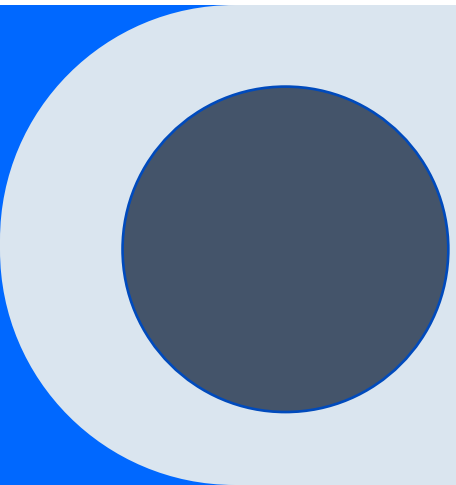
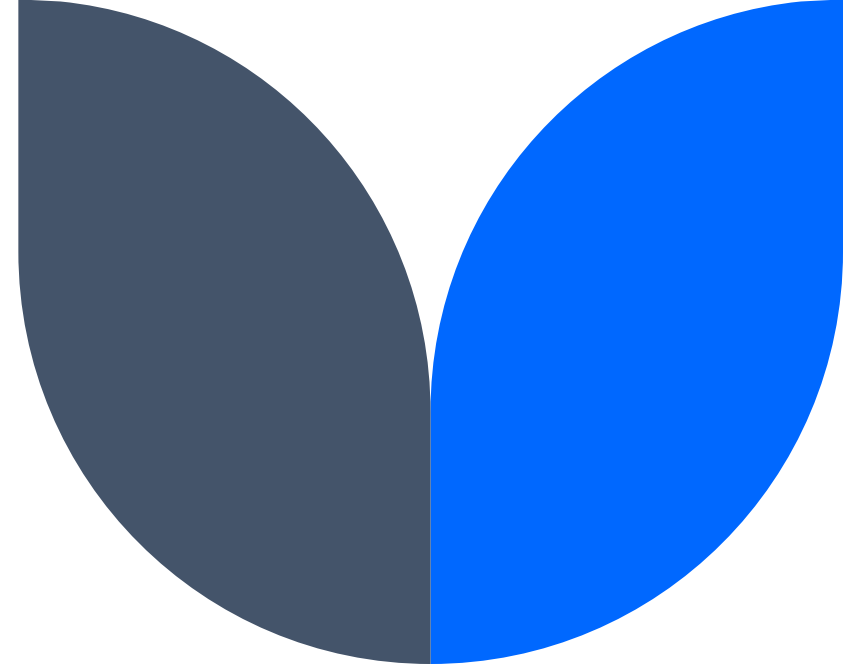




Seeking Undenominational Christianity

Tom Rucker – Hardin Valley Church



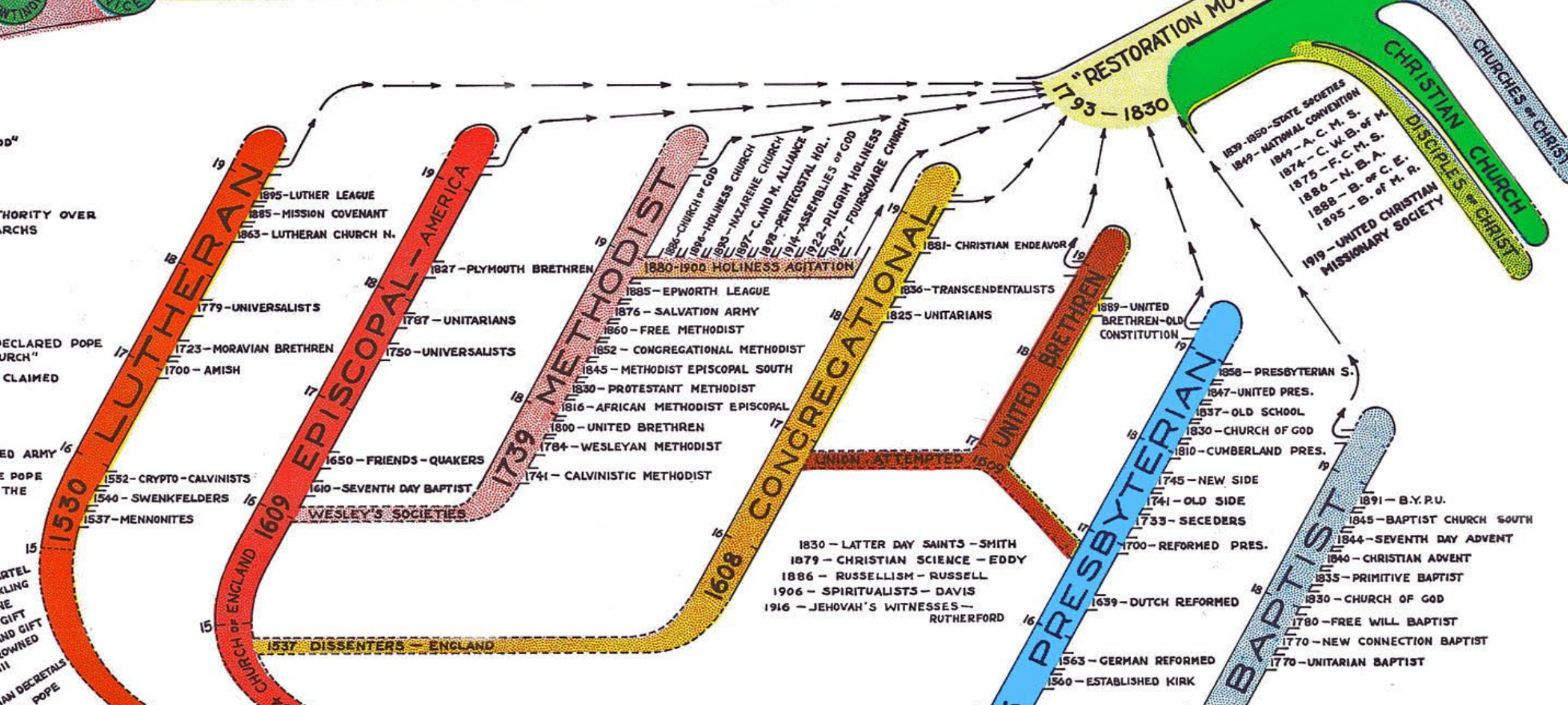


Seeking Undenominational Christianity

The Restoration Movement



APOSTASY FROM IT AND RETURN TO IT - HISTORICALLY TRACED



T.M.C.M.T.

Ephesians 4

¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is **one body** and **one Spirit**—just as you were called to the **one hope** that belongs to your call — ⁵ **one Lord, one faith**, one baptism, ⁶ **one God** and Father of all, who is over **all** and through **all** and in **all**.

Outcome of Cane Ridge Meeting



"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 that which 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.

Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Growth of the Stone Movement
 - At the suggestion of Rice Haggard, a former associate of James O'Kelly, Stone and his followers soon called themselves **Christians** and established congregations they called **Churches of Christ** or **Christian Churches**.
 - The question of baptism arose by 1807; and eventually the Stone Churches practiced believer's immersion but did not make it a test of fellowship. Stone feared making it a test of fellowship would exclude more Christians than a creed.
 - Stone received opposition on two theological views: He did not accept the ideas of substitutional atonement and the Trinity.

Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone on Spiritual Unity

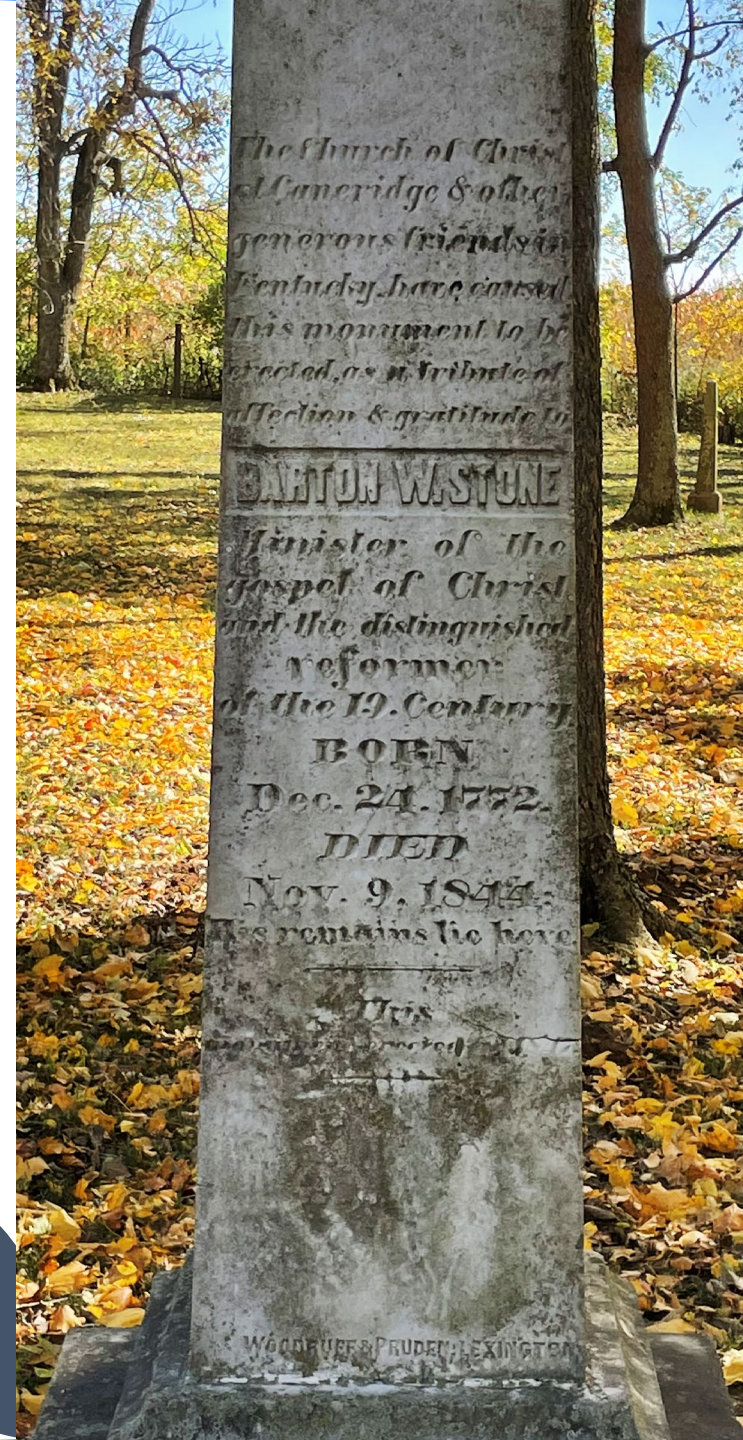
“Show how opposite to truth is sectarianism, and preach union, not of the sects as such, but of Christians, not a union founded on the wisdom or devices of humans, but that based upon the word of God, not only of the letter, but of the spirit of the word. Be careful to avoid all offensive language as much as possible. Let all your things be done with charity, humility, and meekness, but with boldness in the faith.” Barton W. Stone, *Christian Messenger* (1843), 35



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone's Open Mind – By Alonzo Willard Fortune

Stone's open mind made him a searcher for the truth rather than a dogmatist or debater. "He did not feel that he had reached the final truth which must be defended at all hazards. He did not agree with many of his brethren on fundamental doctrines....But he did not feel himself obligated to try to force them to accept his conclusions.



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone on Debate

“I wish it to be known that I shall never be an angry disputant, even in Reformation. It is possible to be too strict, too censorious, too confident; to feel that we have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And when we have that attitude, we become debaters rather than searchers for the truth.” Editorial in *Christian Messenger*



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone's Four Types of Union
 - Book Union (creeds and confessions) – “For these books have, from their very introduction, been the unhappy cause of disunion—and as light and liberty progress will be banished from the Christian community.”
 - In spite of the support of some of us for “book union,” we ultimately rejected this model of unity. Indeed, we all seem proud of our anti-creedalism.



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone's Four Types of Union
 - Head Union (common understanding of the Bible) - "Each one believed his opinion of certain texts to be the very spirit and meaning of the texts—and that this opinion was absolutely necessary to salvation"
 - With some this attitude led to the worst of sectarianism—we alone were the whole church and others could be unified with us if they accepted "the truth" (that is, our opinions on certain texts).
 - It is clear that "head union," that is, hermeneutical agreement on the Bible, will not produce true union but rather division and sectarianism.



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone's Four Types of Union
 - Water Union (Baptism) - "Water union was defined to be a union founded on immersion into water. But fact proves that this union is easily dissolved, and that immersion will not keep those who are immersed, united."
 - Are there devout Christians who have not been immersed in water?



Barton Stone and Christian Unity

- Stone's Four Types of Union
 - Fire Union (Unity of the Spirit) – “How vain are all human attempts to unite a bundle of twigs together, so as to make them grow together and bear fruit! They must first be united with the living stock, and receive its sap and spirit, before they can ever be united with each other. So, must we be first united with Christ, and receive his spirit, before we can ever be in spirit united with one another.”

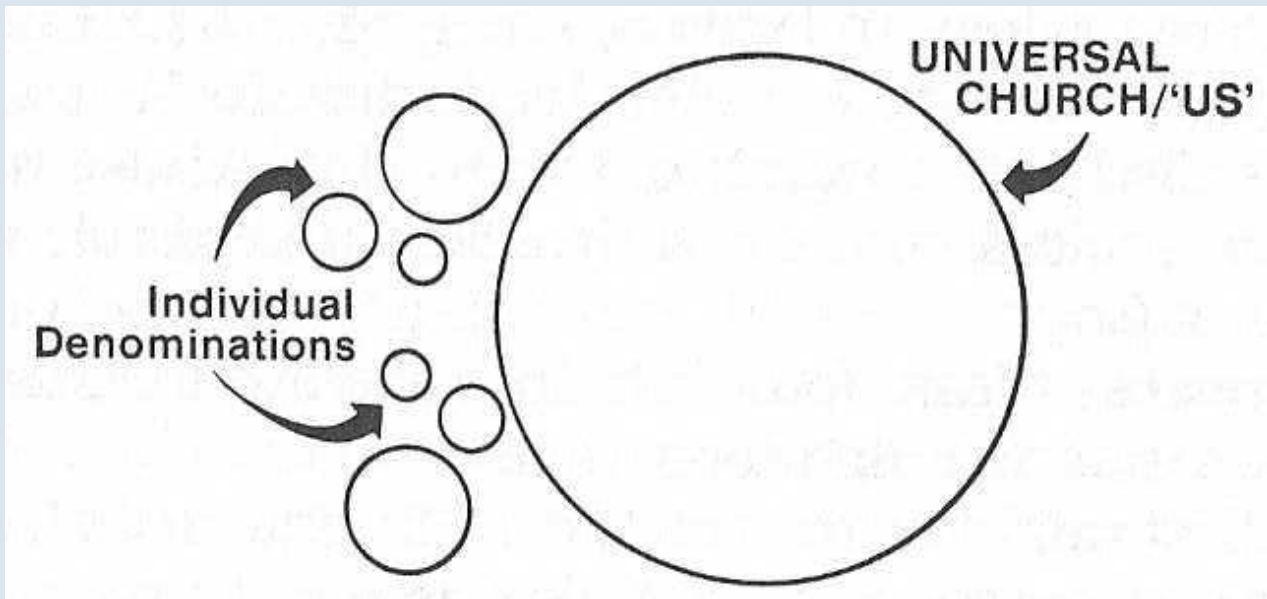
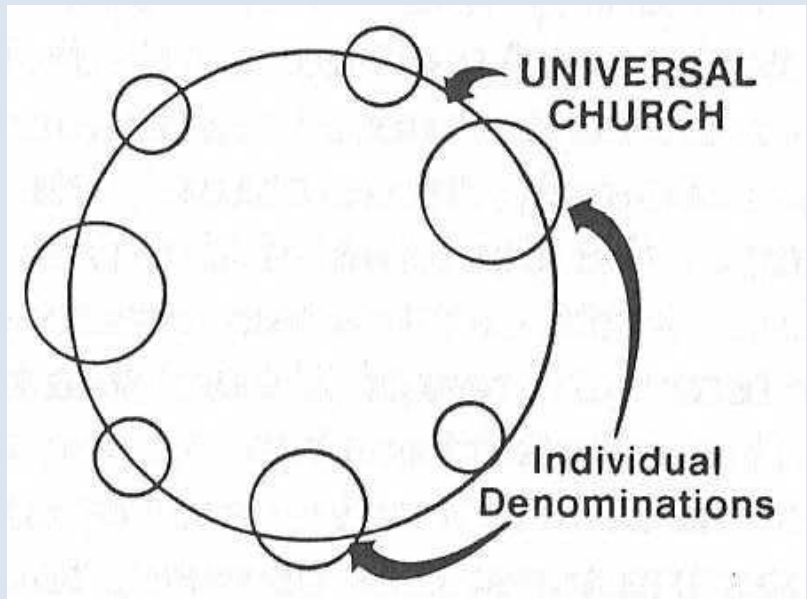
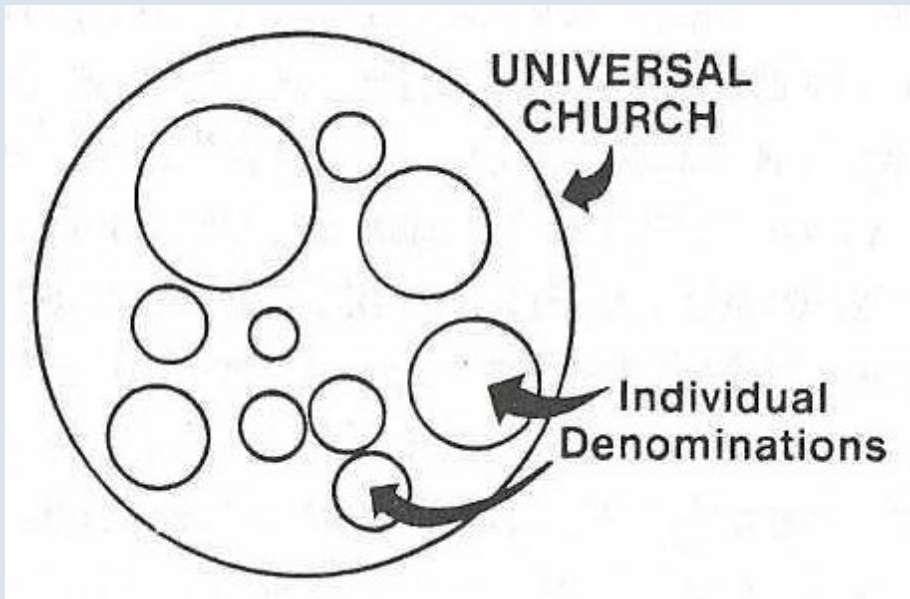
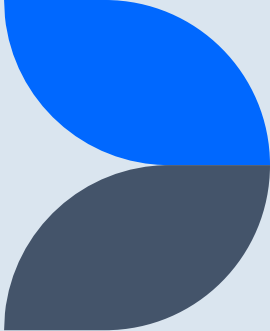


Barton Stone and Christian Unity

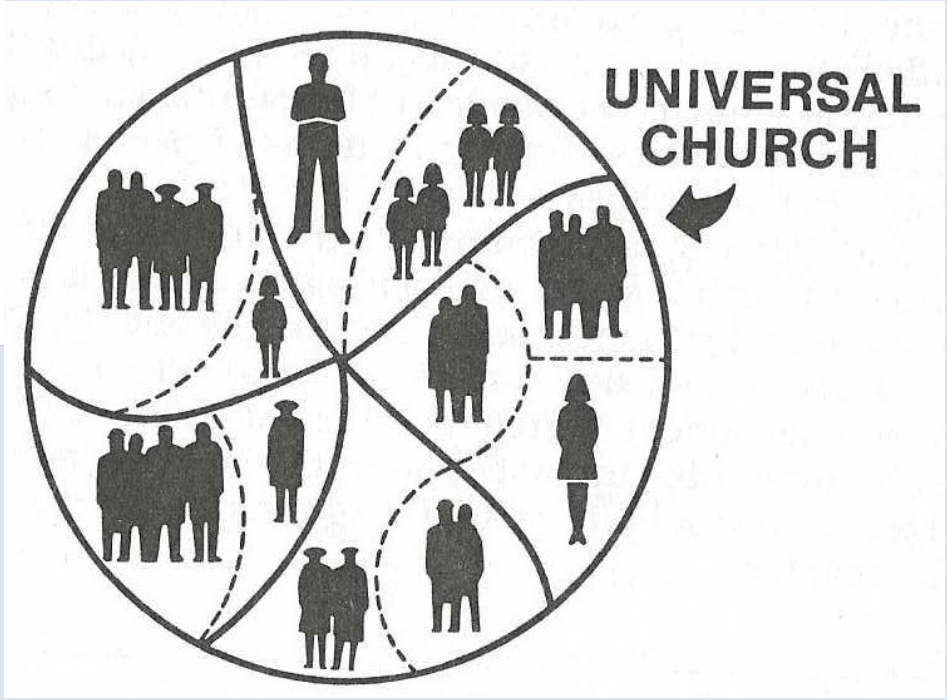
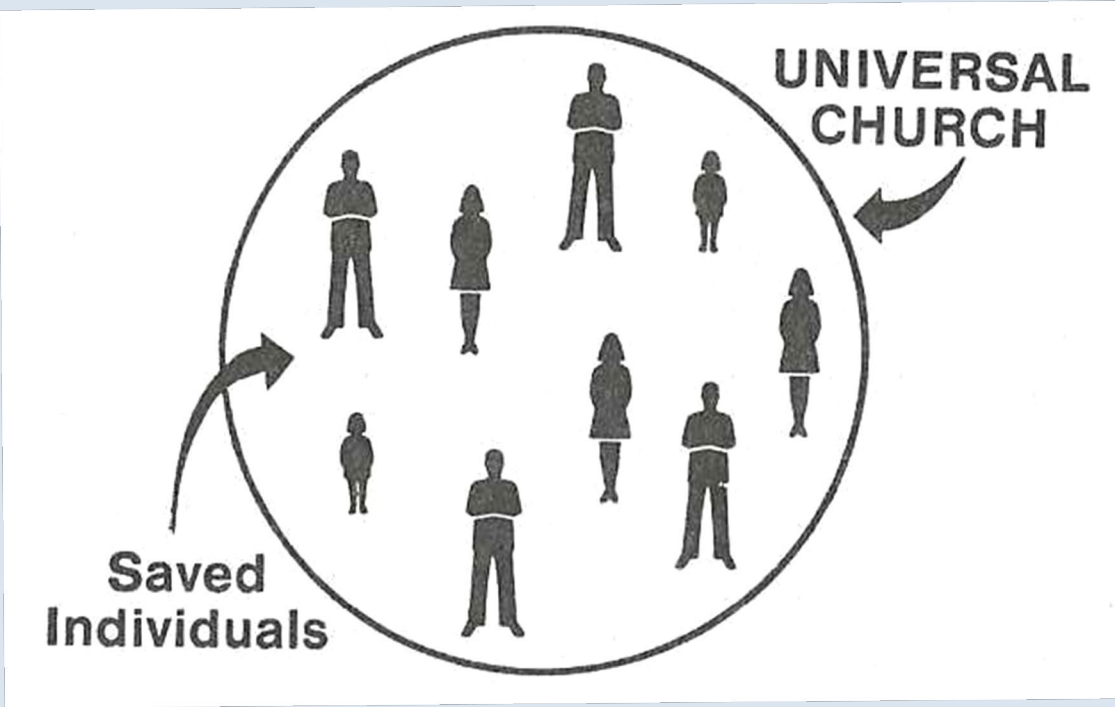
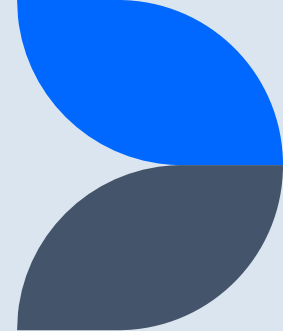
- Stone's Four Types of Union
 - Fire Union (Unity of the Spirit) – “The members of the body cannot live unless by union with the head—nor can the members of the church be united, unless first united with Christ, the living head. His spirit is the bond of union. Men have devised many plans to unite Christians—all are vain. There is but one effectual plan, which is, that all be united with Christ and walk in him.”
 - Is it possible to shift from an emphasis upon structural and institutional unity to one that finds its focus in relationships and mission centered in Jesus Christ?



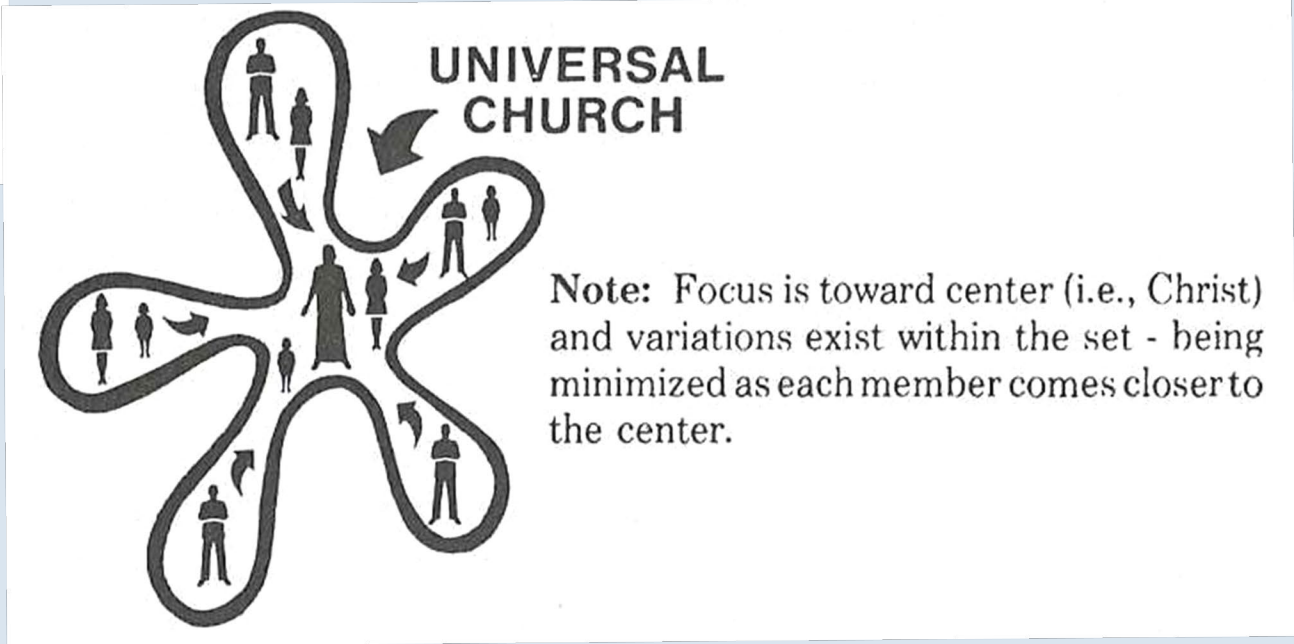
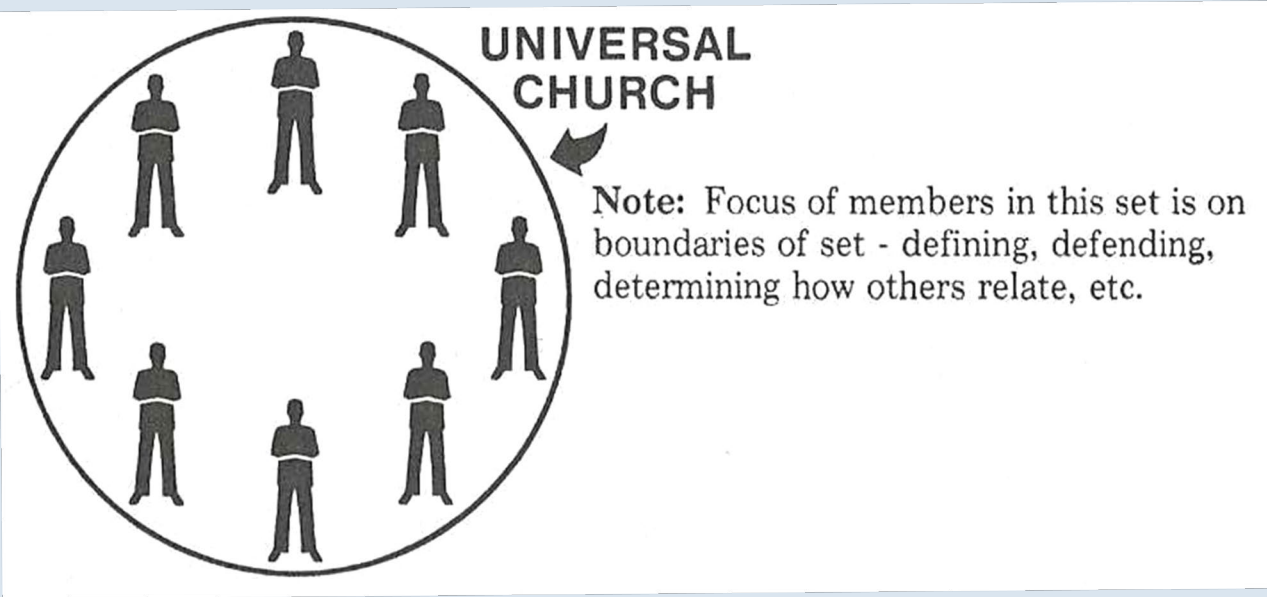
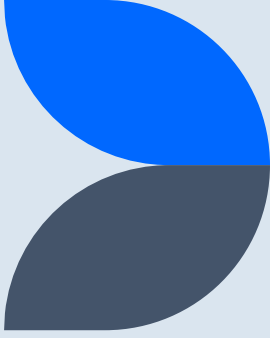
Models of Denominational Church Unity



Models of Geographical Church Unity



Models of Church Unity



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**

Discussion

- How do you view the universal church?
- How do you view the “Church of Christ”?
- What kind of unity do you have with the universal church?
- What kind of unity do we have in the Hardin Valley Church?
- How do you view the role of the Spirit in church unity?



Discussion

- What are the similarities of the three Christian groups we have discussed so far?
- How were they different?
- What kind of unity did they have?
- What can we learn from them?

**CHRISTIAN
CONNECTION**

