



Seeking Undenominational Christianity

Tom Rucker – Hardin Valley Church





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The Restoration Movement



Cane Ridge Trip Saturday July 1st



"The Last Will And Testament Of The Springfield Presbytery"

The Presbytery of Springfield, sitting at Cane-ridge, in the county of Bourbon, being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily; and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; and knowing that it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die; and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain this our last Will and Testament, in a manner and form following, viz:

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 delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Item. We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scripture with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven without mixture of philosophy, vain, remorse, 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 resume 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 to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and that she resume her primitive right 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 a 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 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 draweth nigh.

Item. We will, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and 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 Je _____, 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 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.

Springfield Presbytery } L.S.
June 28th, 1804

Robert Marshall,
John Dunlavy,
Richard M. Neman,

B. W. Stone
John Thompson,
David Purviance.

} Witnesses.

2 Corinthians 13:11-12

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, **compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,** ¹³ **bearing with** one another and, if one has a complaint against another, **forgiving** each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on **love**, which binds everything together in **perfect harmony.** ¹⁵ And let the **peace** of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in **one body.** And be thankful.

Post War Environment and Moods - North

- A general sense of victory, progress, prosperity, and a desire to punish the south.
- Many churches built large buildings with stained glass windows and expensive organs.



Post War Environment and Moods - South

- Interpreted defeat as discipline from God to keep them from becoming like the materialistic North and to preserve their virtues as an example of God's ideal culture.
 - Faced starvation, disease, and economic ruin.
 - To Southerners, it was inconceivable that their fellow Christians could spend money on buildings and organs while their brothers and sisters in the South were struggling just to stay alive.



Sectional Division Reflected in Journals

- In 1866 the *Gospel Advocate* resumed publication under the editorship of Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb in Nashville, TN. The war had forced it to shut down in 1861.
- Fanning felt it necessary because there were no other papers southerners could read without political insinuations and slurs.
- Lipscomb continued to discourage involvement in Civil Government. He viewed governments role as punishment wrong doers just and ordained it just like he did hell.



Sectional Division Reflected in Journals

- The same year the *Christian Standard* began publication in under the editorship of Isaac Errett in Cleveland, OH.
- Previously the *American Christian Review* edited by Benjamin Franklin had the most influence in the North, but he had remained neutral in the war and was considered to be an “old fogey.”
- While neither journal gave sectional political feelings as the reason for starting their journal, the sectional character was real.

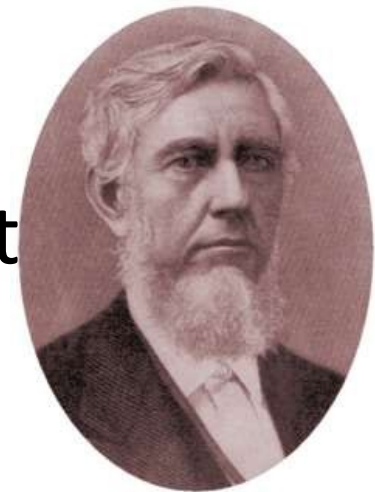


Discussion

- In what ways did the Civil War Era lay the foundation for divisions that would come later?
- How can a movement that has no organization beyond congregations divide?
 - The same way it united:
 - Congregation by congregation through the influence of powerful preachers, and
 - Influence of religious papers through powerful editors.

The Issues of Division

- Opposition to the Missionary Society
 - When the AMCS formed in 1849 there was little opposition. Fanning and Franklin had both served as officers.
 - Fanning started the Gospel Advocate in 1855 to give the society issue a through discussion. By 1857 he was convinced it was not authorized by Scripture but refused to break fellowship over it. In 1859, he addressed the Society rejoicing it was still united. After events of 1861 and 1863, it affected fellowship.
 - Franklin served as the Society secretary for thirteen years but in 1866 turned completely against it.



The Issues of Division

- Arguments Against the Missionary Society
 - It had become involved in sectional politics.
 - It an was inefficient way to do mission work.
 - It dictated to the churches.
 - Silence of the Bible on church organization local beyond the congregation.
 - Those who supported it took silence as permission.



The Issues of Division

- Outcome of the Missionary Society Debate
 - A compromise plan was proposed in 1868, but failed.
 - Eventually most preachers and papers in the north supported the missionary society and other organizations for benevolent and mission work.
 - Those in the south generally opposed any organization beyond the local congregation.





Thank you

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