



Seeking Undenominational Christianity

Tom Rucker – Hardin Valley Church



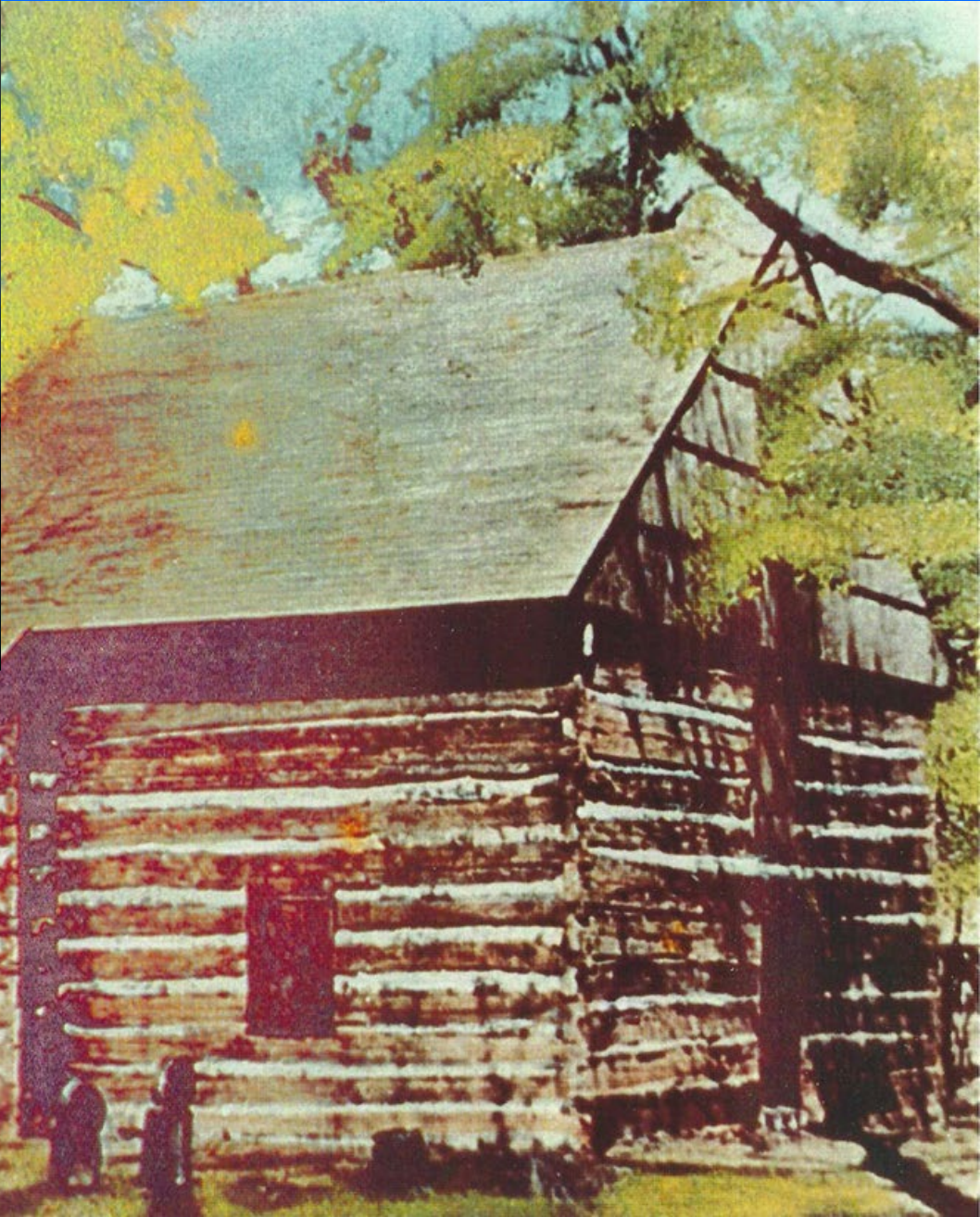


Seeking Undenominational Christianity

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.

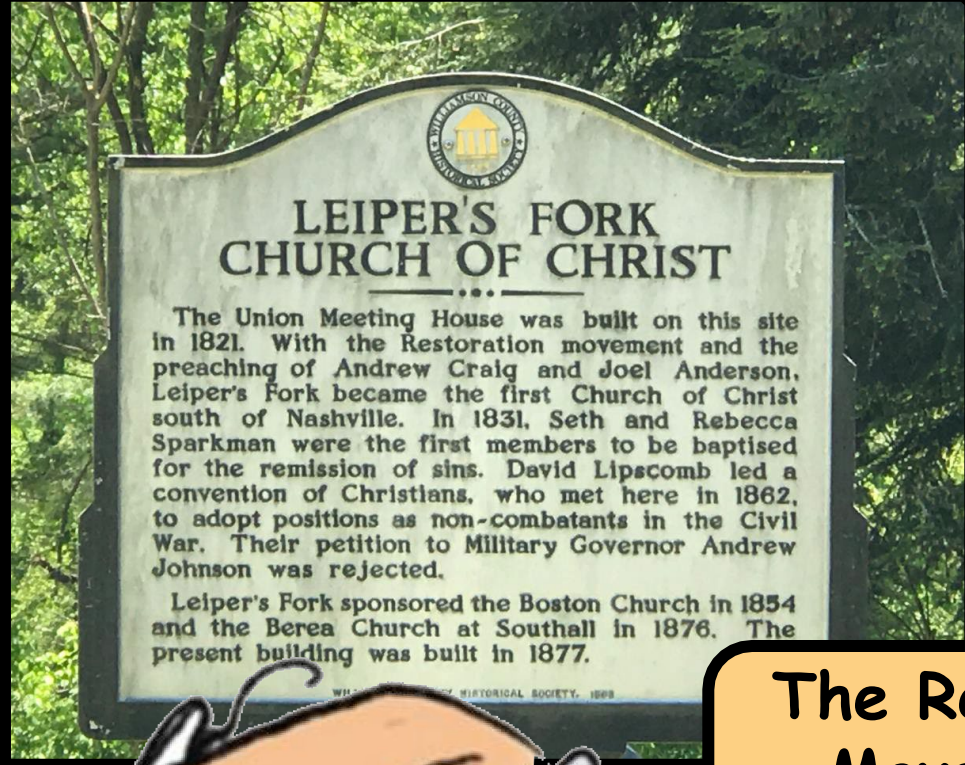
Item. We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member, who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such suspected heretic immediately; in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of gospel liberty.

Item. We will, that , 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, } Witnesses.
Richard M. Neman, }
B. W. Stone }
John Thompson, }
David Purviance. }



Seth and Rebecca
Sparkman



The Restoration
Movement in
Microcosm!



Ephesians 4

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the **unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God**, to mature manhood, to the measure of the **stature of the fullness of Christ...**¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, **into Christ**

Further Roadblocks to Union

- Unity was not easy. Old issues over worship styles were still there (emotional versus rational and dignified). The work of the Holy Spirit and choice of name continued to be problems.
- The O'Kelly and Smith-Jones churches that had been in fellowship with the Stone churches were shocked at the union.
 - They regarded Campbell as cold and rationalistic, having little or no religion in him.
 - They charged Stone with giving up on the original vision of reform.



Further Roadblocks to Union

- When Stone moved to Illinois in 1834, he found the two churches, one from each movement, still worshiping separately and refused to meet with either until they united.
- One month after the January 1, 1832 meeting, the combined church in Lexington experienced a “blowup.” The Stone people insisted an ordained minister (elder) be present to administer the Lord’s supper. Since no elder was there and the Campbell people thought the requirement was ridiculous, the two groups decided they could not unite for the time being (for three years).



Further Roadblocks to Union

- Proper names for the movement and individual congregations continued to be a problem.
- Some used Disciples or Disciples of Christ.
- Others preferred Christian Churches or Churches of Christ.



Discussion

- Why was the union accomplished despite the differences?
 - They believed union was God's will and that they shared what was most important in Christianity – one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.
 - They loved one another as fellow children of God, with all their imperfections.
- Was it a good thing or a bad thing to happen?

Discussion

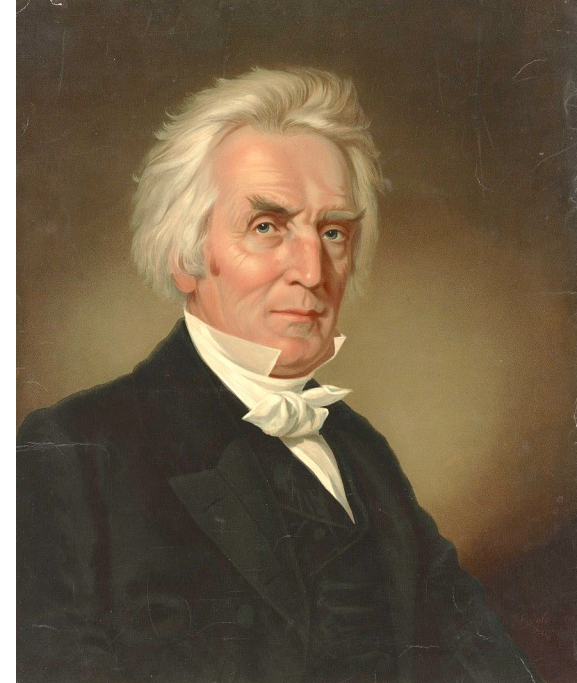
- Does Christian unity always mean a merger of congregations or movements?
- Would it be possible today for local congregations to experience union like what occurred in the 1830s?

Developing a Theology

- What does Theology mean?
 - The study of God.
 - Religious beliefs and theory when systematically developed.
- Early Restoration leaders condemned the term.
 - It smelled like divisive speculation.
 - Theology expressed in creeds divided Christians. They wanted Christ to unite them.
 - Some Christian colleges still prefer the term Christian Doctrine to Systematic Theology.

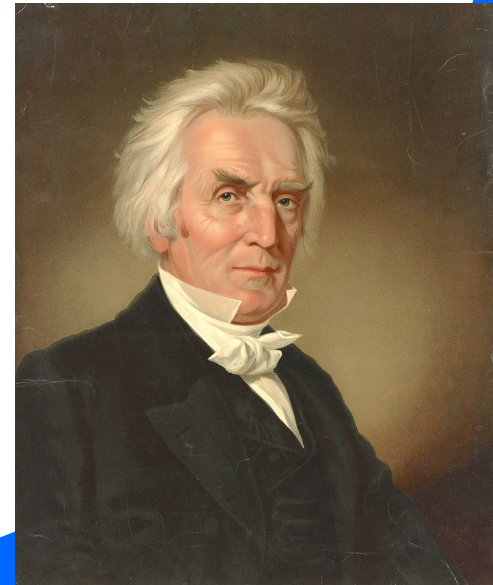
Campbell's Theology – 30 Articles on A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things – *Christian Baptist, 1825-1829*

- 5 on general principles of restoration.
- 2 on the dangers of creeds.
- 9 on worship (4 on weekly communion).
- 5 on church offices (bishops, deacons, etc.)
- 7 on “Church Discipline.
- 1 on “Spirit and Temper of Mind of the Ancient Order.”
- 1 on “Devotion to God’s Will.”



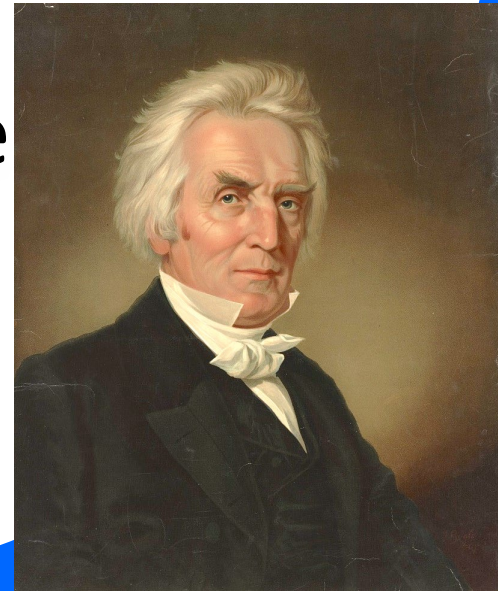
Campbell's Theology – 30 Articles on A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things – *Christian Baptist, 1825-1829*

- Why did the Campbells speak so much about the church and neglect other fundamental doctrines?
 - Their purpose was to bring Christianity and the church of the present up to the New Testament Standard.
- Although opposing creeds as tests of fellowship, he said “We have a creed – an apostolic creed”. After quoting it added to it baptism for the remission of sins, weekly communion, and other facts and articles of belief.



Campbell's Theology – Interpreting the Bible – *The Christian System*

- Free the Bible by reading it scientifically (grammatically and historically). (Roots in Enlightenment)
- But the most “indispensable” rule is: “We must come within the understanding distance.” One must have “one ardent desire – intent only to know the will of God.”
- He transcended the strict rationalism of his day with by giving precedence to obedience from the heart over understanding with the mind.
- Christocentric: Focus on heart-felt relationship with Christ and following his example.





Thank you

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