



Seeking Undenominational Christianity

Tom Rucker – Hardin Valley Church



1 Corinthians 1:10-13

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you **agree**, and that there be **no divisions** among you, but that you be **united** in the **same mind** and the **same judgment**. ¹¹ For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is **quarreling among you**, my brothers.

¹² What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 4:5-7

⁵ Therefore **do not pronounce judgment** before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

⁶ I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us **not to go beyond what is written**, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. ⁷ For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

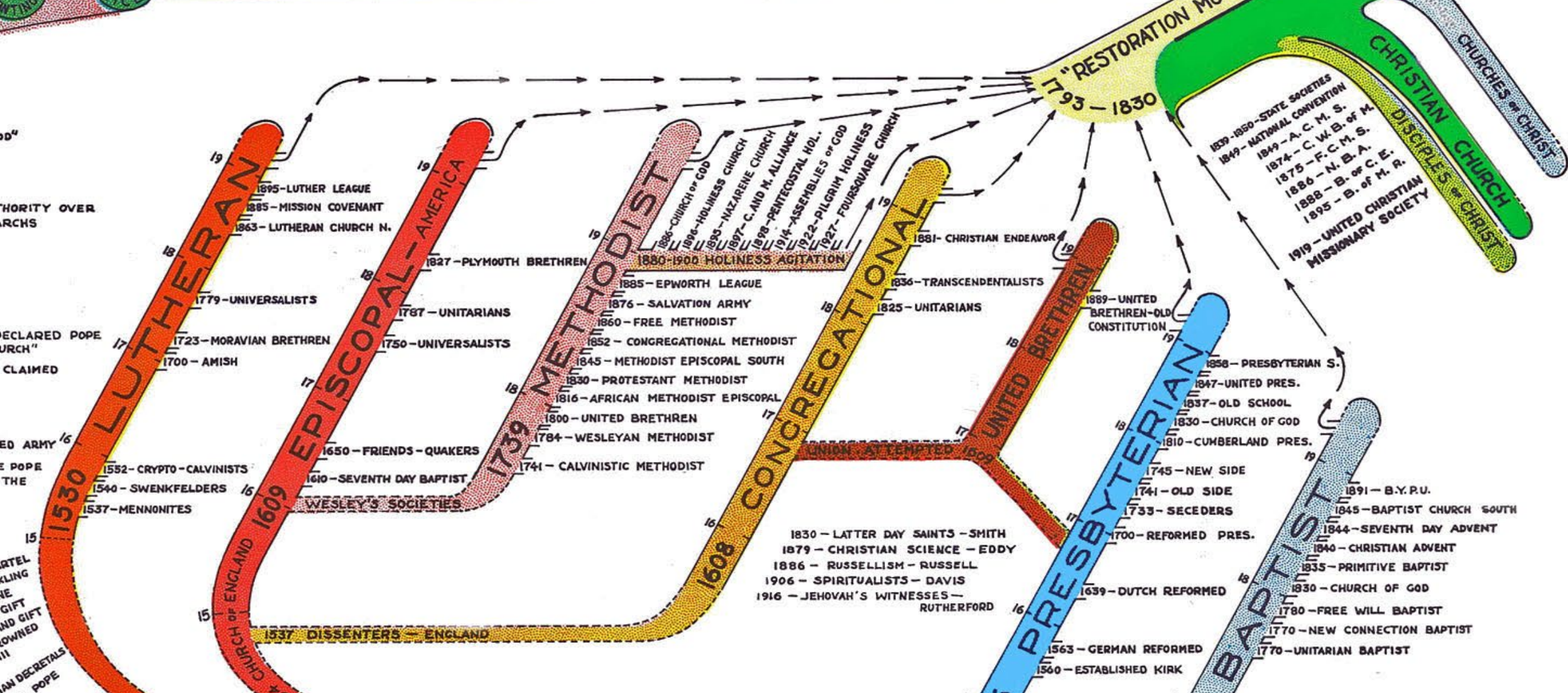


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The Churches of Christ



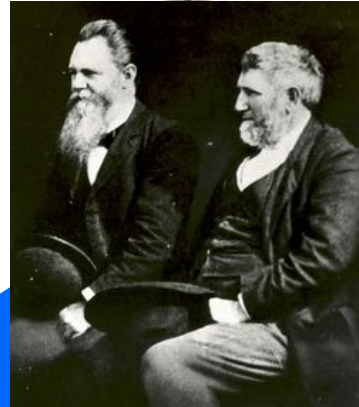
APOSTASY FROM IT AND RETURN TO IT - HISTORICALLY TRACED



T.M.C.M.T.

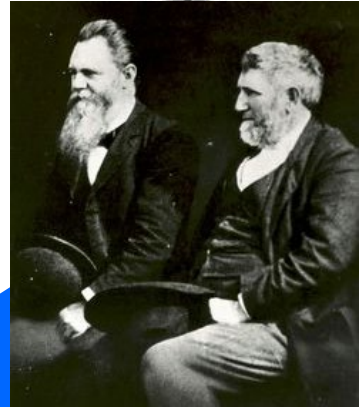
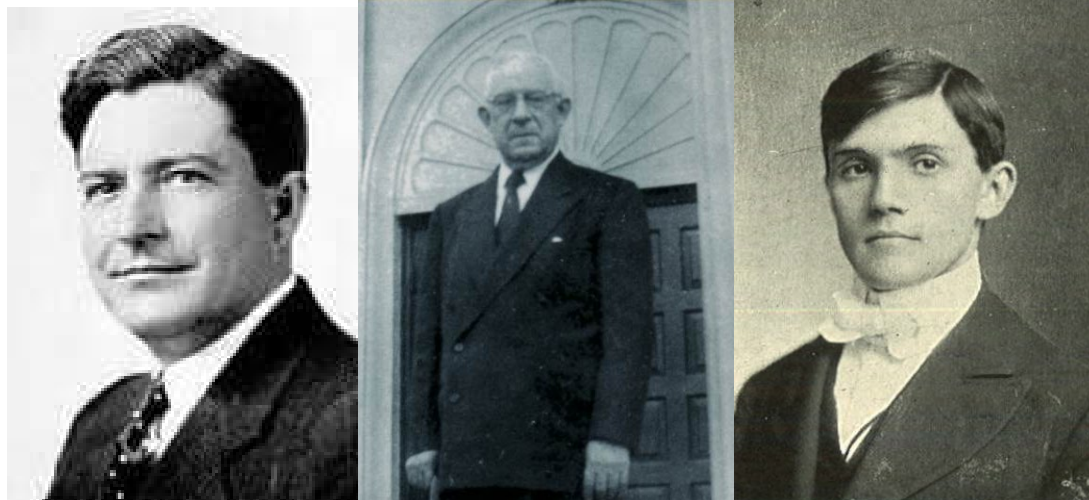
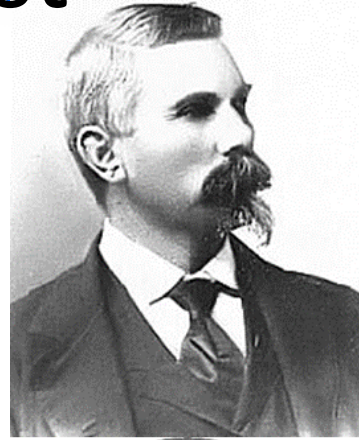
A Sectarian Spirit Begins in Churches of Christ

- Issues Debated by McGary, Sommer, Lipscomb and Harding in their journals.
- Rebaptism of those who had been immersed but without the understanding of remission of sins versus “right had of fellowship.
- Institutionalism – Christian Schools, Orphanages
- “Laying on of hands” in appointment of elders, deacons, and evangelists.
- Introduction of innovations: hymnbooks, projectors, church buildings, Sunday Schools.



A Sectarian Spirit Begins in Churches of Christ

- Issues Debated (Cont.)
 - One cup/alcohol in communion.
 - Involvement in civil government
 - Premillennialism
- Other debaters:
 - Foy Wallace
 - G. C. Brewer
 - R. H. Boll
- Being right on the issues was a test of fellowship for some.



Discussion

- The issues were debated sometimes in public debates, but mostly in articles and letters published in journals. Much of the “Church of Christ” theology was formed in controversy.
- What are some dangers of developing our beliefs and theology through debates?
 - Pushes to extremes in positions.
 - Doesn't admit opponents are ever right.
 - Emphasizes distinctions from others.
(Evangelism begins with distinctions instead of Jesus).
- Where debates helpful or harmful?



Marks of Identity – 1906-1941

- Social Isolation and Exclusivism
 - Sociological Factors – Wrong side of the Tracks
 - Isolated from centers of power
 - Isolated from government involvement. Many refused to fight in WWI.
 - Moral separatists: like many other religious groups, generally did not drink, dance, wear fine clothing play cards, or attend movies.
 - But refused to be involved with other professed believers in moral crusades.



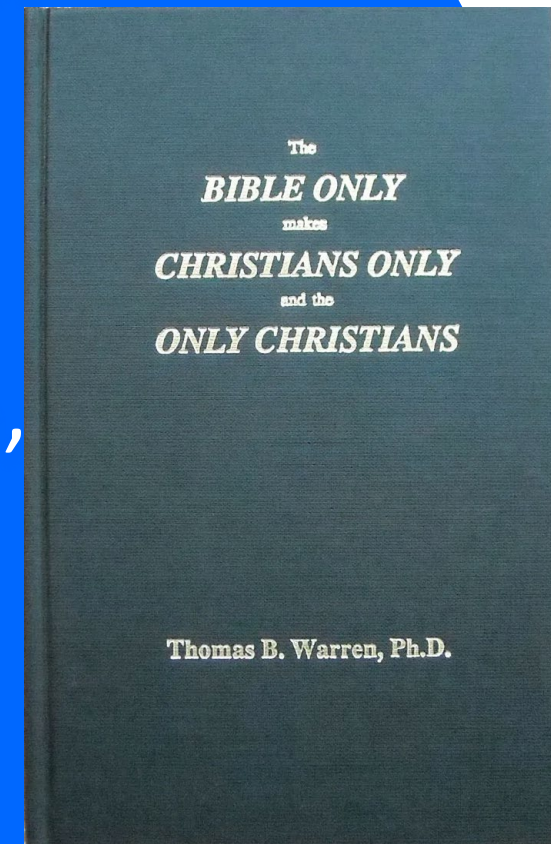
Marks of Identity – 1906-1941

- Religious Isolation and Exclusivism
 - Early, members would occasionally attend revivals of other religious groups but later it became less common.
 - Talked little of Christian unity and practiced it even less.
 - Fewer voices called for Churches of Christ to be truly non-sectarian.
 - Most assumed the COC were the only Christians and so needed to stay separate from “the denominations.”
 - H. Leo Boles (1874-1946), *Gospel Advocate* writer, at a 1939 unity discussions meeting told conservative Christian Churches they were denominational, had left the faith, and would find Churches of Christ where they always had been – based on the N.T.



Discussion

- What factors led many to believe that members of the Churches of Christ were the only Christians?
 - Is it true?
 - Do many today still believe this?
- This view affected how we viewed our history: Not as an attempt to reform an existing church, but that the church had disappeared and was reborn in the time of the Campbells.
 - Is that true?
 - Do many today still view it this way?





Thank you

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