

**INTRODUCTION**

- A. Those who have a general knowledge of churches of Christ today are aware of the fact that a division took place during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
1. This division came about over doctrinal issues concerning the organization and mission or work of the church.
  2. In many respects, this division reflected many of the same issues that divided the church during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that resulted in two distinct groups—the Christian Church and churches of Christ.
    - a. In the ensuing years, the Christian Church itself has suffered a division, with the more liberal element identified as the Disciples of Christ, and the more conservative element identified as the Independent Christian Church.
    - b. In a convention of the Disciples group some years ago, they acknowledged, “We are a denomination, and we might as well admit it, and get on with the business of being a denomination.”
- B. Some may wonder why it takes 50 years for a division to become complete.
1. There are some issues that brethren must take time to study.
  2. There are ties of friendship and brotherhood that are slow to be broken.
    - a. My father went to school with many preachers that ended up on the other side, but who often worked together in meetings in their younger years.
    - b. I knew these men, as they were in my parents’ home, and I in theirs.
    - c. But now my children have no association with these men, thus in the third generation the lines of division are pretty clearly drawn.
- C. Sadly, bitterness and wild charges often accompany division.
1. Conservative brethren were oft called “orphan-haters” and “anti-cooperation,” thus were labeled as “antis.”
    - a. This is the same appellation that was given to those who were opposed to instrumental music and missionary societies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  2. “While there are a few places where ‘anti-ism’ is still a real threat to the true faith, it is generally of no consequence. Isolated little groups of ‘antis’ still meet; but they are withering away and are having no appreciable effect on the brotherhood at large.” This speaker went on to say that this “false doctrine” was “antagonistic to clear Bible teaching,” and the “typical ‘anti’ usually cut his own throat by his arrogant and malicious acts and statements” and was “quick to draw a line of fellowship and exclude himself from the larger portion of our brotherhood.” (Reubel Shelley, F.-H. Lectures, 1970)
  3. Nine years later Ira North, editor of the *Gospel Advocate* estimated that the “antis” composed 5% of the churches, and pleaded with them to “come back home...to the old paths...and preach again in the great churches,” claiming that “anti doctrine cannot build great churches, inspire missionaries, and encourage pure and undefiled religion.”
  4. A college professor argued that those who believe that Christians could “visit the fatherless and widows by taking them in your home” have “taken the narrow, crooked pig-path of radicalism.”
    - a. Is that a “radical” statement, or what?
- D. In this lesson we want to take a look at the past and see where we are today.
1. I acknowledge the research of Homer Hailey, Steve Wolfgang, Ed Harrell and

others, which was of great help in preparing this material.

1. Steve Wolfgang wrote a tract several years ago that contained much of this material

## I. THE BIBLE AND APOSTASY

- A. The Old Testament period was full of apostasy.
  1. Prophecies were made even before they entered into the promised land. Deut.31:19-21
    - a. The people prospered, grew fat and indifferent, and fell away.
  2. Time and time again we have the story repeated—a period of faithful service, apostasy, oppression, repentance, restoration, etc.
  3. Finally, God’s patience ran out, and Israel was no more.
- B. New Testament history presents a similar picture.
  1. Once more many warnings were given about departures from the truth.
    - a. Paul’s charge to the Ephesian elders. Acts 20:28-30
    - b. Paul’s warning to Timothy. I Tim. 4:1-2
    - c. The warning in Hebrews 3:12.
  2. Within the 2<sup>nd</sup> century we see the trend beginning in the development of the hierarchal system that culminated in the Catholic system with a pope
    - a. This began in the local church with one elder becoming predominant, and then the presiding elders in churches in a given area forming a council.
    - b. Within this area, one elder came to preside, who then joined with presiding elders in other areas, obviously leading to a supreme bishop or pope.
      - (1) This is a clear departure from Biblical directives. I Pet. 5:1-2
  3. Although there is evidence of small, persecuted groups following the New Testament order through the centuries, they were scattered and isolated.
    - a. These centuries are called the Dark Ages, with more than one application.

## II. THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY—THE BEGINNING OF RESTORATION

- A. The 16<sup>th</sup> Century sees the start of efforts to “reform” the Roman Catholic Church.
  1. The Church had grown in power and corruption, and in many respects came to rule much of the civilized world.
  2. Augustine, born in 354, is considered the “Father of Roman Catholicism,” and formulated a doctrine that greatly contributed to the political power of the church, which gave the pope authority over even kings and emperors.
  3. In commenting on this matter, Alexander Allen says:
 

“The church was here by divine appointment, and if so it was the divine will that all men should come into it; and if they would not come of themselves, they must be forced to do so; and if the church lacked the power of compulsion, it was the sacred duty which the state owed to the church to come to its rescue, and by the might of the sword ‘compel them to come in,’ that the church might be filled.” (V. G. Allen Alexander, *The Continuity of Christian Thought*, pp. 152, 153)
  4. Luther, Huss, Zwingli, Calvin rebelled not only against the corruption in the church, but also against its political power.
    - a. These efforts began in earnest in the early 1500s.

- b. But their efforts fell short in that they sought merely to reform a corrupt system, rather than to return to the original pattern.
    - c. This culminated in the formation of a multitude of denominational bodies, which we have as their legacy today.
  - B. Beginning around 1800, we see serious efforts being made at restoring the ancient order of things.
    - 1. Much has been written about the important work of Thomas and Alexander Campbell in this matter, but there were several who had a great influence in this great movement.
    - 2. Around 1793, James O’Kelly and others left their Methodist conference when their efforts to restrict the power of the clergy were not accepted.
      - a. They formed what they called “The Republican Methodists” in Virginia.
      - b. In a formal meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1794, Rice Haggard stood up with a New Testament in his hand, and said, “Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and by it we are told that the disciples were called *Christians*, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply.”
      - c. In 1801 they discarded their bylaws, and accepting the New Testament as their only guide, assumed the name “The Christian Church.”
    - 3. Around the same time, Abner Jones and Elias Smith in New Hampshire, left the Baptist Church and became pioneers in the search for undenominational Christianity.
    - 4. Meanwhile, in Kentucky, Barton W. Stone was on his own journey.
      - a. Ordained a Presbyterian minister, he began preaching in Cane Ridge, KY. in 1798.
      - b. He already had misgivings about the Confession of Faith, and began his break with Presbyterianism at the “Great Revival” at Cane Ridge in 1801.
      - c. Stone’s movement had a great influence in the return to Bible-based Christianity.
  - C. The work of Thomas and Alexander Campbell
    - 1. Thomas Campbell was born in Ireland in 1763, and was ordained as a minister in the Seceder Presbyterian Church.
      - a. Thomas came under the influence of the followers John Glas, a Scot who introduced weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper, a plurality of elders in each congregation, and the principle that the Scripture is the only standard of both doctrine and practice.
      - b. For health reasons, Thomas came to America in 1807.
      - c. Shortly after his arrival, he was asked to preach for a Seceder church near Pittsburgh.
      - d. His views on the Lord’s Supper offended some, and he was subsequently tried for heresy by the Presbyterian Synod.
      - e. He left the Presbyterian Church, but continued to preach to a group of people who, like him, looked for freedom from sectarian narrowness, a closer walk with God, and a union based upon Scriptures.
      - f. At one of the meetings of these people, Campbell spoke at length about the desire for unity among all believers based upon the Scriptures, and made

what has become a well-known statement concerning the rule they would follow: “That rule, my highly respected hearers, is this, that where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

- g. This statement had a tremendous effect upon the religious thinking of the nation in the ensuing years.
2. The “Declaration and Address.”
  - a. Realizing the need to make his views of Scripture clear, Thomas delivered his famous “Declaration and Address” on Sept. 7, 1809.
  - b. The entire document filled 54 pages and was a masterpiece of reasoning from the Scriptures.
  - c. W. E. Garrison summed up the major points in this address:

“...first, that the will of Christ included the revelation and imposition of a definite doctrinal and ecclesiastical program. Second, that the Scriptures give an inerrant report of the teaching of Jesus and His apostles and the procedure of the church of the first century, so that any verse in the New Testament could be quoted with perfect assurance of its historical accuracy... Third, that the teaching authority of Jesus had passed over undiminished to the apostles, so that both the injunctions and the examples of the apostles possessed complete authority over the church for all time, that their teachings were as the commands of God, and that the practice of the church of the apostolic age constituted a pattern which the church must permanently follow.” (Winfred Ernest Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier*, pp. 95, 96)
3. Shortly before the “Declaration and Address,” in 1809, Alexander and his mother and sisters arrived,
  - a. Alexander had already been influenced towards reformation by men in England and Ireland, and happily found similar thinking in his father.
  - b. In 1810 a meeting house was built in Brush Run, PA, and by the following year these brethren formally organized themselves into an independent congregation, soon realizing that their attempts to identify themselves with any denominational group was fraught with failure.
4. Following the principles set forth by his father, Alexander soon realized that he had not been baptized scripturally, for the Presbyterians did not immerse.
  - a. Soon the whole family was immersed, and in a short time, nearly the whole congregation was made up of immersed believers.
  - b. This event was the occasion of the change in leadership from father to son.
  - c. The father had enunciated the principles, and the son recognized the full implications of the principles and put them into practice.
5. Alexander began publishing *The Christian Baptist* in 1823, which had a wide influence.
  - a. He also had several highly regarded debates, and was even honored to be able to address the U. S. Congress on one occasion.
    - (1) In his 1843 debate with Presbyterian H. L. Rice in Lexington, KY, the noted Henry Clay presided as chairman over the two weeks debate.

- b. His famous *Sermon on the Law* in 1816 had caused much prejudice among the Baptists with whom had been associated, and this reflected a general ignorance of denominational preachers concerning the Bible and the distinctions between the Old and New Testaments.
- 6. Alexander and Barton W. Stone met for the first time in 1824, and by 1832 the two groups had joined forces, recognizing they were on common ground.

#### IV. THE SPREAD OF THE “CHRISTIANS ONLY” PLEA – 1830-1949

- A. A new publication: *The Millennial Harbinger*
  - 1. Campbell wanted to expand the scope of his paper, and felt that the name “*Christian Baptist*” could be misconstrued.
  - 2. Though somewhat milder in tone, the new publication did not hesitate to wage war against the denominational departures of his day.
  - 3. It would be hard to overestimate the influence of Alexander Campbell’s writing, preaching and debating through these crucial years.
- B. The spread of the plea was rapid and widespread.
  - 1. The work of the Campbells, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott John Smith and others resulted in possibly 200,000 who were followers of the ancient gospel by 1839.
  - 2. The causes of this growth were rooted in the zeal of the believers.
    - a. “How is such a rapid growth, with no societies, no machinery, no central head or headquarters, to be accounted for? The answer is: They had a message, they believe their message to be the greatest discovery of the age and need of the world; hence, fired with the zeal of discoverers, they became propagandists of the first rank.” (Homer Hailey, *Attitudes and Consequences*, p. 93)
- C. Dark clouds appear on the horizon.
  - 1. As brethren rejoiced in their newfound faith and love, they began to meet together to meet and edify one another.
  - 2. In 1831 Alexander Campbell published four articles on “Cooperation.”
    - a. He pointed to the obligation resting upon the church to evangelize the world.
    - b. Whereas their plea was that any work done by the church should be done through the local congregations, they were discussing *how* the work should be done.
  - 3. As the movement continued to grow, there was a growing sentiment for a stronger organized force than the cooperation meetings.
  - 4. Some voices were raised in opposition, not to the meetings per se, but to the consequences of the more organized state meetings that were developing.
  - 5. Aylett Raines, writing in the *Christian Teacher* strongly opposed these meetings,
    - a. “He believed there were tendencies, which, unless checked, would lead to state organizations and to a ‘United States organization of the congregations’ which would be a dangerous consolidation of power” (Alonzo Willard Fortune, *The Disciples in Kentucky*, p. 166)
    - b. The subsequent years have proven his fears well founded.

**V. 1849—THE BEGINNING OF THE END**

- A. The American Christian Missionary Society
  - 1. In 1849, Campbell published five articles entitled “Church Cooperation.”
  - 2. A general meeting was held in Cincinnati October 24-28, which culminated in the forming of *The American Christian Missionary Society*, with Campbell elected as its first president, although he was hampered by age and feebleness.
    - a. Accounts of the meeting give the number of those present as 155 delegates representing 110 churches and ten states.
  - 3. This was determined to be a voluntary cooperation of churches that would send funds to the organization, which would in turn select and send our preachers, but in time it came to exercise quite a bit of persuasive power.
- B. From the very first, there were strenuous objections to the society.
  - 1. Among the objections was this: “It was said that the Book of God knows nothing of a confederation of churches in an ecclesiastical system, culminating in an earthly head, for government or for any other purpose... It was a dangerous precedent, a departure from the principles for which we have always contended...” (Archibald McLean, *The Foreign Missionary Society*, p. 20).
  - 2. Indeed, more than once Alexander Campbell’s earlier statements were used against him, as in the early years his arguments against such a structure were very clear.
  - 3. Although there was much discussion and disagreement concerning the Society, It did not result in a break of fellowship at that time.
- C. As 1860 came into view, there was another troubling issue that arose—the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship.
  - 1. As the number of disciples grew, there were more and more who came from the denominations who held not the same convictions as the early reformers did.
  - 2. Thus there were two attitudes that were prevalent:
    - “There were those who believed the church should move on with the rest of the world and adapt the spirit of the New Testament to conditions that were ever changing. They held that, when not forbidden by the New Testament, they were free to adapt their program to changing needs. On the other hand, there were those who believed the matter of the church was fixed for all time, and the fact that certain things were not sanctioned was sufficient ground for rejecting them. The men on both sides were equally honest, but they had a different approach to these issues that were raised.” (Fortune, pp. 364, 365)
  - 3. As early as 1827, resolutions forbidding instrumental music and the title “Reverend” had been stated, and the instruments had no significant backing.
  - 4. But in 1858 or 1859, L. L. Pinkerton introduced a melodeon in the worship at Midway, Kentucky.
  - 5. The storm over this innovation reached full fury by 1864, but the aged Alexander Campbell weighed in against the instruments with strong words in an article he penned in 1851, charged that the use of instruments were an appeal to the carnal nature men as practiced in the denominations.
    - a. “I wonder not, then, that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal

- souls...and that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, sympathies of renewed hearts, should call for such aids, is but natural.”
- b. He further stated that “to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert.” (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1851, pp. 581, 582)
6. One of the major arguments in favor of the instrument is just that the Scriptures do not forbid it.
7. But this argument flies in the face of the very principles upon which Campbell, Stone and others sought to restore the ancient gospel.
8. In time, the use of the instrument became more and more widespread, and bitter division took place, as those in favor of the instrument and societies forced others out of their buildings and out of fellowship.
- a. There were occasions when those opposed to the instruments actually took an ax and chopped up the organ, but this did not stem the tide.
- D. By the turn of the century, the lines were pretty well drawn, and the division was all but complete.
1. In the 1906 U. S. Census, churches of Christ and the Christian Church were recognized as separate entities—no longer one band of disciples.

**VI. THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

- A. As the “dust settled,” the conservative churches were few and small.
  - 1. My father stated that in 1900 there were perhaps 12 full-time preachers among conservative churches.
    - a. Most, like my grandfather, supported themselves by farming.
  - 2. Most of the college-educated preachers and churches with nice brick buildings went with the liberal trend.
- B. Despite such encouraging numbers, these years became, in the words of the Lone Ranger, “the thrilling days of yesteryear” for conservative churches.
  - 1. These were the prime years of men whose names were household words—Foy E. Wallace, Jr., N. B. Hardeman, G. C. Brewer, J. D. Tant, Joe Warlick, H. Leo Boles and many others.
  - 2. The years of prosperity of the 20s and the depression years of the 30s were years of strong growth among brethren.
    - a. Some sources place the number of Christians close to 500,000 in 1926.
    - b. The message was spreading not only in the south, but in places like Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and the West Coast.
  - 3. The technologies of radio, automobile and air travel also fueled the spread of the gospel.
    - a. In many areas radio broadcasts by local churches had wide audiences.
    - b. WLAC in Nashville had so many gospel preachers on the air that the station was nicknamed “We Love All Campbellites.”
    - c. KRLD in Dallas featured two young preachers who were also law-school students—W. L. Oliphant and Roy Cogdill.
- C. During this time, various para-church organizations were also growing.
  - 1. Nashville Bible School became David Lipscomb College, and Harding College settled in Searcy, AR after brief stays in KY, MO, OK, and Kansas.
  - 2. With the establishment of Pepperdine in California and other schools, there was now a band stretching from Tennessee to California.
  - 3. Orphan asylums had their beginning with the Tennessee Orphan Home in 1909, and in time others were added—Potter in KY in 1914, Boles Home in TX in 1927 and Tipton in OK in 1928.
- D. A spirit of unity.
  - 1. Although a few skirmishes came about as the result of egos, in general the time following the division with the Christian Church up until W.W. II was characterized by doctrinal unity.
  - 2. The issue of Premillennialism caused some unrest in the 1930s, but it was dealt with quickly and effectively with the resulting loss of only about 100 churches located mainly in KY, IN and LA.
    - a. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. was very effective in standing against this false doctrine
  - 3. This unity is also seen in the numerous debates with brethren from across the nation cooperating to present these forums for discussion.
    - a. N. B. Hardeman had debates on instrumental music with Ira Boswell from the Christian Church, as well as debates with Ben Bogard, a Baptist.
    - b. Foy Wallace had quite a debate with the notorious Baptist J. Frank Norris in Texas.



- c. J. D. Tant had over 300 debates in his lifetime with all sorts of denominational preachers
- d. These debates were well attended, and many conversions resulted.
- 4. Gospel meetings were often great events, with great community interest.
  - a. They might run for two weeks, or even longer, with 50, 75 or 100 baptisms.
  - b. The Tabernacle Meetings in Nashville in the 20s drew 8 to 10,000, with many turned away for lack of room
- 5. As historians look at this period, they are agreed that a spirit of unity prevailed.
- 6. One writer characterized this period in these words:
 

“There was a time when Churches of Christ were known as a people of the Book. All who knew us knew that we hungered above all for the word of God. They knew that we immersed ourselves in its truths and sacrificed dearly to share the gospel with those who had never heard. These were our most fundamental commitments. We knew it, and others knew it” (Leonard Allen)
- 7. Recollections from some older, well-known preachers summarize the era.
  - a. When comparing the church of the 1980s with that of the 1930s, Willard Collins said: “I don’t think they see the glory of the church, unencumbered by denominationalism, as I did...when I was growing up...I don’t think members of the church think the church is different from Protestantism. When I started preaching members of the church believed Protestants needed to be saved. We’ve lost a lot of that. It goes back to an understanding of the distinctiveness of the church. At an earlier time they really felt the gospel was a lot better than Protestantism.”
  - b. G.K. Wallace described his preaching in the 20s and 30s: “Most of the baptisms were from the denominations. In those days denominational people would come to our meetings...Denominational people do not come these days to our meetings and if they did they would not, in most places, hear anything that would lead them out of false doctrine.”
- 8. But other factors work also at work, giving a foretaste of the decades to come.
  - a. Although several colleges were quietly accepting contributions from churches for years, a stir was created at the A.C.C. lectures in 1938 by G. C. Brewer when many understood him to say that the church that did not have Abilene Christian College in its budget had the wrong preacher.
  - b. A decade later N. B. Hardeman and others revived the controversy as they began a push to get churches to support the colleges from their treasuries.
  - c. Along with this was more material prosperity, as Bill Humble illustrated:
 

“...larger and more expensive buildings, the more affluent middle-class membership, the number of full-time ministers, the increasing emphasis on Bible schools and Christian education, and missionary outreach all reflect a gradual but impressive growth...After W.W. II the church enjoyed a remarkable growth in urban areas. As its members climbed the economic and educational ladder, the church moved ‘across the tracks.’”
- E. But there were some who saw the signs of danger on the horizon.
  - 1. At the Abilene Christian College Lectures in 1939, Guy N. Woods gave a warning, which turned out to be quite prophetic. “The ship of Zion has floundered more than once on the sandbar of institutionalism. The tendency to organize is a characteristic of the age. On the theory that the end justifies the means,

brethren have now scrupled to form organizations in the church to do the work the church itself was designed to do. All such organizations usurp the work of the church, and are unnecessary and sinful.”

2. In the 1946 Annual Lesson Commentary, he continue his words of caution. “It should be noted that there was no elaborate organization for the discharge of these charitable functions. The contributions were sent directly to the elders by the churches who raised the offering. This is the New Testament method of functioning. We should be highly suspicious of any scheme that requires the setting up of an organization independent of the church in order to accomplish its work.”
3. Brother Woods was later editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, which led the slide into institutionalism, the very thing he opposed.

## VII. WORLD WAR II

- A. The period of time around W.W. II marked a definite change in the church.
  1. For one thing, a generation of respected preachers whose stand for Biblical principles was influential was passing from the earth.
    - a. In one 18-month period of 1940-41 Daniel Sommer, J. D. Tant, Joe Warlick and F. B. Srygley died.
  2. They were replaced by younger men as editors of religious journals and in other spheres of influence.
- B. Attitudes toward the war itself produced some controversy and change.
  1. There had been a strong minority position, mainly through the influence David Lipscomb, that Christians could not participate in civil government, especially in warfare.
  2. In W.W. I Cordell Christian College in OK was closed by the local “defense counsel” and two young Christians were threatened with execution for their beliefs.
  3. But W.W. II produced a different mood and strong patriotism after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.
    - a. B. C. Goodpasture closed the pages of the *Gospel Advocate* to any discussion of the matter, which was a portent of things to come.
    - b. By the middle of the next decade, the pages of this influential journal were likewise closed to any discussion of the issues that were dividing brethren.

## VIII. THE POST-WORLD WAR II ERA

- A. With the return of GIs from the war, fervor for evangelism grew.
  1. Churches and brethren seemed to be willing to try whatever sounded good in spreading the gospel.
  2. Thousands of GIs were also going to college on the GI bill, and the “Christian Colleges” didn’t want to be left out, thus the growing appeal for funds from Churches to sustain their growth.
  3. With good intentions, churches were inundated with appeals to support cooperative works in Germany, Italy and Japan.
    - a. The work in these countries was “overseen” by churches in TN and TX which assumed centralized control over the work done in these countries.
    - b. This was the beginning of the “sponsoring church” concept, with scores or hundreds of churches sending funds to one eldership, who then had the

oversight of whatever work was in their sight.

- B. In time some brethren began to have second thoughts about such cooperative efforts that involved something larger than the local church.
  - 1. Roy Cogdill, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Luther Blackmon and Yater Tant were forced by conscience to withdraw their support of these schemes and voice their concerns.
    - a. This was reminiscent of what had happened 100 years before when men like Tolbert Fanning and Benjamin Franklin withdrew their support of the missionary societies and became vocal opponents of such works.
  - 2. For some years Wallace had published the *Bible Banner*, but in 1949 closed its pages and revived the *Gospel Guardian*, which he had published in the 30s, and asked Yater Tant to become its editor.
    - a. This paper became a leading influence in the controversies that developed and came to full bloom in the 1950s.
    - b. Tant served as editor for 22 years through some turbulent times, and thus a position of leadership was passed on from J. D. Tant to his son Yater.
    - c. Other papers soon joined the battle—Preceptor, Searching the Scriptures and Truth Magazine.

#### IX. WHAT WERE “THE ISSUES”?

- A. The proliferation of human institutions and sponsoring church arrangements, all clamoring for church support, set the scene for conflict.
  - 1. Combining this with the post-war prosperity many Christians were experiencing after the struggles during the Depression, the stage is set for differences, disagreement and division.
  - 2. Soon a national radio and TV program came on the scene.
    - a. The “Herald of Truth” was looked upon as the “voice” of the churches of Christ, much as the “Lutheran Hour” and the “Catholic Hour” were for their respective church bodies.
    - b. The 5<sup>th</sup> and Highland church in Abilene, TX was the sponsor, and in time came to have over 1,000 churches sending money to them for the program.
    - c. The problem was that with no denominational hierarchy, how does one program speak with authority for all independent churches of Christ?
  - 3. In the beginning, this program had a different composition.
    - a. The originators of the program, James Walter Nichols and James D. Williford came to my father with the idea of producing professional quality tapes to be sold to churches and aired on local stations.
    - b. My father thought it sounded like a good idea, but the final version was a far cry from what was proposed.
  - 4. Added to the list of organizations clamoring for support were homes for unwed mothers, homes for the aged, orphan asylums, publishing ventures, “Cows for Korea,” and a host of other ventures arising out of the imaginative minds of brethren who wanted to go good.
- B. Opposition began to appear in some of the religious journals.
  - 1. As early as May, 1949, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., wrote an article in *GG* questioning “brotherhood elderships” that were overseeing the work of many churches.

2. Then in Dec., 1953, Glenn L. Wallace, preacher for the College Church in Abilene, had an article in the *GG* raising questions about the Herald of Truth.
3. Other papers began to publish articles questioning these practices, but it was the *Guardian* that was the main voice of the opposition as a growing number of brethren began to question the increasing number of centralized projects under the control of a few large, prosperous churches.
4. The two main organs supporting these ventures were the *Gospel Advocate* under the editorship of B. C. Goodpasture and the *Firm Foundation* under the editorship of Reual Lemmons.
  - a. Once again the pages of the *Advocate* were closed to opposing views, thus preventing thousands of from having a clear understanding of the issues.
- C. Eventually there were a number of debates on the issues beginning in 1954.
  1. Holt-Totty debate in Indianapolis, Oct. 1954.
  2. Harper-Tant debates in Lufkin and Abilene, TX in 1955.
  3. Woods-Porter debate in Indianapolis, January, 1956.
  4. Cogdill-Woods in Birmingham, November 1957.
  5. Wallace-Holt in Florence, AL, December 1959.
  6. These debates reflected scores of debates, hundreds of articles and untold numbers of discussions brethren have had through the years.
  7. Brethren who once stood together for the common faith were now on opposite sides of these issues.

#### **X. THE ARGUMENTS ADVANCED BY NON-INSTITUTIONAL BRETHERN**

- A. That God has revealed in Scripture patterns to be followed in the work and worship of the church. Heb. 8:5
- B. That authoritative patterns are expressed in terms of
  1. Generic or specific statements or commands.
  2. Examples for churches to follow.
  3. Necessary conclusions or implications. (Acts 15)
- C. That the generic statements or commands allow expedient ways of obeying, while the specific directions are more restrictive and do not allow changes.
- D. That the differences between general and specific instructions can be distinguished by common sense principles of interpretation.
- E. That there is a difference in individual and church responsibilities in carrying out their respective roles in glorifying God.
- F. That the church's treasury is to be used for the purposes of the edification and education of its members, assisting saints who are in need, and supporting preachers in their proclamation of the gospel.
- G. That there is no authority in Scripture for human organizations or super-church arrangements through which local churches may do their work. (II Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 4:15-18)
- H. That the church Jesus died to purchase is a spiritual institution, and was not intended to provide for the recreational or social needs of its members, nor to be a world-wide benevolence organization.
- I. That human societies or organizations (hospitals, publishing houses, colleges, etc) may provide services on a fee-for-service basis, but the Scriptures do not allow

for these to become permanent appendages to the church.

- J. That individual churches do not compose the universal church as in a denominational structure, but that it is individuals who are the universal church.
- K. That there is no provision in Scripture for the universal church to function, for it is a relationship of people rather than a structured organization.
  - a. The human race exists, but has no organizational structure.
  - b. The human race lives and functions in nations, which have organizational structure.
  - c. The universal church exists, but has no organizational structure.
  - d. Its members function in local churches, which have organizational structure.

## XI. THE YELLOW TAG OF QUARANTINE

- A. The lines of fellowship were further strained by the policies of the *Gospel Advocate*.
  - 1. Although discussions and divisions would continue for at least another decade, in 1954 the editor of the *Advocate* agreed to the idea of a “yellow tag of quarantine” to be placed on the “antis.”
    - a. This harks back to the days before W.W. II and “wonder drugs” when those who had infectious diseases were “quarantined” and a yellow flag posted on their homes to warn others away.
    - b. This is similar to the treatment of lepers in Biblical times.
  - 2. In this environment, the pressure on other institutions to “line up” would be resisted at the risk of losing prestige and financial well-being.
    - a. There were efforts to close down Florida College by discouraging students from going there, and by discouraging individual financial contributions.
    - b. Business ventures such as Bible bookstores were boycotted if its owners were thought to be antis.
  - 3. Churches were pressured to line up and let their position be known.
    - a. I heard urgings to put some human institution in the budget for at least \$5 to let everyone know that they were not “anti” churches.
    - b. Church treasurers were dared to voice a reservation about these schemes were told to either sign the check or resign and go elsewhere.
  - 4. Preachers were threatened, fired and had meetings cancelled.
    - a. They were told “if you espouse such a doctrine you won’t have any place to preach.”
    - b. They were told by elders not to preach on these matters.
    - c. “Confessions” of preachers who recanted their “anti-ism” were featured in the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*, including names well-known to that generation—Earl West, Pat Hardeman, Hugo McCord, C. M. Pullias.
- B. The ugliness of a partisan spirit was manifested in many ways.
  - 1. Ads for preachers contained such statements as “no anti need apply.”
  - 2. Lawsuits over ownership of church buildings were paraded before the world.
  - 3. I was present in Cordele, GA in 1966 when a group of liberal-minded brethren came to the building with a telephone pole battering ram, intending to break down the door and take over the building.
    - a. They later broke into the building, and one time were confronted with

- brethren inside with cameras, whereupon one of the aggressors shouted to someone outside to “bring the gun.”
4. I heard the tape of a radio sermon preached by Malcolm Hill in Waycross, GA, stating that if a child got run over by a car in front of the Tebeau St. church building there, that the church would not allow the church phone to be used to call an ambulance for the bleeding child.
    - a. This eventually led to my wife and I being involved in working with unwed mothers to find homes for some 80 children who needed to be adopted.
  5. In the Wallace-Holt debate in Florence, AL, I heard G.K. Wallace charge Charles Holt with the crime of taking church money to buy fertilizer for the church lawn, but wouldn't take a dime to feed an orphan child.
    - a. That was a strange charge, as the Holts had adopted four children.
- C. In short, by the 1960s the clear message was sent to the minority “antis”—“go away, you bother me.”
1. What once were defended as expediencies were now defended as something necessary.
  2. One writer claimed that children were raised better in orphanages than in the homes of Christians.
    - a. “We contend that the homes perform a service more effective than the average private home in developing habits of work and industry... We contend that the homes do a more effective work teaching good, moral behavior than the home... We contend that the homes are more successful than the average private home in making Christians of the young people... This statement is no indictment of the private home. It is the best organization in the world.” (Said by defender of Central KY Orphan Home).
  3. A study was shown that among institutional churches, the average church member gave 7 cents per week for the care of orphans.
    - a. Thus they were willing to divide the church over 7 cents per week.
    - b. And they accused those who believed in taking orphans into their own homes of being “orphan-haters.”
- D. What is abundantly clear is that the majority of the men and institutions that were centers of influence were with the institutional majority.

**XII. SEPARATION, GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

- A. Despite the predictions of doom and gloom, “anti-ism” has not perished from the earth.
1. Bill Humble presented a more objective view.
 

“The most serious issue that churches of Christ have faced in this century is church cooperation and ‘institutionalism.’ Led by Roy Cogdill, Yater Tant, and the *Gospel Guardian*, a substantial number of churches have come to oppose such cooperative programs of evangelism as the Herald of Truth and the homes for orphans and aged, as they are presently organized. During the past 15 years many debates have been held, churches have divided, and fellowship has been broken. This is the most serious division, numbers-wise, that churches of Christ have suffered. Whether that division is final, or whether it can be healed, is yet to be determined.” (*Story of the Restoration*, p. 74, 1968)
- B. Counting numbers is something fraught with difficulties.
1. Since we have no central organization to which statistics are reported, any number total can be regarded as less than absolute.
  2. However, brother Mac Lynn has done a commendable job for some years in collecting and compiling data on churches of Christ.
    - a. Of nearly 12,000 churches of Christ in the U.S., the non-institutional churches composed nearly 21% of the total of the combined groups. (’03)
- C. Foreign evangelism.
1. Contrary to the charges that we do not believe in foreign evangelism, we have been active in sending Americans into other nations with the gospel, and are supporting countless natives in many nations.
  2. While institutional brethren have built schools, hospitals and other such organizations, we have concentrated on building churches.
- D. Caring for orphans.
1. Some of the most egregious charges against us was that we were “orphan-haters,” since we did not believe in churches supporting orphan asylums.
    - a. This was purely an emotion ploy, designed to cause people to not consider the Scriptural basis of our objections.
  2. But the figures tell another story.
    - a. Several years ago, Eugene Britnell surveyed 60 preachers who opposed church support of benevolent institutions, and they accumulated a list of 450 orphans and widows being cared for by individual Christians.
    - b. Cecil Willis pointed out that 17 children had been adopted or cared for by the faculty of Florida College, which at that time had 25 families.
    - c. Eight families represented by the editorial staff of the *Gospel Guardian* provided homes for at least ten children not their natural offspring
    - d. If these figures provide an average, it means that nearly 19,000 orphans and/or widows were cared for by Christians in conservative churches.
  3. I had an exchange with one of the officials of the Eastern New Mexico Children’s Home when I lived in Portales, New Mexico.
    - a. Studying with Naomi Bruce, whose family was struggling in the small town
    - b. An institutional church learned of our studies, and then began flooding her with gifts of food and clothes, seeking to undermine our relationship.

- c. One day she asked me when I was going to go get the children at the orphan home, as the director had told her I could have the children if I could find homes for them.
  - d. This was my first information about this, so we called the home, and asked when I could come get the children, as I told them I could find homes for them in about two weeks.
  - e. The fellow played dumb, until Naomi got on the phone and reminded him of what he had told her.
  - f. Of course, the whole thing fell apart when I accepted his offer.
    - (1) He admitted that there were no true orphans of the 50 in the home, but there had been two there some time earlier.
    - (2) All the children had living relatives who could have cared for them.
  - g. When I later baptized her into Christ, she saw clearly what had been going on—“They tried to buy me with things, but you taught me the gospel.”
4. Referring back to the radio broadcast in Waycross, GA, when I got back to Atlanta, I called the preacher who said that the church there would let a child bleed to death before using the church telephone to call an ambulance.
- a. I challenged him about that statement, and he replied, “Well, David, since you love orphans so much, I’m going to give your name to the probate judge of Juvenile Court here in Clayton County. She’s always trying to find homes for children.”
  - b. Sure enough, in a short time Judge Trudy Boswick called me, and said that her preacher said I could help her find some homes.
    - (1) I found homes for two 15-year-old girls who were wards of the court; then a 15-year-old boy; then another teenaged girl.
    - (2) Then a call about 19-year-old Margaret, pregnant and with a 10-month old baby, with no place to go and too old for Juvenile Court to help.
      - (a) Flora told me to bring her home, which we did, eventually teaching her the gospel.
    - (5) Another call resulted in our placing a child for adoption with a preacher, and then the word got out that the Tants could help with pregnant girls and with couples seeking adoption.
  - c. In the ensuing years, we have had about 50 pregnant girls live with us, and helped arrange adoptions for some 80 children.
  - d. All because an institutional preacher thought he would “call my bluff.”
  - e. I asked the judge why she thought I could find homes for the children when her preacher didn’t seem to have a means of doing so.
  - f. I explained that we taught people to take them in their homes, while the church she was attending told people to put an extra dollar in the collection plate on Sunday, and let an institution take care of them.
5. But we had a reputation to uphold, and it is reported that some women once approached Robert Jackson and chided him for his hatred of orphans.
- a. He then told them if orphan children came to his door wanting help, he would “pinch their little heads off.”



**XIII. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?**

- A. Is there any hope for reconciliation?
1. The history of divisions does not present an optimistic picture.
  2. Historian Ed Harrell reported after a meeting with institutional brethren in Arlington, TX in 1973.
    - a. “Does anyone seriously believe that...the thousands of unscriptural promotions dreamed up will...suddenly, or slowly, begin to disappear? Of course not. No man could bring it off; not 20 or 50 or 200 men could bring it off. And not only *could* they not, they *will* not bring it about.”
  3. Steve Wolfgang remarked: “Such a movement to turn the clock back would require that institutional brethren in thousands of places make a conscious decision to place fellowship with their non-institutional brethren on a higher plane than the support of human institutions—and I think everyone knows that simply isn’t going to happen.”
  4. Another preacher expressed such a possibility in these words:
 

“It isn’t just supporting an orphanage anymore. The liberal church in town here split this congregation almost eighteen years ago over the orphanage issue—but ironically doesn’t support one to this day! What they *have* done is to accept people we have withdrawn from, no questions asked; or accept in full fellowship people who have left here after hearing preaching they didn’t like on divorce and remarriage, the role of the Holy Spirit, examination of premillennial claims or of the Masonic Lodge—all of them ‘shaken in’ with the clear understanding that they will not hear any preaching on those or any other controversial issues. Don’t let someone tell you it’s just ‘sending a few dollars a month to an orphanage’—its how we look at the Bible, the church, living the Christian life, and much more. The longer it goes on, the more incompatible we will become.”
  5. The division is seen in an exchange between preachers at a meeting in Leakey, TX between the two sides seeking to come to a meeting of the minds.
    - a. Joe Fitch was there, and reported this exchange between preachers:
 

“One preacher said, ‘Give us the Scripture authorizing the things you are doing and advocating; that is all we ask.’ A prominent preacher retorted, ‘Give us Scripture! Give us Scripture! You can teach an old green parrot to say “Give us Scripture.” That is all you fellows say.’ I was amazed! Some churches could surely use an old green parrot to cry out, ‘Give us Scripture! Give us Scripture!’...Few preachers are saying it.”
  6. Paul Williams tells of a discussion of the institutional question in South Africa.
    - a. An American preacher defended the questioned practices by saying, “These practices must be scriptural, for brethren in the U.S. have practiced these things for many years.”
    - b. The African preacher responded: “Brother, if we were practicing the same things we had done for years, we would have cooked you white men and had you for lunch.”
- B. Even among institutional people there has been alarm, as evidenced by an 1986 “Expression of Concern” signed by hundreds of institutional preachers.
1. This document was specifically directed toward the teaching of theistic

evolution and other concerns at Abilene Christian University, but addressed several other issues.

- “I. We are deeply disturbed over the liberalism that is so evident in the brotherhood today. By ‘liberalism’ we mean especially the following items, though not excluding other specifics that could be mentioned:
- A. There is a drifting from Bible-centered, definitive, distinctive doctrine that once characterized our preaching. Presently, uncertain sounds and weak messages emanate from many pulpits among us. Brethren are becoming accustomed to diluted and polluted preaching. We are rapidly approaching the point where many of our people, including preachers and elders, no longer know the difference between true Christianity and the corrupted forms of it so prevalent about us.
  - B. There is a concerted effort on the part of some of our brethren to restructure the organization, worship and work of the church along sectarian lines, thus tending to denominationalize the New Testament body of Christ.
  - C. A spirit of doctrinal compromise and fellowshipping those in blatant religious error has permeated our ranks.
  - D. The world has made alarming inroads into the church. Instead of the church influencing the world for righteousness, as it should, the world has adversely affected many brethren in matters of morality and conduct of life.
  - E. The typical emphasis of the denominational world on recreation, entertainment, and solving the social ills of society has been incorporated into the thinking and programs of many congregations, supplanting the God-given work of meeting the desperate spiritual needs of those born within and without the body of Christ.”

2. No “anti” could have said it better.

3. We all know the story of the camel that asked to stick his nose in the Arab’s tent one cold night.

a. Inch by inch it finally took over the tent.

b. And so it is with even small departures from the Biblical pattern, for once started, there is no stopping place.

C. To reinforce the aforementioned comments, a statement from Abilene Christian University is a real eye-opener.

1. *“Dear Friends: The Abilene Christian University has taken a bold step in their 2004 Lectureship, and has clearly defined the terms for reforming Church of Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. These reforms are already being implemented in many congregations. These reforms will fundamentally change the Church of Christ as we know it. A few of the key elements of this reformation movement are as follows:*

1. *We should cease our elite and sectarian behavior, and ask our brethren in all denominations to forgive our sins, especially that we said they weren’t saved.*
2. *We must not say that we have the truth, but that we are on a spiritual journey, just as our brethren in the denominations are on their spiritual journey.*

3. *We should have open fellowship with all who say they believe in Jesus. We should follow the example of brave reformists who ask denominational preachers to share pulpits with their congregations. We should also share major social and religious events with our denominational brethren. We should be ecumenical in our thinking and practice, and should openly align ourselves with the current evangelical ecumenical movement.*
  4. *We should continue to say that baptism is important, but that it is not essential for salvation. We should recognize that there are many non-immersed believers who are saved.”*
2. Some claim this statement is of doubtful origin.
    - a. To authenticate it, I wrote to Royce Money, ACU president, and asked about it, but got no response.
    - b. Those who know ACU state that it accurately reflects ACU’s position.
  3. ACU also honored Max Lucado as its Outstanding Alumnus for 2004.
    - a. This popular author preaches for the Oak Hills church in San Antonio, and has had the designation “Church of Christ” removed from its sign.
    - b. I have material from Lucado which shows he no longer believes baptism is necessary for salvation, and has exchanged pulpits with a Baptist preacher.
    - c. They have introduced instrumental music into their worship, and have installed a McDonald’s style playground on their property.
    - d. On a Larry King TV show, he was pressured into saying that he did not believe it was necessary to believe in Jesus Christ!
  4. One of the featured speakers at the 2005 Lectureship was Don Jeanes, President of Milligan College, a Christian Church school.
    - a. Concerning this, Money was interviewed by *Christian Chronicle*: “I would fight vigorously if instrumental music were attempted to be introduced into my home congregation. I am firmly within the a cappella tradition, but I have a tolerance for those who make other choices, and I don’t see that it needs to constitute a complete severing of fellowship or alienation. I just don’t see the need for that.” (April 1, 2006).
    - b. Note that Money says a cappella is a “tradition,” not a matter of doctrine!
    - c. I wonder what other denominational preachers ACU might invite?
- D. David Lipscomb University has also joined the bandwagon
1. The Christian Scholars Conference (CSC) convened at Lipscomb in Nashville June, 2008.
    - a. Participants were Pepperdine, OCU, ACU and Harding—total 90+ orgs.
    - b. Jared Carter, ACU grad., now an Episcopal priesthood, plainly declares he has abandoned the idea of “restorationism.”
      - (1) “I don’t believe in Restorationism or Primitivism. I just don’t. It’s not Biblical, there’s no call to it. I don’t care two bits if today’s church looks like the first century church, and I don’t think God does.”
    - c. His presentation: “One New Humanity: Reconsidering Homosexuality in light of the Ecclesiology of Ephesians.”
      - (1) He studies the place of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Christians in the Episcopal Church.
      - (2) He argues that there is nothing “wrong about a faithful, loving, mono-

- gamous same-sex relationship.” “I fail to see what it is about homosexuality that declares it as inherently evil.”
- d. It is hard to imagine a more egregious affront on the Bible & morality for these so-called “Christian” schools to engage in.
  - e. And this was not a surprise to the schools, for the topic was known beforehand, and indeed this was the topic of Cramer’s Master’s thesis at ACU.
2. Further evidence of Lipscomb’s drift is seen in *Wineskins* mag., Jan-Apr 06
- a. Gary Holloway, Bible teacher: “My own experience teaching in a university where 70% of the students are from *a cappella* Churches of Christ confirms this cultural shift away from the importance of denominational labels to a deep concern for relational and spiritual union. It is not unusual in a typical week for our students to attend a Monday night instrumental praise worship at a local Church of Christ, a Tuesday night ecumenical teaching session at First Baptist downtown, Wednesday night church at a fairly traditional Church of Christ, and Thursday night Taize worship at a Presbyterian church—all before going home on the weekend to their parents’ Church of Christ where many think we are the only Christians!” Professor Holloway goes on to say that “Many of us cannot deny that there are many devout Christians who are unimmersed.”
  - b. Mike Williams, a teacher of freshman Bible at DLC, delivered a sermon at 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. CofC. on 3/15/06 titled “Baptism and Christian Unity.” “We need to view baptism in the context of God’s story, God seeks our hearts more than right ritual...” In the sermon, he spoke of three categories—those baptized into a denomination, those sprinkled, and those who have never been “baptized” at all. He warned his listeners to “avoid the proof-text approach,” and to “avoid pattern theology.” “We welcome all believers in Christ.” Well, what about the unimmersed —“perhaps sprinkled... If they choose not to be immersed, we welcome them on the journey as part of the family... What about those who have never been baptized?... And so, for those who have never been baptized, we welcome the opportunity to study with you about the beauty and significance of baptism, yet we will also welcome you...”
- E. “The Great Communion” was held Oct. 4, 2009.
1. Purpose: to promote unity between Christian Church, Disc. of Christ, and C’s of C.
  2. ACU Moody Coliseum hosted one of these meetings.
    - a. Song before L.S. was a choir using instrumental music, Pres. Money participated.
  3. West End CoC in Nashville hosted another.
    - a. Closing prayer by Rhonda Lowry, wife of DLU pres. Randy Lowry.
    - b. French-speaking Af-Amer Group sang closing song with bongo drums.
  7. Unsuspecting parents send their children to these schools thinking they are safer than public universities.
    - a. Perhaps motto should be: “Send us your children. We will destroy their faith and show you how ignorant your parents are.”
  8. Once digression starts, it is hard to stop, as anyone who raises rabbits knows
- F. I have seen the same trends through the years in the bulletins and journals I get from institutional brethren.
1. Bar-B-Q dinners and clowns and a charge for admission.
  2. Christmas pageants with instrumental music.
  3. Million dollar gymnasiums and coffee shop facilities.
  4. Fashion shows in church buildings with an admission fee charged.
  5. Pulpit exchanges with denominational preachers.

6. Women taking leading roles in worship assemblies.
7. A survey indicating that 90% of young people in institutional churches see nothing wrong with instrumental music in worship.
  - a. Thus in the next generation, when the old folks die off, its use will not even be questioned.
9. The White Station church in Memphis has opened a coffee shop, which is to be used for social activities, birthday parties, card games, etc. Some churches are hosting “Christian Rock Bands” and charging for admission. Others build family life centers, with basketball, shuffleboard and yoga facilities. The claim is, “If you don’t provide this, the young people won’t come. So, “If you can’t lick ‘em, join ‘em.” A church in has a dance teacher on staff to teach dance to kids and adults.
10. Hillcrest CoC, Decatur, GA, hosted its first annual Golf Tournament, 8/10 for only \$100 participation.
11. “On Sat., Feb. 10, 2007, the Richland Hills church of Christ will begin holding a weekly Saturday evening worship service that will include the use of musical instruments in worship, and an observance of the Lord’s Supper. Jon Jones (the former pulpit minister and one of the elders) said that the elders ‘fully and completely’ endorsed the decision. At an adult Bible study he said, ‘There is unity in our eldership, and we are so thankful for that.’”
  - a. This church has 24 “ministers,” and four of them are women.
12. On the TV program, “In Search of the Lord’s Way,” Mack Lyon spoke of the problem of women in leadership roles in churches. Many voiced strong protest to his words.
  - a. One woman wrote, “God help us. This message is from Churches of Christ.” She was upset that the TV audience might think this represented the church at large. She went on to say, “I couldn’t disagree more with his message. And yet people in Abilene hear that it’s from Churches of Christ. Pretty soon, they’ll all be dead, including Mack Lyon, and the problem of traditional coC’ers will snuff itself out.”
  - b. Mike Cope, a preacher at Highland church of Christ in Abilene, and a teacher at A.C.U. wrote, “Of course, I think this brother (Mack Lyon—jdt) is wrong. Way wrong. I’m becoming more and more convinced that only time will take care of this.” This church is the sponsor of the national Herald of Truth radio and TV program.
  - c. The Bible is quite clear about women and leader ship roles. I Tim. 2:12
13. But that doesn’t deter those who insist on their own way.
  - a. E.g. from N.Y.: “West Islip Church of Christ is led by a group of gifted shepherds known collectively as the Council.” The website then names nine individuals, including five women. The website also mentions “Our ministers, Katie Hays and Lance Pape.” By the way, the last word is that Katie now preaches for the Lawrenceville, GA First Christian Church. Lance Papa had a webpage dedicated to “Gender Justice” in churches of Christ seeking to encourage women’s roles as “deacon, elder, minister, worship leader, preacher, teacher, etc.”
  - b. The Cahaba Valley church of Christ in Birmingham as a picture of their

- elders on their webpage. Their five elders include two women.
- c. How do they deal with I Tim. 2:12?
- (1) “From the indications inside the letters themselves, it appears that these books came from a period around 115 AD and were put together by those people leading the churches that Paul founded in his life-time, attributing the material, as they believed its content to be, from Paul himself. Therefore, most scholars believe that, at times, what is found in I and II Timothy and Titus reflects more about what is going on in the churches of 115 than Paul's own views. This is true of the view of the law found in these letters, along with various other teachings about faith, the church, and even Jesus himself found in these letters.” (Cahaba website)
  - (2) Evidently they deal with Timothy by dismissing it as “uninspired.”
14. Then there are such promotions as “Coon-huntin’ for Christ” and “Gymnastics to the glory of God.”
15. From there we go on to challenges about the authenticity of Scripture.
- a. “It is consistent to believe that the Bible is authoritative in matters of faith and practice, but may be incorrect in geographical or historical details. Once a person abandons the concept of divine dictation, he must abandon the idea of inerrancy.” (William Abraham, a Christian college professor)
  - b. The call for a “new hermeneutic” of interpreting Scripture from the leftwing in the church is well known.
- G. To look at the future, one needs only to look at the past.
1. To read the debates and arguments of 100 to 150 years ago in the division with the Christian Church, one would think he was reading the debates of 50 years ago, as the same arguments were made then as in more recent times.
  2. Consider this example from the *Christian Standard* in 1893, as a writer is defending women having more prominent roles in the church.  
“A principle may set aside an apostolic precept. It may brush aside an apostolic decree. We do that constantly. We follow the apostolic example whenever we like it; when we do not, we depart from it.”
  3. Such thinking is still around, as I heard a prominent institutional preacher make the claim that “We do many things for which we have no authority.”
  4. What we have been experiencing over the past 50-60 years is but a repeat of what has been transpiring since the beginning of time, as new generations arose in Israel that were not content with the ways of their fathers. Jud. 2:9-10
  5. In looking to the late 1800s, we see “the case with such men as J.W. McGarvey or Isaac Errett, first generation leaders who serve as a ‘bridge’ for a little liberalism often discover that succeeding generations are not content to stop where their forebears drew arbitrary lines, and are determined to carry to logical extension the incipient practices of the former generation.” (Steve Wolfgang, *History and Background of the Institutional Controversy*, p. 31)

## CONCLUSION

- A. The division in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century eventually produced three bodies.
1. The conservative group generally took the name “church of Christ.”
  2. The more liberal group was usually known as the Christian Church.
  3. In time an ultra-liberal group was spawned, known as Disciples of Christ.

- B. The division in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century looks like it will have the same results
  - 1. The conservative churches which hold to the inerrancy of the Scriptures and the insistence of having a “thus saith the Lord” for teaching and practice.
  - 2. The institutional churches that insist we do not have to have authority for all that we do, and
  - 3. The ultra-liberal folks who seem determined to have the church take its place among the denominations.
- C. This emphasizes the need for each generation to be taught the basic principles over and over again.
  - 1. When Israel came into the promised land, there were certain instructions that were given along these very lines.
    - a. A stone memorial was to be placed at the crossing of the Jordan River as a perpetual reminder. Josh. 4:1-7
    - b. God’s ordinances were to be taught to successive generations. Deut. 6:1, 2, 6-8
- D. Gospel meetings in the 40s and 50s.
  - 1. I remember gospel meetings as a boy—tent meetings, camp meetings, etc.
  - 2. I often heard sermons on what was wrong with instrumental music in worship, but never recall hearing a lesson on the Missionary Society, yet these were the two prominent things that were a part of the division in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
  - 3. When the current division started 100 years later, it was not the instrumental music that was the issue, but Missionary Societies.
    - a. They were not called Missionary Societies, for all knew they were wrong, but they didn’t know *why* they were wrong.
    - b. Thus a generation that grew up untaught on a vital principle fell into error.
  - 4. Let us learn from history, that the cycle not be repeated.

## INVITATION

- 1. The Old Jerusalem gospel is still true, and it is still God’s only method for the redemption and hope of all people. John 14:6
  - 2. If there is one present who has not obeyed the simple commands of Christ to have your sins washed away; his means of doing this is quite clear. Mk 16:16
-