the ground and hear him preach. The idea was new, hundreds adopted it, and camp meetings began. The first regular general camp meeting was held at the Gasper River Church, in July, 1800; but the rage spread, and a dozen encampments followed in quick succession.

The meetings were always held in the forest near some church which furnished a lodging place for the preachers. As the meetings progressed and the excitement grew more intense, and the crowd rushed from preacher to preacher, singing, shouting, laughing, calling upon men to repent, men and women fell upon the ground unable to help themselves, and in such numbers that it was impossible for the multitude to move about, especially at night, when the excitement was the greatest, without trampling them, and so those who fell were gathered up and carried to the meeting house, where the "spiritually slain: as they called them, were laid upon the floor. Some of them lay quiet, unable to move or speak; some could talk, but were unable to move; some would shriek as though in greatest agony, and bound about "like a live fish out of water."

In 1807, Richard McNemar published a book on "The Kentucky Revival." He states that the spread of the revival began in Christian and Logan Co., Kentucky and in the Spring of 1801, had reached Mason Co., Kentucky. Beginning at Flemingsburgh in April, moving to Cabin Creek, where a camp meeting was held, then Concord, in Bourbon County, by the last of May and Eagle Creek in Adams Co., Ohio in the beginning of June. There were meetings in quick succession at Pleasant Point, Kentucky; Indian Creek, in Harrison county (July); Cambridge, near Paris, Bourbon County (August).

"Here were collected all the elements calculated to affect the imagination. The spectacle presented at night was one of the wildest grandeur. The glare of the blazing camp-fires falling on a dense assemblage of heads simultaneously bowed in adoration and reflected back from long ranges of tents upon every side; hundreds of candles and lamps suspended among the trees, together with numerous torches flashing to and fro, throwing an uncertain light upon the tremulous foliage, and giving an appearance of dim and indefinite extent to the depth of the forest; the solemn chanting of hymns swelling and falling on the night wind; the impassioned exhortations; the earnest prayers; the sobs, shrieks, or shouts, bursting from persons under intense agitation of mind; the sudden spasms which seized upon scores, and unexpectedly dashed them to the ground -- all conspired to invest the scene with terrific interest, and to work up the feelings to the highest pitch of excitement. When we add to this, the lateness of the hour to which the exercises were protracted, sometimes till two in the morning, or longer; the eagerness of curiosity stimulated for so long a time previous; the reverent enthusiasm which ascribed the



strange contortions witnessed, to the mysterious agency of God; the fervent and sanguine temperament of some of the preachers; and lastly, the boiling zeal of the Methodists, who could not refrain from shouting aloud during the sermon, and shaking hands all round afterwards. . ; take all this into consideration, and it will abate our surprise very much, when informed that the number of persons who fell, was computed by the Rev. James Crawford, who endeavored to keep an accurate account, at the astounding number of about three thousand."

The subjects and promoters of this revival were those who went into and formed that which was afterward called the New Lights. The Presbyterians among them at first formed themselves into a Presbytery in 1803, calling it the Independent Presbytery of Springfield, for John Thompson, pastor of the Church of Springfield (now Springdale, near Cincinnati, Ohio), was one of those who went off, and that church had the honor of giving a name to the seeders.

This arrangement was, however, of short duration, for June 28, 1804, they adopted what they called "The Last Will and Testament of the Presbytery of Springfield" in which those that signed agreed to "sink into union with the body of Christ at large. The signers included Robert Marshall, John Dunlevy, Richard McNemar, Barton W. Stone, John Thompson and David Purveyance. This is the founding of the Christian Church denomination which led to the founding of the Christian Disciples.

On April 20th, 1804, the Turtle Creek Church, which was near Lebanon, Ohio, and a part of the Washington Presbytery, supplied by Richard McNemar, reorganized as a New Light Church, adopting four propositions that were presented in writing, signed by William Bedel, Malcham Worley, Matthias Spring, Aaron Tullis, Samuel Sering, Francis Bedel and Richard McNemar; some of these, and probably all of them had been elders in the church.

At the close of public worship the congregation was asked "Do we adopt the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice; the only standard of doctrine and discipline? Do we agree to constitute a church in that capacity to transact business?" These were answered in the affirmative.

The one thing which varied in this church from the New Lights was that the New Lights did not allow dancing, although involuntary movement brought on by conversion experiences was allowed.

The Turtle Creek Church encouraged voluntary dancing. At first the dancing was very formal -- going round the stand chanting in a low tone of voice, "This is the Holy Ghost: Glory!" But the ensuing Fall and Winter, the dancing became less formal. About the latter end of the year 1804, there were regular societies of these people, in the state of Ohio, at Turtle Creek, Eagle Creek, Springfield (Springdale), Orangedale, Salem, Beaver Creek, Clear Creek, etc. and in Kentucky at Cabin Creek, Flemingsburgh, Concord, Cambridge, Indian Creek, Bethel, Paint Lick, Shawny Run, and besides, an innumerable multitude dispersed among the people in Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and in the Western parts of Pennsylvania.

In 1805 while the people were in this confused, excited state, expecting they knew not what, three men, John Meaghan, Benjamin S. Young, and Issachar Bates, on the first day of the year,

started from the church at New Lebanon, town of Canaan, in the state of New York, on foot, and arriving in Kentucky, about the first of March, stopped a few days at Paint Lick, where they were kindly entertained; thence they journeyed to Cambridge, and spent a few days among the subjects of the revival in that place, courteously entertained by the Rev. Barton W. Stone; thence they came to Ohio, going first to Springdale, but not doing much there, they went to Turtle creek where they arrived the 22d of March. These were Shaker missionaries and quickly converted Rev. McNemar, and soon the main part of the Turtle Creek Church, believed in the doctrines and became members of The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming. This church became the nucleus of the Union Shaker Village, a people who live as celibates, and have all their property in one common fund, managed by those of their own number who are appointed to that work, who honest in all their business transactions, have ever maintained a high character for sobriety and industry, and whose trade mark upon any article is accepted as proof of its being the best of its kind. By 1807 there were between thirty and forty families at Turtle Creek and twenty or thirty families at Eagle Creek who had come into the new belief. The most of the members of Orangedale church which was in Lemon township, Butler county, not far from Lebanon, also came.



# Restoration Movement

## The Movement Spreads



The Restoration Movement consolidated and grew tremendously between 1830 and 1860. At the same time important changes left their mark on the movement's progress and future. The movement acknowledged Alexander Campbell as its leader while Barton W. Stone and others slipped into the background. Some say the "Christian Disciples" grew on "preaching, publishing, pedagogy and the plea". Most important, it *grew!*

Following is a survey of the Restoration Movement's extensive growth in that period. Also noted are the reasons for that growth.

### Reasons for the Restoration Movement's rapid growth

**T**he Restoration Movement grew faster than any other religious movement between 1830 and 1860. Starting from almost nothing in 1800, 1860 estimates placed total membership at 195,000. Statistics show some 2,100 congregations and 1,800 ministers. Campbell, who published statistics in the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1857, showed even more with 225,000 members in 2,700 congregations served by 2,225 ministers. We may never know the real numbers, but it became obvious that rapid growth occurred. Why?

A. *The circulation of notable papers.* Restoration Movement editors published periodicals in nearly every region. Many had substantial influence. The major papers, of course, reached larger audiences and many outside the Restoration Movement digested this material. Many people simply left their denominational churches to join the Restoration Movement.

B. *The movement of Baptists.* Many Baptist congregations came into the reformation "lock, stock, and barrel." The Mahoning Baptist Association represented just one of these Baptist groups. Baptists in Indiana, notably the Blue River Baptists and the Silver Creek Association, along with Baptists in Virginia and North Carolina also came into the movement. Quite often, when entire associations adopted the Restorationists position, individuals left to form new congregations following the old Baptist order of things.

C. *The period's Primitivism promoted Restorationism.* Historians refer to the period between 1829 and 1841 as the "Age of Jackson," "The Age of the Common Man," or the "Age of Egalitarianism." The people of the day romantically elevated the common man. Americans considered the "old paths" superior to the newer ways. Men looked back to the golden ages of Greece and Rome with longing. You can see such interest in frontier names: Paris, Athens,

Liberal and New Harmony. Campbellian reform called Christians back to the "old paths" so the plea fit the age.



Some writers link the Restoration Movement to Jacksonian primitivism. I think this interpretation is too simplistic. The Restoration Movement providentially appeared at "just the right time." Like so many successful men and movements it "was at the right place at the right time."

D. *The nonsectarian plea.* Settlers built new communities every time the frontier moved west. The Disciples offered the hope that Christians moving to these new towns did not need to be divided over sectarian differences. Many settlers prayerfully and carefully considered the movement's plea.

E. *Disciples migrated west, too.* Disciples simply took their faith with them. Wherever they went they started new churches worshiping on the New Testament "pattern." In some cases, such as in Kansas, Disciples established some of the territory's first churches.

F. *Church planting.* By the mid-1840s, the Restoration Movement formed cooperative agencies. Missionary associations formed specifically to send missionaries overseas, but they also sent workers to the Midwest and the frontier to begin new churches.

G. *Personal work of the leaders.* History reveals that whenever Alexander Campbell toured an area increased interest in "the plea" spread. When Barton Stone moved to Illinois and then Missouri he increased interest in those areas, too.

H. *Campbell's debates.* Other Restorationists debated sectarians throughout the period but Campbell's proved most influential. Whenever Campbell debated in an area the plea grew dramatically. Following the Campbell-Rice Debate on baptism the Presbyterians purchased the publication rights because of "their victory." So many Presbyterians left their churches that they stopped printing the debate. The debates also increased Campbell's notoriety and made the reformation more palatable, particularly those debates with Robert Owen and Bishop Purcell.

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### Examples of substantial growth

A. *The East.* For some reason the Restoration Movement never really took root in the eastern United States. Once the movement recognized Alexander Campbell's leadership, the New England Christians refused fellowship. Unitarianism and Universalism tainted those groups anyway but a few congregations united with the movement after Campbell visited New England in 1836. A few Christian Churches in Massachusetts and an independent congregation in

Danbury, Connecticut, joined the movement. At one point a few Vermont and Maine bodies identified with the movement but they ultimately died out.



The plea enjoyed some strength in Pennsylvania and Virginia. This was expected. After all, the first Campbellite congregation formed in the panhandle of Virginia (now West Virginia) at Brush Run and the next was Wellsburg, which formed in 1815. Campbell's Virginia fame grew after he served as a delegate to Virginia's constitutional convention in Richmond in 1829. A congregation began meeting in Richmond as a Baptist Church but the Baptists effectively forced it out of fellowship. The Richmond church, once independent, "mothered" six more congregations.

Reformation churches began in Maryland in 1833 when Alexander Campbell held meetings there in a Haldanian church. After the Georgetown union in Kentucky, Maryland's "New Lights" joined the Disciples. The first Washington, D.C. congregation met in the home of Dr. James T. Barclay in 1843. Barclay later became the movement's first foreign missionary.

**B. The Deep South.** Republican Methodists established a congregation near Athens, Georgia in 1807. This congregation joined the reformation in 1842. Campbell visited Savannah in 1838 and many of the city's notables attended his meetings.

Alabama churches grew from Georgia and Tennessee migrations. Alabama opened up when upper south cotton lands "played out" and growers needed new land. The Disciples held a convention in Alabama sometime around 1849 spurring growth in the region. In addition, Campbell toured Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana three times: 1839, 1857 and 1859.



The establishment of black congregations offers an interesting sidelight to southern restoration growth. By 1850, the south saw some 310 black Restorationist congregations although most blacks attended predominately white congregations before the Civil War. Slaves and whites worshiped together, but separated. Blacks sat either in the balcony, as at Cane Ridge, or in rows at the back of the building. A small number of free blacks organized Disciple congregations, too. A free black congregation organized in Savannah as early as 1838 led by Andrew Marshall, a mulatto who bought his own and his family's freedom. Marshall built quite a large congregation but after leaving the Baptists for the reformation he went back to sectarianism. Separation of blacks into separate congregations, then, began before the Civil War. In Nashville, Tennessee, a white congregation operated two black Sunday Schools. In 1859, one of these schools organized into a west Nashville church. In Midway, Kentucky, whites allocated money to enable blacks to build their own building. A former slave, who took Alexander Campbell's name and who became a Christian at Cane Ridge, led this congregation. He did a good job, too. During his ministry he converted some 300 blacks.

C. *The Midwest.* Ohio proved a ready field for restoration work. By 1853 eighty congregations existed within the state although many members and ministers started migrating west. The same thing happened in Indiana. Interestingly, the Disciples predominated in northeastern Ohio while the Christians predominated in southern Ohio.

Christians organized Illinois' first congregation at Barney's Prairie in 1819. Restorationism grew quickly in Illinois and it remains strong downstate.

Kentucky had the largest Christian and Disciple population. Even though most Disciple congregations had no paid ministry, the cause grew rapidly. When the Christians and the Disciples united, growth exploded.

D. *Far West.* New Testament Christianity moved into Michigan in 1840. Isaac Errett organized a congregation at Ionia in 1859 and experienced remarkable success.



Settlers from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina moved into Missouri after it became a state. Many of these belonged to restoration churches. Missouri became one of the strongest states for the New Testament plea. In 1845 the state held 196 congregations with 13,047 members.

The first Arkansas Disciple church began in Little Rock in 1832 by B.F. Hall, a doctor and evangelist. Hall strongly supported the Confederacy during the War.

The first congregation in Iowa met in Dubuque in October, 1835. A second church started in Fort Madison in 1836. By 1846, when Iowa became a state, the state had 21 churches and by 1860 there were 150 churches and 10,000 members.

The Restoration Movement reached Minnesota in 1860, Nebraska in 1849, and Kansas in 1854-1855, Oregon in 1843. The first California congregation gathered in Stockton in 1850 or 1851.

By 1860 the Restoration Movement had churches in almost every state and reached from "shore to shore." At a time when political tensions divided the nation the plea for Christian unity grew. Then the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter and things changed!

# Canadian History Library Archives



The Evangelical Christian Church, founded in 1804 as the *Christian Church* (*Christian Disciples*), joined with many Canadian branches of church bodies in 1832. The first work of the Canadian Evangelical Christian Church to be formed was in 1810 near Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. It was known as the Stone-Campbell movement in Canada that united the Kentucky and Virginia leaders and their independent congregations. Since the 1920s, and 1930s, each Canadian Evangelical Christian Church church has been governed by the decisions of delegates at biennial General Assemblies and resolutions implemented by each congregation and other church units.

It was after the Second World War, that a collaboration between an All-Canadian and North-American (Evangelical Christian Church) Movement began as a way to coordinate and unite the various churches and ministries within the Restoration Movement. As this movement developed, in Canada, following up to the early 1940s, the Great Western Revival caused a tidal wave of religious interest and excitement in the Canadian Evangelical Christian Church to sweep across North America, revolutionizing a spiritual hunger for God, and unifying Christians on the basis of New Testament basic principles, while liberating the spiritual landscape in Canada.

The founders of The Canadian Evangelical Christian Church's message to the General Assembly and all the Assemblies of the North-American (Evangelical Christian Church) was to raise objections against African-American discrimination, and called for the immediate Abolition of slavery in the United States and around the world. In the early 1960s, and 1970s, many new Canadian Evangelical Christian Church ministers relocated from the Southern Ontario (Region) District to the Maritime Provinces of the District of Halifax, Nova Scotia (Region) District and to various parts of the regions of Newfoundland Districts, rebirthing new ministries and planting new Spirit-filled missional Assemblies of Canadian Evangelical Christian Church.

Since the early 1960s, the governmental polity of the North American Evangelical Christian Church was formed to allow all individual churches the freedom to restructure their congregations to worship as they choose, adopting a *simple Christianity* which allows all Christians the right to participate in Holy Communion and believer's baptism without human restrictions. The Canadian Evangelical Christian Church distinguishes between clergy and laypersons on functional rather than sacramental grounds. The ordination of women and men to the ministry normally followed graduation of theological study at an accredited seminary with credentials granted by the national church body on behalf of the whole church.

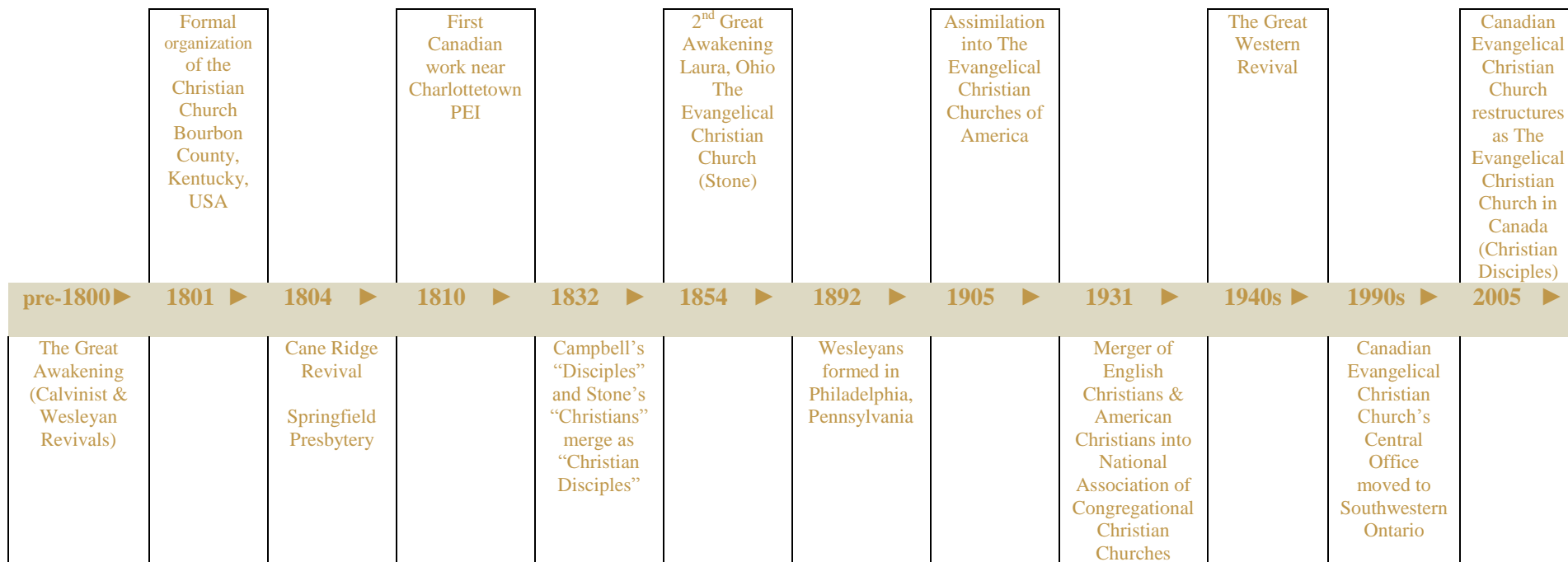
In the early, 1990s, Central Office and District Offices were moved to a remote area of the region of Southern Ontario, where many Canadian Evangelical Christian Church assemblies continue to operate and spread to every province throughout Canada. "The Standard" newsletter as a news publication (since renamed), was developed to open the channels of communication to the General Assembly of the Canadian Evangelical Christian Church. The Canadian Evangelical Christian Church, as a religious group within the Restoration Movement

tradition, reorganized in 2001, and restructured as *The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples)* in 2005 as a one world-wide Religious Body. Throughout the last century, many district offices were established to oversee the many independent Canadian Evangelical Christian Church assemblies and ministries which continue to branch out in Western Canada, drawing from their Restoration heritage, and offering significant contributions to evangelical discussions of the theology of conversion and ecclesiology.

Today The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada continues the historical tradition of sound, moral, biblical Christianity and humanitarian work. Each of our churches and affiliated ministries has a sound doctrine and moral fiber. Our affiliated ministries offer assistance to the poor and homeless, a wide array of counseling services, etc. In addition, a strong, vital ministry to the afflicted and disabled is carried on.

Learning a lesson from our past we endorse several Bible Colleges and Seminaries for theological training. The Evangelical Christian Church ministers have a strong heart for humanitarian and benevolent work. They believe in “faith in action” and practice the Golden Rule. They are firm believers in “be ye not hearers of the Word only but doers also”. Feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, working with alcoholics, caring for widows and orphans are just a few of the humanitarian efforts with which we concern ourselves.

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## THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

### *Timeline*









The Evangelical Christian  
Church In Canada 

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