

Historical Reflections on Stone-Campbell Spirituality in Recognition of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*

D. Newell Williams

The *Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington County, Pennsylvania*, published in September 1809, along with the *Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery*, published in June 1804, is recognized as a charter document of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Key to understanding the vibrant hope for Christian unity that these documents express is the spirituality of the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Likewise, the unfortunate history of divisions within the Stone-Campbell Movement cannot be understood apart from spirituality; in this case, distortions of the spirituality of the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Lest you think that you might have a hard time grasping Stone-Campbell spirituality and its distortions, I offer a simple definition of spirituality: Spirituality is our understanding and practice of relationship with God. I address three questions to individuals and groups in the history of Christianity to tease out their understanding and practice of relationship with God. These are the questions: What is sin and what are its consequences? What is salvation and what are its consequences? And, how does one get from sin to salvation and are there side effects? When one asks these questions of the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement one gets a coherent set of answers which disclose their spirituality—their understanding and practice of relationship with God.

Before engaging the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement with these questions, I want to say just a word about their religious background. Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander

Campbell, and Walter Scott were Presbyterians from different parts of the world. Stone was from the southern United States, the Campbells were immigrants from Northern Ireland and Scott was an immigrant from Scotland. Presbyterians shared a spiritual tradition profoundly shaped by the Reformed Tradition, one of the major Christian traditions to emerge out of the sixteenth century reformations of Western Christianity. The theologian most identified with the Reformed tradition, John Calvin, whose personal motto was “the heart aflame,” was born in 1509. Three hundred years later, Thomas Campbell, standing squarely in the Reformed tradition, would pen his *Declaration and Address* in response to a scandal endemic to the Reformed tradition, the scandal of division among Christians. But, I am getting ahead of myself.

#### Founding Spirituality

What is sin? Sin for the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement was the failure to be in love with God. This definition implies something more than the statement that sin is the failure to love God. To be in love is to be attracted, to find delight in the object of one’s love. We speak of falling in love, for we do not experience this type of love as a matter of choosing. One might will to act toward God in a loving manner out of gratitude for some gift received or—more likely—to merit some future favor, but this is a far cry from being “in love” with God. To be in love with God is to love God for who God is. The New England theologian Joseph Bellamy illustrated this distinction as follows: “If I feel a sort of respect to one of my neighbors, who is very kind to me, and either do not know what sort of man he is or, if I do, yet do not like him, it is plain it is his kindness I love, and not his person; and so my seeming love to him is nothing but self-love in another shape.”<sup>1</sup> In one of the earliest documents of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Joseph Bellamy*, 2 vols. (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 1:26.

Movement, a colleague of Barton Stone wrote: “The whole tenor of Scripture shows that [humanity] is made. . .to glorify God in an active manner; *that knowing [God’s] nature, perfections, and astonishing works,* [we] should render due praise to the divine name, and employ all [our] powers of body and mind, in doing the will of God.”<sup>2</sup> Sin, for the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement was the failure to be *in love* with God.

What are the consequences of sin? The consequences of sin were many and terrible. Preachers pointed to sin as the root of human unhappiness. Humans were created to love God. Not being in love with God, they constantly seek for some earthly good that will bring them pleasure; that will fill the place of God in their lives. James McGready, whose preaching awakened Barton Stone to his need for a love relationship with God, noted that some persons seek happiness through the satisfaction of their “animal nature,” others through the possession of “riches” and “honors,” while yet others seek happiness through a “religion of external duties” which is thought to secure the favor of a God who remains unknown and unloved. None of these substitutions, though, bring the ultimate happiness that humans were meant to know in a love relationship with God.<sup>3</sup> One preacher likened the sinner’s search for happiness to chasing after phantoms. When one is seeking after a phantom, it seems quite real; when one embraces a phantom, one discovers that it was not what one thought it was.<sup>4</sup> Barton Stone described the matter succinctly: “All are in want of what they were made to enjoy, which

---

<sup>2</sup> “Remarks on the Confession of Faith,” in Robert Marshall, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, “An Apology for Renouncing the Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky. To which is added a Compendious View of the Gospel, and a Few Remarks on the Confession of Faith,” in Barton W. Stone, *Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself, with Additions and Reflections by Eld. John Rogers* (Cincinnati: Published for the author by J.A. and U.P. James, 1847; reprinted in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke S. Dickinson, n.p., 1972), 235. Italics mine.

<sup>3</sup> *The Posthumous Works of the Reverend and Pious James McGready, Late Minister of the Gospel in Henderson, Kentucky*, ed. James Smith, 2 vols. (Louisville: W.W. Worsley, 1831 and Nashville: Lowry and Smith, 1933), 1:51, 150-151; and 2:363-364.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Davies, *Sermons on Important Subjects*, 3 vols. (New York: R. Carter and Brothers, 1849), 1: 159.

is God; and have a propensity to satisfy that want with meaner things. Hence arise the busy pursuits, the incessant labors, and the universal cry of a distracted, disappointed world, *Who will show us any good?*<sup>5</sup>

Another consequence of sin was the proliferation of sins against God and neighbor. Not loving God, persons do not obey God's command to love their neighbor. Instead, they seek their own good without much regard for their neighbor. Stone stated that Jesus' life and death save us "from the *want* of love to God and [neighbor], and all those actions which are the native fruits of that *want*."<sup>6</sup>

Yet another consequence of sin was hell or damnation. Hell was to be cut off from God. In an account of his conversion, Stone reported asking himself, "Are you willing to be damned—to be banished from God—from heaven—from all good—and suffer the pains of eternal fire?"<sup>7</sup> Hell was not so much a place as an experience. Stone wrote of a time in his life when he could not believe that God loved humanity. On the contrary, it seemed to him, based on his interpretation of the Reformed doctrine of predestination, that God delighted in the damnation of humanity. Describing his experience of this time, he notes: "I was bereft of every good;" adding, "The fires of Hell got hold of me, and were kindling a flame against such a God."<sup>8</sup>

What is salvation? Salvation for the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement was to be in a love relationship with God. It was not a reward that one received for living a holy life, but the holy life, itself. Consequently, it was understood to begin not at death,

---

<sup>5</sup> "A Compendious View of the Gospel," in Marshall, Stone and Thompson, 192.

<sup>6</sup> *Atonement, The Substance of Two Letters Written to a Friend* (Lexington: Joseph Charless, 1805), 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Stone, *Biography*, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Barton W. Stone, *A Reply to John P. Campbell's Structures on Atonement* (Lexington: Joseph Charless, 1805), 4.

but whenever one became a Christian. Alexander Campbell spoke of “our individual enjoyment of the *present* salvation of God.”<sup>9</sup>

What are the consequences of salvation? First, one experienced the sheer joy and fulfillment of being in love with God. In a letter written in 1844, Thomas Campbell exclaimed, “Now can there be happier persons under heaven, than the believing and obedient worshippers, who are thus divinely assured of the constant enjoyment of the Divine Presence!”<sup>10</sup>

Another consequence of salvation was that one desired to honor God by doing God’s will in all matters. This is the origin of Thomas Campbell’s commitment to address the scandal that had particularly marred his own Reformed tradition, the scandal of division among Christians. He had overheard Jesus praying in John 17: 20-23: “I ask . . . on behalf of those who will believe in me through [the word of the disciples] that they may all be one. As you Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

Desiring to honor God by doing God’s will extended to social issues. Barton Stone, though reared in a slaveholding family, early became an opponent of slavery. The earliest writing that we have from Stone is a letter arguing against scriptural defenses of slavery on the grounds that the destruction of families and the suffering caused by slavery could not be the

---

<sup>9</sup> *The Christian System, In Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, as plead in the Current Reformation*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Cincinnati: H.S. Bosworth, 1863), 179.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Campbell to Brother Bonar, 1844, Mary Couts Burnett Library, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas.

will of the God revealed in scripture. Note if you will his principles of interpretation: that scripture interprets scripture and that no interpretation of scripture can be authoritative if it stands in conflict with the Biblical revelation of God's love for all. Stone observed that it was often said by white Christians that it was not a good policy to set the slaves free "amongst us." Many, he responded, thought otherwise. In any case, he continued, "Christians ought not to let civil policy oppose the express will of God. If we know God's will, we are not to enquire whether it will be [in] our interest to do it."<sup>11</sup> For several years Stone supported the Colonization Society. Disillusioned with the Colonization Society's failure to end slavery with its promise of removing free Blacks to a colony in Africa, Stone became an advocate of the immediate abolition of slavery without any provision for the removal of formerly enslaved Blacks.<sup>12</sup> Alexander Campbell's discernment of God's will with regard to war led him to embrace passivism.<sup>13</sup>

Alexander Campbell believed that the cumulative effect of the present salvation of individuals, accelerated by the unity of Christians and the restoration of apostolic practices (more on that below), would be the dawning of a this-worldly age of peace and justice; what he and other Christians called the Millennium. In the prospectus for the journal he launched in 1830, aptly titled, *The Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell stated that the new journal "shall have for its object the development and introduction of that political and religious order of society called THE MILLENNIUM, which will be the consummation of that ultimate [improvement] of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures." Among the subjects that readers could expect to

---

<sup>11</sup> B.W. Stone to Samuel Rennels, Cane Ridge Preservation Project Museum, Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Kentucky.

<sup>12</sup> D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 205-212, 218-220.

<sup>13</sup> "Address on War," *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (St. Louis: John Burns, 1861), 442-466.

see addressed was “The *injustice* which yet remains in many of the political regulations under the best political governments, when contrasted with the *justice* which Christianity proposes, and which the millennial order of society promises.”

Yet another consequence of salvation was heaven. The founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement did not have much to say about the details of life in heaven. The central aspect of life in heaven would be the continuation of the joy of salvation. Thomas Campbell wrote of our present experience of salvation, “What can be more blissful than the exercises of heaven; namely, the contemplation, admiration, adoration, and worship of God? What more desirable than the enjoyment of the Divine Presence?”<sup>14</sup> This view of heaven is echoed in the literature of the Cumberland Presbyterians, a group that had much in common with the followers of Stone. Peggy Davidson Ewing was the seventy-six year old widow of Finis Ewing, a leading Cumberland Presbyterian preacher who had been a successful lawyer before entering the ministry. She was also the daughter of the family for which Davidson County Tennessee was named. It seems that a development officer, probably wanting to talk with Mrs. Ewing about a planned gift, asked Mrs. Ewing, “Do you not anticipate a happy meeting with those loved ones who have gone before?” To which Mrs. Ewing answered, “O yes; and it will be joyful, but nothing like seeing my precious Saviour: without Him heaven would be no heaven to me.”<sup>15</sup>

How does one get from sin to salvation? For the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement one got from sin to salvation by the grace of God. Wrote Thomas Campbell: “It appears that we are as dependent upon the will of God for our salvation, as for

---

<sup>14</sup> Campbell to Bonar. Italics mine.

<sup>15</sup> Franceway Ranna Cossitt, *The Life and Times of Rev. Finis Ewing* (Louisville: Rev. Lee Roy Woods, Agent for the Board of Publication of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1853), 54.

our creation; for we can no more new create, or regenerate ourselves, than create ourselves first. Nay, it appears more difficult, if there can be any difficulty with God, to effect [our recreation] than [our creation]. For the dust could have no dislike to become a [human being], not so the sinner to be saved.”<sup>16</sup> Do you hear what he is saying? I don’t think I fully appreciated this comment until my wife, the Rev. Sue McDougal, and I began having children. For us, thanks be to God! procreation was, with the exception of nine months of morning sickness and eight hours of labor, fairly easy. Well, at least, fairly easy for me. The more challenging part, we discovered, came after our children were born, as each came into the world with a will of his or her own. For the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement, our salvation was not ultimately something we accomplish, but something God accomplishes.

So, how does God accomplish our salvation? The founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement knew that God must somehow get our attention. This is what Presbyterians referred to as God’s “awakening” of sinners. And, they were adamant that it involved the sinner’s conviction that he or she was a sinner. In their view, this was the necessary first step in God’s work of salvation. Our Stone-Campbell forebears believed that awareness of our own sin was part of being a Christian, but were not at all sure that this awareness was the necessary *first* step on the way to salvation. In the words of Barton Stone, “We . . . do not prescribe to God the particular means by which [God] shall bring [sinners] to faith and repentance.”<sup>17</sup> In any case, the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell

---

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Campbell to Brother Jones, Jan. 17, 1844, Mary Coats Burnett Library, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas.

<sup>17</sup> Stone, “A Compendious View of the Gospel,” 220.

Movement, like other Presbyterians, understood that God's getting our attention does not amount to falling in love with God.

For the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement, as with other Presbyterians, God causes us to fall in love with God's self through our encounter with the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the Good News that God has acted in Jesus Christ that we might know the forgiveness of our sins and receive the Spirit by which we are enabled to live new lives. James McGready, who described the sinner's encounter with the Gospel as a "view" of "the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus," put it this way: "No sooner does the 'light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus,' shine into their souls, then [sinners] are enraptured with [God's] excellency, and their hearts are filled with [love toward God]." <sup>18</sup> In his earliest theological statement, Stone declared what other Presbyterians would have affirmed: [The sinner's] "fears may be awakened by the thunders of Mount Sinai [a reference to the Ten Commandments]; but it is only a view of the holiness, goodness, love—and the free, unmerited grace and mercy of God, which produces true conviction [of sin] and true repentance, and which humbles the soul, slays the enmity of the heart, and makes [the sinner] willing to depart from all iniquity." <sup>19</sup>

In the parlance of the time, it was said that persons who fell in love with God through their encounter with the Gospel would "come to Christ" for the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would sustain and strengthen their new relationship with God. Baptists and Methodists, and to a lesser extent, Presbyterians, believed it was important to have an assurance that Christ had forgiven their sins and granted them the Holy Spirit. Hence, the popular nineteenth-century practice of directing penitent believers to pray to God for an

---

<sup>18</sup> McGready, 1:93-95.

<sup>19</sup> Stone, "A Compendious View of the Gospel," 205.

experience that would assure them of the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes penitents were invited to come to a “mourners’ bench,” where the saints would lay hands upon them and add their prayers to those of the penitents beseeching God to grant them assurance of the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. The founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement appreciated the desire for assurance of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, but believed the Apostles had provided a more certain way to that assurance and the gift of the Holy Spirit through the baptism of penitent believers—an apostolic practice they sought to restore.<sup>20</sup>

Walter Scott, the great evangelist of the first generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement, could state this distinctive view of how one got from sin to salvation on the fingers of one hand. *Faith* in the Gospel of Jesus Christ transforms one’s affections and leads to *repentance*, which leads to *baptism*, which is followed by *assurance of the forgiveness of one’s sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit*.<sup>21</sup>

The practice of the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement differed from that of Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists in another way, as well. All of these traditions valued the Lord’s Supper, which re-enacts the central drama of the Christian gospel. The Stone-Campbell founders, however, were convinced that a restoration of what they believed to be the apostolic practice of every Lord’s Day celebration of the Supper was critical to the spiritual health of the Christian community. So critical, that when an ordained minister was not

---

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Campbell, 208-217.

<sup>21</sup> D. Newell Williams, “Bringing a Vision to Life: Walter Scott and the Restored Church,” in, ed., *Walter Scott: A Nineteenth-Century Evangelical*, ed. Mark G. Toulouse (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), 123-133.

available, congregations were to select qualified persons from among the membership to lead in the celebration of the Supper.<sup>22</sup>

The Stone-Campbell founders also encouraged the restoration of other apostolic practices as means of bringing the gospel before the minds and hearts of believers, including: study of the scriptures, prayer, meditation, observance of the Lord's Day, fasting, confession of sins, and praise.<sup>23</sup>

Is there a side effect to this process of moving from sin to salvation? There is: humility. Thomas Campbell stated that humility, the attitude born of the believer's absolute dependence upon God for every aspect of salvation, is the "fundamental ingredient in Christian character."<sup>24</sup> Barton Stone wrote that Christians are well convinced of their "natural poverty of divine things, such as holiness, righteousness and peace," of their "spiritual weakness to withstand evil, and to do good" and of their "ignorance of God, and divine glories. . ." He asserted that upon seeing wicked sinners Christians exclaim, "Who made me to differ from them? God only, in [God's] matchless grace."<sup>25</sup>

The answers of the founders of the Stone-Campbell Movement to the questions of sin, salvation, and how one gets from sin to salvation disclose an understanding and practice of relationship with God that focuses on knowing and loving God. Thus, I refer to this spirituality as theistic. The main contours of this spirituality are expressed in a well-known eighteenth-century hymn.

---

<sup>22</sup> Alexander Campbell, 265-292.

<sup>23</sup> D. Newell Williams, "The Gospel as the Power of God to Salvation: Alexander Campbell and Experimental Religion," in *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial, 1788-1988*, ed. James M. Seale (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988), 140-141.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Campbell, "Declaration and Address," in *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, ed. Charles A. Young (Chicago: The Christian Century Company, 1904), 194-195.

<sup>25</sup> Barton W. Stone, *The Christian Messenger* 13 (November 1843): 205.

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
    [the sound of the gospel]  
That saved a wretch like me  
    [a person who never forgets that salvation is by grace].  
I once was lost [apart from God],  
But now am found,  
Was blind [did not see the excellence of God]  
But now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
    [the grace that got my attention]  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
    [the gospel of Jesus Christ]  
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
    [temptations to turn away from the love relationship with God]  
I have already come  
'Twas grace hath brought me safe thus far  
    [the grace of the Holy Spirit]  
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days [to do what?] to sing God's praise  
Then when we first begun.

### Distortions of Stone-Campbell Spirituality

Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* was a call for Christian unity that the world might believe that Jesus is the Christ. While it initially attracted little attention, it had quite an impact on Thomas Campbell's son, Alexander Campbell. In 1832, the followers of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, known as Disciples of Christ, united with another Christian unity movement, the Christians, led by Barton W. Stone. How could it happen that by the dawning of the twentieth century this Stone-Campbell Movement, born of a shared commitment to Christian unity, would divide into two streams, one known as Christian Churches or Disciples of

Christ, and the other as Churches of Christ? And, how could it happen that well before the end of the twentieth century the Christian Churches /Disciples of Christ stream would divide into two streams, known today as the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? Though other factors were involved, both divisions had a lot to do with two distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality that appeared before the end of the nineteenth century. I categorize one of these distortions of Stone-Campbell Spirituality as legalistic, as it focuses on knowing and obeying God's law. I describe the other as moralistic, as it focuses on knowing and promoting the social good.

So, to begin with the legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality: What is sin? Sin, in this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality was not the failure to be in love with God, but the failure to obey God's law. God had revealed God's law through prophets and apostles whose testimony was recorded in the Bible. Preachers argued on rationalist grounds that this testimony was reliable. Hence, ignorance or uncertainty regarding God's law was no defense.<sup>26</sup>

What are the consequences of sin? One consequence of the failure to obey God's law was anxiety regarding one's situation in life. In a sermon titled, "The Safety and Security of the Christian," Robert Milligan, prominent second-generation Stone-Campbell Christian, noted that sinners trust in riches, honors, and pleasures as the source of all good, rather than obedience to the eternal God. Since even sinners know that riches, honors, and pleasure can be taken away, they can never be fully confident of their situation in life.<sup>27</sup> (Please note: This view of the transience of earthy goods is significantly different from the founding Stone-Campbell

---

<sup>26</sup> Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty-one Sermons, Vol. II*, (Cincinnati: G.W. Rice, 1877), 80.

<sup>27</sup> "The Safety and Security of the Christian," in *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, ed. William T. Moore (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1867), 374.

spirituality view which declares that earthly goods are incapable of satisfying the deepest human needs.)

Another consequence of failure to obey God's law was moral confusion and error. Benjamin Franklin, another prominent second-generation Stone-Campbell preacher, described the human situation as follows. "[Humans are] poor, imperfect, fallible, and erring creature[s]. [They need] infallibility somewhere to which [they] can come and receive instruction *implicitly*."<sup>28</sup> Sinners who reject the infallible instruction found in the Bible can hardly be expected to do the good. On the contrary, they can be expected to do evil. Pointing to revolutionary France, which rejected Christianity and promptly decapitated a fair number of its population, Franklin warned that society can "have no security for anything better without the Bible."<sup>29</sup>

A third consequence of failure to obey God's law was eternal punishment, or hell. Advocates of this understanding and practice of relationship with God asserted that persons who refuse to obey God's law will suffer eternal torment.<sup>30</sup>

What is salvation? Salvation for this legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality was the reward one received for obeying God's law. Salvation was not viewed as a relationship with God, which is reward in itself, as in the founding spirituality of the Movement, but as the pay-off for obeying God's law.

What are the consequences of salvation? The principle consequence of salvation was that upon death one would enter the eternal bliss of heaven. And, this heaven has more of a

---

<sup>28</sup> *Vol. II*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> *The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty Sermons*, (Cincinnati: Franklin and Rice, 1869), 29.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 54, 124, 479.

material aspect than the heaven of the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement which focuses on the joy of experiencing God's presence. Franklin exhorted, "Let us hear [Jesus'] sayings and do them, that he may . . . lead us safely into the everlasting city, and to the fountains of living water, where there are riches, and treasures, and splendors, and sublimities, transcending all human imagination . . ." <sup>31</sup>

A consequence of compliance with the terms of salvation was confidence and assurance concerning the present and the future, even in the midst of suffering and misfortune. No matter what might be happening in the believer's life, one who had obeyed God's law in all things could be confident that the major matter of life was secure. Milligan promised that "As long as we love God with all our hearts, and souls, and minds, and do [God's] commandments, so long God is faithful and will not allow any *absolute* evil to befall any one of us." <sup>32</sup>

Another consequence of compliance with the terms of salvation was the moral and social good. Advocates of this understanding and practice of relationship with God were convinced that Christianity was necessary to maintain a humane society. Franklin appealed to sinners to become Christians, not only for the sake of their eternal good, but out of a concern for the moral and religious welfare of their communities. <sup>33</sup>

How does one get from sin to salvation? Not by grace, as in the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement, but by searching the Scriptures to find God's law and by obeying it in full. As preachers searched the Scriptures, the list of duties could become rather long. Robert Milligan promised heaven to his hearers on the following terms: "Do you believe,

---

<sup>31</sup> Vol. II, 53.

<sup>32</sup> Milligan, 380.

<sup>33</sup> *Twenty Sermons*, 127.

with all your heart, that Jesus is the Messiah—the Son of the living God? Have you repented of all your sins? Have you openly and publicly confessed the name of Jesus as your only and all-sufficient Savior? Have you, by His authority, been baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? Are you now giving *all diligence* to adding to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love to all? If so, all is well. For just as sure as the Lord God omnipotent reigns, if you continue in these things, and abound in them, you will at last receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”<sup>34</sup>

The Stone-Campbell Movement’s distinctive practice of baptism was maintained in this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality, but it took on a significantly different character.

Baptism for Alexander Campbell was the gracious means by which a gracious God communicated to penitent believers assurance of the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the context of this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality, baptism became one of many duties, albeit an important duty, that one must perform to obtain heaven.

“Baptism,” Franklin wrote, “is the test of [the sinner’s] belief in Christ—the trial of the [sinner’s] loyalty to the King. There, at the entrance of the Kingdom, the question comes before the sinner of *obedience* in a matter of the most trying nature—obedience to a commandment, where the sinner can see no reason for *obedience* only that the King requires it. If the sinner stops at this first formal act required, and refuses to *obey*, what may we expect of [this person]

---

<sup>34</sup> Milligan, 384.

at any subsequent time?”<sup>35</sup> I refer to this understanding of baptism as the hazing view of baptism.

Is there a side effect to this method of salvation? Yes, a certain smugness, or pride; confidence born of the conviction that one has obeyed God’s law and, therefore, all is well, with *my* soul. This contrasts sharply with the humility of the founding spirituality of the Movement that was rooted in the believer’s conviction of sin and experience of God as the giver of every aspect of our salvation. John W. McGarvey, pioneer theological educator of the Stone-Campbell Movement, defended the practice of immersing new converts in cold, wintry streams, not in terms of the believer’s joy in the assurance of sin forgiven and the promise of the Holy Spirit, but by stating that “the consciousness of a solemn duty performed sends a glow of gratitude and peace through the inner man which contributes largely to the comfort of the body.”<sup>36</sup>

This practice of baptizing people in frigid waters could, it should be noted, produce some pretty radical characters. There was a Stone-Campbell woman by the name of Carry who married the Disciples minister, David Nation, and became famous for what she called “hatchetation”—the practice of entering illegal saloons with her hatchet and proceeding to chop up everything, the bar, the bottles, and the portrait of a half-naked woman behind the bar. Asked by a reporter why she was not content to advocate temperance in the manner of

---

<sup>35</sup> *Vol. II*, 215-216.

<sup>36</sup> *The Autobiography of John W. McGarvey*, (Lexington, Kentucky: The College of the Bible, 1960), 47.

other women, she answered: "I was baptized on the coldest day of the year. They cut a hole in the ice and dropped me in, and I came out a bearcat for the Lord!"<sup>37</sup>

The legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality, both its demands and its promises, is nicely expressed in a nineteenth-century hymn which remains popular, at least among some Disciples, to this day.

When we walk with the Lord  
In the light of his word,  
What a glory he shows on our Way!  
While we do his good will  
He abides with us still  
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey,  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus,  
But to trust and obey.

Not a shadow can rise,  
Not a cloud in the skies,  
But his smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt nor a fear,  
Not a sigh nor a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.

Trust and obey,  
For there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus,  
But to trust and obey.

Then in fellowship sweet  
We will sit at his feet,  
Or we'll walk by his side in the way;  
What he says we will do,  
Where he sends we will go—  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

---

<sup>37</sup> Herman A. Norton, Class Notes from Vanderbilt University course in Disciples History, 1972. While I have not located Dr. Norton's reference, I have found references to the icy conditions of Ms. Nation's baptism. There are also references to her having described herself as a "bull dog of Jesus."

The moralistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality takes a different track: What is sin? Sin, in this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality was the failure to promote the social good; the failure to help America achieve its destiny as a land of liberty and justice. And the consequences: that America would not fulfill its destiny or, at the very least, that the sinner would not have a part in accomplishing God's good purposes for the human family.

What is salvation? Salvation was the fulfillment of God's purposes for America, the establishment of a land of liberty and justice. And the consequences: that Americans would enjoy the blessing of freedom, but more than that, that the example of America carried to other nations through the expanding influence of the American Republic would liberate all peoples.

Alexander Campbell contributed to this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality by a series of popular lectures that, according to Mark Toulouse, were not meant to replace Campbell's writings on the role of a united and restored church in ushering in a this-worldly reign of peace and justice.<sup>38</sup> Be that as it may, in 1849 Campbell prophesied that "The Lord Almighty, who has now girdled the earth from East to West with the Anglo-Saxon people, the Anglo-Saxon tongue, sciences, learning and civilization, by giving a colossal power and grandeur to Great Britain and the United States over the continents and oceans of the earth, will continue to extend their power and magnificence until they spread from north to south, as they have already from east to west. . . Then will 'They hang their trumpet in the hall, and study war no more.' Peace and universal amity will reign triumphant. For over all the earth there will be

---

<sup>38</sup> "The Kingdom of God and the Disciples of Christ," *Discipliana* 62:1 (Spring 2002): 5-6.

but one Lord, one faith, one hope and one language.”<sup>39</sup> In 1852, Campbell stated that God had granted such stupendous power and might to England and America and would continue to favor them in order that they might shine the light of liberty and justice into all the world. Campbell called upon his listeners to fulfill the duties they owed to themselves, their country, and the human race.<sup>40</sup>

This idolaterization of Anglo-Saxon culture, it must be noted, while helping to fuel the nineteenth century overseas missionary movement, impeded and, dare I say, impedes Disciples of Christ evangelization of non-English speaking populations in the United States. This same idolaterization of Anglo-Saxon culture, with its blatant message of Anglo-Saxon superiority, also made it necessary for African-American Disciples to form organizations related to, but separate from, white Disciples.

How does one get from sin to salvation? One got from sin to salvation in this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality by identifying and promoting the social good. And the side effects: A deep sense of satisfaction rooted in the conviction that one was helping to advance God’s purposes and to improve the lives of all human beings. As with the legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality, there is not much room here for humility. Rather than seeing themselves as the recipients of God’s grace, exponents of this spirituality tended to view themselves as partners with God in saving the world. And the result, as with the legalistic distortion, was a sort of smugness or pride. Having informed his audience in 1852 of their role as Americans in shaping the future of humanity, Campbell wrote, “We have, then, a fearful and

---

<sup>39</sup> “Address on the Anglo-Saxon Language: Its Origin, Character and Destiny,” *Popular Lectures*, 44.

<sup>40</sup> “The Destiny of Our Country,” *Popular Lectures*, 170.

glorious responsibility. Let us cherish in our individual bosoms this feeling of personal as well as national responsibility . . .”<sup>41</sup>

There is not much place in this scheme for the distinctive Stone-Campbell teaching on baptism. If one can get from sin to salvation by identifying and promoting the social good, why would one make a big deal out of baptism?

My hymn for this understanding and practice of relationship with God was written in the North just before the Civil War. It arose out of a men’s movement led by Dudley Tyng, who remarked in a sermon that he delivered to 5000 men, “I would rather that this right arm were amputated at the trunk than that I should come short of my duty.” The next week, while watching the operation of a corn thrasher, his arm got caught in the machine, was severely lacerated, and a week later he died. But not before uttering his last words which were the inspiration for the hymn: “Let us all stand up for Jesus.” Southerners learned this hymn from Union armies invading the South. Using a military theme, this hymn—still sung by Disciples—calls Christians to join Jesus’ army. Though it speaks of opposition, it promises victory and an exalted place in eternity for persons who join Jesus in the battle.<sup>42</sup>

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Ye soldiers of the Cross;  
Lift high his royal banner,  
It must not suffer loss:  
From victory unto victory  
His army shall he lead,  
‘Til every foe is vanquished,  
And Christ is Lord, indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,

---

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 Hymn Stories: Inspiring Factual Backgrounds and Experiences That Prompted the Writing of 101 Selected Favorite Hymns* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1982), 236-237.

The trumpet call obey;  
Forth to the mighty conflict,  
In this his glorious day:  
"Ye that are men now serve him"  
Against unnumbered foes;  
Let courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Stand in His strength alone:  
The arm of flesh will fail you;  
[Did you get that?]  
Ye dare not trust your own:  
Put on the gospel armor,  
And, watching unto prayer,  
Where duty calls, or danger,  
Be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
The strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle,  
The next the victor's song:  
To him that overcometh,  
A crown of life shall be;  
He with the king of Glory  
Shall reign eternally.

### Division

Before the end of the nineteenth century, there were two distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality bumping around in the Movement along with the spirituality of the founders. What would happen when the Movement would encounter social and cultural change? Division.

Following the Civil War the South was impoverished. Life was hard. Moreover, many white Southerners struggled to understand why the Yankees had won. Surely, many thought, God must have been punishing them. But punishing them for what? Not for slavery. They were sure that slavery was in the Bible. It must have been for something else. As a result, many white Southerners vowed to never again disobey God.

In the North, life was good, especially for the middle and upper classes. The economy, with a few hiccups along the way, was booming. Clearly, many thought, God had been on the side of the Union in its efforts to extend liberty and justice.

In this social and cultural moment, where do you suppose the legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality would have been most attractive? In the South. And, where do you suppose the moralistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality would have been most attractive? In the North.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Stone-Campbell Movement divided over whether the scriptures would allow the use of instrumental music in worship and the funding and oversight of missionaries by missionary societies. Three-fourths of the Churches of Christ, which opposed instrumental music in worship and missionary societies as not included in the New Testament order of the church and, therefore, forbidden, were located in the South.<sup>43</sup>

But, that's not the end of the story of Stone-Campbell divisions. By the turn of the twentieth century urban Americans had been exposed to social problems that accompanied industrialization. Disciples were sending ministerial candidates to Yale and the University of Chicago, where they were taught historical approaches to the Bible which discredited the idea that the New Testament contains a blueprint for the organization of the church. In response to urban social issues and historical approaches to study of the New Testament, some Disciples began to call for recognition of other denominations as churches, regardless of their views and practices of baptism, in order to partner with them in addressing contemporary social issues. In

---

<sup>43</sup> David Edwin Harrell, *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ: 1865-1900* (Atlanta: Publishing Systems, 1973), 323-50.

this social and cultural moment, where do you suppose the moralistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality was most attractive? In the cities. And, where do you suppose the legalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality could be most easily maintained? In small towns and rural areas. In 1971, when the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, which had opposed partnering with other denominations, asked to be listed separately in the *Yearbook of American Churches* from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which had partnered with other denominations, the two groups did not differ significantly in number, on the average, in either rural or suburban counties; however, the Disciples' total membership in urban counties exceeded that of the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ by fifty percent.<sup>44</sup>

Legalistic and moralistic distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality have helped to divide a movement that began with a commitment to Christian Unity. But not just because they were different: each of these distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality produces a pride or smugness which makes it difficult for persons to tolerate, much less, to welcome diversity. Understanding these two distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality, and especially how each of them produces the side effect of smugness or pride, helps to explain why our record as a Christian unity movement has not been, to date, as good as one have might expected for a Movement which claims Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* as one of its founding documents.

#### Adaptability of the Legalistic and Moralistic Distortions

The legalistic and moralistic distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality both emerged at particular moments in our history and have been associated with particular issues. However,

---

<sup>44</sup> D. Newell Williams, "How and Why the Disciples have Changed in Relation to American Culture," in D. Newell Williams, ed. *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: The Disciples Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 5-10.

they are remarkably adaptive. The legalistic understanding and practice of relationship with God in our tradition has often focused on the purpose and mode of baptism, while embracing other matters as well. It can as easily focus on what it means to be a man or a woman, and the related issues of sexual orientation, gender roles, marriage, the ordination of women, the ordination of gays and lesbians, and what it means to be a Christian family. Likewise, the moralistic understanding and practice of relationship with God in our tradition has not been bound to one social or political ideology. Although there was a good bit of Americanism and Anglo-Saxon racism in the emergence of this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality, Americanism and Anglo-Saxon racism are not essential components of this spirituality. Indeed, this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality has sometimes been expressed in ways that seemed, to some observers, to be anti-racist and even anti-American. In the 1960s, members of a generation who had been influenced by a moralistic understanding and practice of relationship with God rose up to oppose what appeared to them to be fundamentally anti-Christian and anti-American practices: the exclusion of Blacks from an equal share in American life and what they believed to be a war of aggression in Southeast Asia. Others of that same generation, also much influenced by a moralistic understanding and practice of relationship with God, responded that Martin Luther King Jr. was a communist who represented a threat to the American way of life and that if Jesus were here today, he would be an American soldier in Vietnam.

If you think from these comments that I am opposed to obeying the law of God or would foreswear the church's engagement with social and political issues, you are wrong. I will

have more to say on this topic below. But first, I need to describe yet another distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality.

#### Another Distortion of Stone-Campbell Spirituality

A third distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. Its roots can be found in the early decades of the twentieth century that have been called “the Era of the Psyche.” I refer to this distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality as personalistic, as it focuses, not on knowing and loving God, but on knowing and improving oneself.

What is sin? Sin is the failure to become a whole person; the failure to realize one’s true self. What are the consequences of sin? First, one is unable to find fulfillment or satisfaction in life. Second, one is unable to give oneself to others in supportive and nurturing relationships. Some years ago I was a member of a wonderful Disciples congregation that included the following prayer of confession in its liturgical repertoire:

Gracious and Holy One, Creator of all things, and of emptiness, we come to you full of much that clutters and distracts, stifles and burdens us, and makes us a burden to others. Empty us now of gnawing dissatisfactions, of anxious imaginings, of fretful preoccupations, of nagging problems, of old scores to settle and the arrogance of being right. Empty us of the ways we unthinkingly think of ourselves as powerless, as victims, as determined by sex, age, race, as being less than we are, or other than yours. Empty us of the disguises and lies in which we hide ourselves from each other and responsibility for our neighbors and the world. Hollow out in us the space in which we will find ourselves, find peace and a whole heart, a forgiving spirit and holiness, the springs of laughter and the will to reach boldly for abundant life for ourselves and the whole human family, in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

Did you notice that the congregation, of which I was a member, did not confess that we had sinned against God? Rather, we confessed that we had sinned against ourselves and our

neighbors, and we asked God to help us find ourselves, that we might have abundant life and better serve our neighbors.

What is salvation? Salvation is to become a fully functioning self, a whole person. What are the consequences of salvation? The consequences are that one finds personal happiness and fulfillment and is enabled to contribute to the well-being and happiness of others.

How does one get from sin to salvation? By employing the therapy or spiritual practices best suited to address the particular issues in one's life. Are there side effects? In one sense, there is no simple answer to this question, such as "humility" or "pride," as different therapies and spiritual practices may have different side effects. At the same time, it would appear that a general consequence of this method of getting from sin to salvation is an abiding focus on oneself.

Now, at this point, you may be expecting a hymn. For the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement it was "Amazing Grace." For the legalistic distortion of that spirituality it was "Trust and Obey." For the moralistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality: "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus." For whatever reason, maybe it's the sheer range of therapies and spiritual practices by which persons can move from sin to salvation according to this perspective, I have not discovered a widely known hymn that expresses a personalistic understanding and practice of relationship with God.

#### Reclaiming Stone-Campbell Spirituality for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The Stone-Campbell Movement has liked slogans. From Thomas Campbell: "The church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one," and "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." From Barton Stone:

“Let Christian unity be our polar star.” And, then those slogans for which we do not know the author: “No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine” and “We are Christians only, but not the only Christians.”

In 2007, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Fort Worth, Texas affirmed a new one:

*We are Disciples of Christ,  
a movement for wholeness  
in a fragmented world.  
As part of the one body of Christ,  
we welcome all to the Lord's Table  
as God has welcomed us.*

If we are going to live up to this slogan, or any of the earlier ones, we must have an understanding and practice of relationship with God that supports a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world; that enables us as part of the one body of Christ to welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us. I submit that the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement represents such an understanding and practice of relationship with God. I have identified this spirituality as theistic, because it focuses on knowing and loving God. As far as I can tell, this spirituality has never disappeared from any of the streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement. But, as I have sought to show, it's had some competition!

For the founding generation of the Stone-Campbell Movement sin was the failure to be in love with God. The consequences being (1) that human beings, made to love God, cannot find happiness; (2), that not loving God, they reject God's command to love God and neighbor; and (3) that upon death they are cut off forever from the possibility of relationship with God. Salvation was to be in love with God. The consequences were (1) the sheer joy of being in love with God, which is heaven on earth; (2) a determination to honor God in all areas of one's life,

both personal and public, which, in Alexander Campbell's view, would—through the influence of a united and gospel proclaiming church—usher in the Millennium, a this-worldly reign of peace and justice; and (3) upon death, eternal joy in God's presence. One got from sin to salvation by God's grace. How? God shows us a view of God's self in the gospel of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ that causes us to fall in love with God. Through baptism, God assures us of the forgiveness of our sins, and gives us the Holy Spirit by which we grow in love for God through every Lord's Day celebration of the Lord's Supper, and other apostolic practices of the church which bring the gospel before our minds, such as prayer, scripture study, meditation, fasting, confession of sins, and praise. The side effect of this way of salvation—in which God is the giver of every aspect of our salvation—was humility. Christians know that they have not and cannot save themselves. They are saved by grace.

This understanding and practice of relationship with God can support a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world; it can enable us as part of the one body of Christ to welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us. Why?

First, it focuses on knowing and loving God. The distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality that I have described have as their end something less than knowing and loving God.

The legalistic distortion focuses on God's law. And, the purpose of obeying God's law is not to honor God, but to secure God's favor now and in the life to come. And so, the focus is really on us.

The moralistic distortion focuses on the social good. The purpose is to advance the social good for our own benefit and the benefit of others. The "us" of the social good is larger than the "us" of the former case, but the focus is still on us. And, the social good is always our

perception of the social good which often overlooks the perspectives of persons who differ from us in language, race, and experience. We are not even aware that our structures and practices exclude the perspectives of others. Ron Sommerville, who teaches at Christian Theological Seminary, has written of his experience of the “unbearable whiteness of CTS” when he arrived there in 1994.<sup>45</sup> Well, you know, I was there in 1994. I was the Dean and Vice President. I did not experience the whiteness of CTS as unbearable. How rarely does it occur to most of us to seek the perspectives of persons who differ from us. Sandhya Jha quotes Maureen Osuga describing her experience in predominantly white Disciples congregations: “None of the churches in my life included me in any overt, positive way. Hence I was included on their terms, and my “Japaneseness” was nonessential and invisible. I was not invited to share that part of myself, nor did it occur to me to offer. As I think back, to have pushed myself into those churches would have violated that inner sense of needing to be invited in as an outsider.”<sup>46</sup>

With the personalistic distortion of Stone-Campbell spirituality the focus again is on us, since the purpose is to improve ourselves for our own sake and the sake of others.

To be sure, the leading concerns of the legalistic, moralistic, and personalistic distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality are not bad in themselves, and, indeed, have a positive role in the context of theistic spirituality. Commitment to obeying God’s law, seeking to discern and advance the social good, working to heal and develop one’s own self, are all aspects of living a life that serves and honors God. The distortion is when the ultimate purpose of these concerns

---

<sup>45</sup> “Are We There Yet? Movement Toward a Racially Just and Inclusive Community at CTS” Encounter 70:2 (Spring 2009): 52.

<sup>46</sup> *Room at the Table: Struggle for Unity and Equality in Disciples History* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2009), 84.

is to serve ourselves and our perceptions of the good rather than God. In the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement there is a place for each of these concerns, but they do not take the place of God in the believer's heart and mind. There is no forgetting in this understanding and practice of relationship with God that the end of life is not our own good, or even our perception of the social good, but the glory and honor of the God revealed in the Good News of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world must have a purpose higher than our own well-being and our always limited perception of the social good.

The understanding of how we get from sin to salvation in the founding spirituality of the Stone-Campbell Movement is the second reason that it can help us live up to this new slogan. Every aspect of our salvation is a gift in the founders' understanding and practice of relationship with God. As a consequence, the fundamental ingredient of Christian character is, as Thomas Campbell observed, humility. And, that humility, born of the experience of our salvation as gift, allows for genuine community in which we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us. The understandings of how we get from sin to salvation in the legalistic, moralistic, and personalistic distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality tend toward a sense of personal achievement or, to use the theological term, self-righteousness, which inhibits genuine community and increases the fragmentation of the world. A movement for wholeness in a fragmented world, a church that welcomes all to the Lord's Table as Christ has welcomed us, must be rooted in an understanding that every aspect of our salvation is gift.

We will conclude this 2009 General Assembly with a communion service led by members of the Churches of Christ, the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, and the

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). There are differences that separate these three streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement. But we share much in common. We share the founding spirituality of the Movement and also in our own distinctive ways and measures the distortions of Stone-Campbell spirituality that have helped to divide us. One hundred years ago, the Christian Churches or Disciples of Christ stream of the Stone-Campbell Movement held a Centennial Celebration in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in recognition of the centennial of the publication of Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*. Christians associated with the Churches of Christ did not participate in any significant number. But the crowd gathered at Forbes field for communion numbered in the thousands.

The concluding service of this General Assembly will be of greater significance. For the fact that Christians will be together from across the streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement is a testament to the abiding power of the Good News of God's love in Jesus Christ to overcome alienation and mistrust.

As I bring to a close these reflections on Stone-Campbell Spirituality in recognition of the bicentennial of Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*, I would like to propose a hymn, written in the 1980s, which expresses the founding spirituality of Stone-Campbell Movement.

Think of it as a call to the communions that await us. I invite you to sing.

We gather here in Jesus name,  
His love is burning in our hearts like living flame;  
For through the loving Son the father makes us one:  
Come, take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.

No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs;  
Finding our forgiveness here, we in turn forgive all wrongs.

He joins us here, he breaks the bread,  
The Lord who pours the cup is risen from the dead;

The one we love the most is now our gracious host:  
Come, take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.

We are now a family of which the Lord is head;  
Though unseen he meets us here in the breaking of the bread.

We'll gather soon where angels sing;  
We'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King;  
Now we anticipate the feast for which we wait:  
Come, take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of  
the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.