

**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF CHRIST:
ITS ORIGINS, GROWTH, & DECLINE**

Chronology Of Biblical And World Events, Part D: The Middle Ages

The fall of the Western Roman Empire was the beginning of a new era in world history. There was a period of constant turmoil in which much of the world adjusted to the changed situation, and by about AD 600 the Middle Ages proper began. Note that parts A-C of the chronology were given with the summer class.

476	The Western Roman Empire comes to an end.
479	The (eastern) emperor henceforth receives his crown from the Orthodox Church. After the fall of Rome, the Eastern Empire is known as the <u>Byzantine Empire</u> , with its capital in Constantinople.
484	First official schism (division) between the Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches, as the Pope excommunicates the Patriarch of Constantinople.
496	Clovis I, king of the Franks, is converted to (Catholic) Christianity by his wife.
519	In response to public displeasure over the schism, leaders of the Eastern and Western churches hold a public ceremony of reconciliation. But in reality they remain on bad terms with each other.
527	Justinian becomes emperor. During his reign, Byzantine armies conquer the Ostrogoths and Vandals, restoring vast territories to the empire. Justinian keeps the empire inseparable from the Orthodox Church; and he also entrenches icons and other fundamental elements of Eastern Orthodoxy.
529	Benedict of Nursia founds the monastery of Monte Cassino, establishing the Benedictine Order.
563	Columba begins converting the Picts, establishes the monastery on Iona.
565	Justinian dies, beginning a long period of decline for the empire.
568	The Lombards, a barbarian tribe, retake Italy from the Byzantines.
590	Gregory I becomes Pope. His policies strengthen the Catholic hierarchy and extend its influence.
590	Mission to the Lombards, later resulting in the conversion of the king and queen in 603.
596	Gregory sends Augustine of Canterbury to begin a mission to Britain.
622	The Moslem era begins with the Hegira, Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina. Soon after his death in 632, the Islamic wars of conquest begin.
638	Jerusalem falls to the Moslems, followed by Alexandria in 642.
650	About this time, the Paulicians begin acquiring influence in the eastern areas of the Byzantine Empire.
655	Moslem ships destroy the Byzantine fleet at Lycia, creating Moslem mastery of the Mediterranean.
664	The Synod of Whitby, uniting the native British churches with the Roman Catholic Church.
711	Moslem armies invade Spain and soon conquer it.
717	Leo III, firmly opposed to icons, becomes Byzantine Emperor and starts the Iconoclast Controversy.
731	Bede completes his <i>Ecclesiastical History Of The English People</i> .
732	Charles Martel defeats the Moslem armies at Tours (or Poitiers) in France, the first halt to Islamic expansion. The Moslems will advance no further, and soon the Arab Islamic Empire starts to splinter.
756	Charles Martel's son Pepin the Short, the King of the Franks, conquers large territories in Italy and gives it to the Pope, establishing the Papal States.
768	Pepin dies and his empire is divided among his sons, including Charles, later known as Charlemagne.
789	The first Viking attack on Britain that can be precisely dated. The island monastery at Lindisfarne falls in 792 as the attacks get ever more daring and damaging.
800	Charlemagne's armies cross the Alps to rescue Pope Leo III from rebels. In return, on Christmas Day Leo crowns Charles with the title "Holy Roman Emperor". The "Holy Roman Empire" will undergo many mutations over the years, but it lasts until Napoleon dissolves it in 1806.
814	After Charlemagne's death, his Empire is divided amongst his sons and begins to weaken.
828	After years of competition, Egbert of Wessex is recognized as the overlord of all 7 Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in Britain. The House Of Wessex will lead Britain until the Norman conquest in 1066.
871	Alfred becomes king of England. His diplomacy and strategic skill save England from the Vikings.

900	Alfonso III of Castile begins the long, slow process of retaking Spain from the Moslems.
950	Approximate date that Bogomil begins his efforts to return to New Testament Christianity.
954	After Christianity enters Russia for the first time, Princess Olga of Kiev becomes a Christian.
962	Otto I becomes Holy Roman Emperor and begins to challenge the Pope's power.
975	After the death of Edgar the Peaceful, a long period of English growth and strength ends. His son Edward the Martyr is murdered three years later, bringing the inept Ethelred the Unready to the throne. A new wave of Viking invasions soon begins.
988	Olga's grandson Vladimir converts to Orthodox Christianity and declares it the official religion of his realm. It later becomes the state church of Russia, lasting until the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.
1000	The "millennial" year sees outbreaks of unrest and anxiety in Europe.
1000	First successful mission to Iceland.
1013	Ethelred the Unready flees England, leaving it to the Danish Vikings, who hold it until Edward the Confessor restores Saxon rule in 1042.
1054	The final, official break between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, whose leaders excommunicate and denounce each other.
1066	William of Normandy conquers England, greatly altering the balance of power in Europe.
1073	Gregory VII (Hildebrand) becomes Pope. He restates and refines many basic Roman Catholic teachings, institutes some needed reforms, and denies monarchs the power to distribute church offices.
1074	Rome excommunicates married priests for the first time.
1076	Almoravid Moslems destroy the great medieval African Empire of Ghana. Until the emergence of Mali in 1235, Africa experiences a period of chaotic rivalries between native leaders and Moslems.
1077	Gregory strengthens the power of the papacy in a confrontation with Emperor Henry IV, who had defied the pope by appointing an archbishop. Soon faced with revolt because of Gregory's public threats, Henry was forced to stand barefoot in the snow for three days, praying for forgiveness.
1095	Pope Urban II declares the first Crusade to recover territories held by the Moslems. Militarily, the first Crusade is successful, capturing Antioch, Jerusalem (1099), and other territories.
1122	Peter Abelard is exiled and his writings are condemned.
1137	The Zagwe dynasty comes to power in the Ethiopian highlands, leading to a revival of Christianity in Ethiopia. Similar to Orthodoxy, Ethiopian Christianity had a long independent history after being isolated from the mainline churches.
1139	Arnold of Brescia begins urging the Catholic Church to sell its property and return to the ways of the New Testament. Arnold is executed in 1155.
1147	The Second Crusade begins - it is far less successful than the First.
1179	Peter Waldo is confronted by Catholic authorities at the Third Lateran Council. Waldo and the Waldenses are all excommunicated 5 years later.
1184	With the Waldenses and Cathars gaining members and popularity, Pope Lucius III demands that bishops "inquire" about the beliefs and practices of their subjects - the beginnings of the Inquisition.
1187	Moslem armies led by the ruthless Saladin, Sultan of Egypt and Syria, recapture Jerusalem.
1189	The Third Crusade begins, led by Richard "Lionheart" of England, Philip Augustus of France, and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa ("Redbeard"). After embarrassments, losses, and near disasters, Richard manages to conclude a peace treaty with Saladin. The era of the Crusades continued until 1291, but they had little significance other than as a tool of propaganda and manipulation.
1198	The belligerent Innocent III becomes Pope. Throughout his papacy (to 1216) he fights endlessly with secular rulers, in his determination to preserve papal power.
1206	Genghis Khan, chief prince of the Mongols, begins his wars of conquest. The Mongols quickly destroy the Chinese Ch'in Empire and then head west.
1209	Pope Innocent III calls for a "Crusade" against the Cathars and Albigensians. It is led by Simon de Montfort, whose son of the same name is known for his role in creating the English Parliament.
1209	Francis of Assisi begins the Franciscan brotherhood.
1210	The Pauperes Lombardi become independent of the Waldenses.

1215	After conflicts between King John and English nobles, the Magna Carta is signed at Runnymede.
1215	Dominic Guzman founds the Dominican friars.
1220	The Inquisition is made independent of bishops, and is placed directly under the Pope's power, with wide powers to confiscate property and levy other punishments on "heretics".
1229	The Inquisition bans all Bible reading except by official clergy.
1235	After the battle of Kirina, the Empire of Mali emerges as the leading power in Africa. Its rulers use careful negotiations and pilgrimages to Mecca to stay on good terms with the Moslem rulers.
1241	Just as the Mongols are about to overrun Europe, a succession crisis is set off by the death of Ugudei, Genghis's successor as Great Khan. After the resulting retreat homewards, the Mongols will no longer threaten Western Europe, but Kublai Khan and others will later ravage Russia and Asia.
1252	Pope Innocent IV authorizes the Inquisition to use torture to obtain "confessions" of heresy.
1270	On the Seventh Crusade, King Louis IX of France (the "St. Louis" for whom the city in Missouri is named) dies of plague, along with most of his army.
1273	Thomas Aquinas publishes <i>Summa Theologica</i> , the Catholic Church's official response to the many "heresies" of the 1100's and 1200's.
1291	Moslem armies retake Acre, the last Christian stronghold in the Middle East. Christian armies then withdraw from the area, ending the Crusades.
1300	Pope Boniface VIII declares a Jubilee Year, promising special spiritual benefits to anyone making a pilgrimage to Rome. There was an atmosphere of great optimism, but that would soon change.
1303	Offended by Boniface's pompous proclamations of papal authority, and angry that the Pope will not allow taxes on the clergy, King Philip IV of France initiates a new and tumultuous era by sending a squad of thugs to kidnap Boniface and beat him up. Boniface dies soon afterwards.
1305	Clement V, a Frenchman, is elected Pope. He never comes to Rome, and in 1309 he moves the entire church administration to the French town of Avignon - referred to by historians as the "Avignon Captivity" or even the "Babylonian Captivity"
1314	Scotland under Robert Bruce crushes English forces at the battle of Bannockburn. The ancient rivalry between England and Scotland bursts into flames, resulting in consequences later for Christianity.
1338	The Hundred Years War (which actually lasted 115 years) begins between England and France. It is a long, pointless drain on the economies and populations of both countries.
1347	The Black Death or Great Plague begins. It sweeps through Europe by 1354 and does not start to decline until 1377. At least a third of the world's population dies, possibly as much as 40%.
1360	Timur the Lame ("Tamerlane") becomes head of a revived Mongol Empire, and combines his Moslem beliefs with the Mongol tradition of conquest. He initiates a long series of cruel and senseless wars of conquest, nominally in the name of Islam, ending only with his death in 1405. Tamerlane's ravages are a significant reason why Europe outpaced Asia for world supremacy in the late Middle Ages.
1377	Pope Gregory XI returns the papacy to Rome, but then dies. Rival groups of cardinals elect rival popes, one reigning in Avignon and the other in Rome (the papacy's "Great Schism").
1380	Oxford professor John Wycliffe completes a translation of the New Testament into English. He also starts to call for the Roman church to return to New Testament teachings. Although the church condemns his teachings, the weakened papacy has trouble silencing him.
1382	Wycliffe completes the translation of the Old Testament and releases the first complete Bible in the English language. He is kicked out of Oxford due to papal pressure, and dies in 1384.
1391	Pogroms (anti-Jewish riots) begin in Spain. The spread of the pogroms make things even worse for the Jews, who had already been persecuted throughout the world in the Middle Ages.
1399	King Richard II of England is murdered by Henry Bolingbroke, who declares himself Henry IV.
1409	At the Council of Pisa, cardinals meet to choose a sole pope to end the schism, but succeed only in electing a third pope who now fights with the other two. This farcical situation leads to a widespread awareness of the spiritual bankruptcy of the catholic hierarchy's spiritual leadership.
1411	Pope John XXIII (later declared a false pope) excommunicates Jan Hus, a Bohemian reformer and nationalist whose restoration-oriented views were very displeasing to the church and the emperor.

1414	Emperor Sigismund calls the Council of Constance to resolve the divisions in the papacy.
1415	Sigismund summons Hus to Constance, giving Hus a guarantee of personal safety. When Hus naively appears, he is seized, condemned, and burned to death.
1417	The Council finally succeeds in choosing Martin V as sole pope. But the power-hungry Martin is a severe disappointment, as his papacy is marked by widespread corruption and influence peddling.
1428	With France struggling in the Hundred Years War, Joan of Arc takes command and wins a dramatic series of victories until she is captured and executed in 1431.
1450	Jack Cade's revolt, one of several popular uprisings in England in this era.
1453	The Hundred Years War finally ends, with no one the winner.
1453	The Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople and murder the emperor, ending the Byzantine Empire. The Moslems convert the famed St. Sophia Basilica into a mosque.
1455	Johannes Gutenberg prints the first complete book, a Bible, on his newly perfected printing press. His invention of moveable type has a significant impact on religious disputes and other public debates.
1459	The Wars of the Roses begin in England.
1479	Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon unit their lands, creating the modern Spanish nation. They request Pope Sixtus IV to appoint a special inquisitor for Spain, starting the Spanish Inquisition.
1485	Richard III is killed in battle. Henry Tudor becomes Henry VII, ending the Wars of the Roses.
1490	King Nzinga Nkuwu of the Congo accepts (Catholic) Christianity. In the 1500's, Nzinga Mpangu and his son Henrique (the first African bishop since ancient times) briefly establish an African church independent of Rome, but this effort dies out after Mpangu's death in 1541.
1492	The notorious Rodrigo Borgia becomes Pope Alexander VI, the low point of the "Renaissance" papacy and the culmination of a long series of corrupt and immoral post-schism popes.
1492	Spanish armies conquer Granada, the last Moorish (Moslem) stronghold in Spain, ending the long era of Moslem influence in Spain.
1492	Christopher Columbus sails from Spain and explores several islands in the Caribbean, beginning the era of European exploration and eventual conquest of the Western Hemisphere.
1493	Askia Mohammed establishes the Songhai state as the leading power in Africa, succeeding Mali.
1494	Charles VIII of France invades Italy and further reduces the influence of the Roman church.

Additional Sources & References

Here are some recommended sources for studying medieval church history:

Everett Ferguson, *Church History: Ancient & Medieval*
Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*
Yves Renouard, *The Avignon Papacy*
R. W. Southern, *Western Society & the Church In The Middle Ages*

Some recommended sources for studying world history during the Middle Ages:

Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*
Winston Churchill, *The Birth Of Britain*
Will & Ariel Durant, *The Story Of Civilization, Volume 4: The Age Of Faith*
Will & Ariel Durant, *The Story Of Civilization, Volume 5: The Renaissance*
Edward Gibbon, *The Decline & Fall Of The Roman Empire* (also covers the medieval Eastern Empire)
The Hammond *Atlas Of World History* (includes many maps of the changes in medieval times)
Albert Hourani, *A History Of The Arab Peoples*
Thomas F. Mathews, *Byzantium: From Antiquity To The Renaissance*

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, September 2012*

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**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF CHRIST:
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**Chronology Of Biblical And World Events, Part E:
The Reformation Era & The Age Of Reason**

The development of moveable-type printing and the start of European involvement in the Western Hemisphere are generally considered to have brought the Middle Ages to an end. The tumultuous Reformation Era was followed by the "Age Of Reason", which itself ended abruptly with the outbreak of the French Revolution.

1509	Henry VIII becomes King Of England, and marries his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon.
1510	Seeking cheap labor for their possessions in South America, the Portuguese begin the African slave trade. By the 1800s, over 11 million Africans are forcibly taken to the Americas, and at least that many die en route. Moreover, the slave trade was also devastating to Christianity in Africa.
1515	The Lateran Council decrees that no books can be printed anywhere without the church's permission.
1516	Erasmus Of Rotterdam publishes the text of the New Testament in Greek.
1517	Martin Luther, teaching at Wittenberg University, posts his 95 theses on the cathedral door there, as an open invitation to discuss his concerns about indulgences and related Catholic church practices.
1519	Hernan Cortez begins the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs, which he completes in 1521. Later, Francisco Pizarro will conquer the other great American empire, the Incas (in 1531-1534).
1519	Magellan begins circumnavigating the globe (the voyage is finished in 1521, after his death).
1520	Thomas Munzer begins activities in Germany advocating the Anabaptist perspective.
1520	Luther's writings are burnt by the church, and he is excommunicated by Pope Leo X.
1521	After the Diet of Worms, Luther is hidden by Frederick the Wise in Wartburg Castle, and begins to translate the New Testament into German. He returns to Wittenberg in 1522.
1523	The Zurich city council accepts Ulrich Zwingli's Program of reform, based on the New Testament.
1525	The Peasants' Revolt in Southern Germany is brutally suppressed, with Martin Luther's approval.
1525	William Tyndale prints his New Testament - the first English translation from the original Greek.
1527	Emperor Charles V's army pillages Rome, killing thousands and imprisoning Pope Clement VII.
1530	Philip Melanchthon details Lutheran doctrines in the Augsburg Confession.
1531	Henry VIII has himself recognized as the head of the English church. In 1533, Archbishop Cranmer grants him a divorce from Catherine, so that he can marry Anne Boleyn (whom Henry later executes).
1534	Parliament accepts the Anglican Church as England's state church.
1534	Ignatius of Loyola founds the Society of Jesus, usually known as the Jesuits
1536	John Calvin prints the first edition of <i>Institutes Of The Christian Religion</i> .
1536	William Tyndale is burned at the stake.
1536	Paul III, a vigorous reformer, becomes Pope.
1541	The city of Geneva requests John Calvin to return (he had been there from 1536-1538).
1543	Copernicus demonstrates that the earth revolves around the sun, contrary to medieval church teaching.
1546	The Council of Trent begins, taking place in three main sessions over the next 17 years.
1547	Edward VII, a Protestant, becomes King of England.
1549	Zwingli and Calvin unite their reformation fellowships.
1553	Mary I ("Bloody Mary") becomes Queen of England and immediately begins persecuting Protestants.
1553	Michael Servetus is executed after losing his debate with John Calvin.
1555	In the Peace Of Augsburg, the major European powers agree that each nation's official religion will be the monarch's religion, and that others will not interfere.
1556	Once powerful Emperor Charles V abdicates, now thoroughly defeated militarily and politically.
1558	After Mary dies, Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England and tries to heal the country's divisions.
1559	Founding of the Geneva Academy, the new center of Protestantism.

1563	At the conclusion of the Council of Trent, the Catholic Counter-Reformation begins.
1563	"The 39 Articles" establish Anglican doctrine, but come under attack from Puritans and others.
1563	John Foxe publishes the first edition of <i>The Book Of Martyrs</i> , primarily about the ways that the Catholic Church has persecuted Protestants. The book inflames attitudes on both sides.
1563	Religious war in French leads to limited tolerance granted to the Huguenots (French Protestants).
1564	The Roman church issues the "Tridentinum", binding the decisions at Trent on the entire church. At the same time they issue the "Index", the church's official list of banned books.
1566	Large-scale Calvinist revolts in the Netherlands.
1571	The Turkish fleet is destroyed at the battle of Lepanto, ending a serious Moslem threat against Europe.
1572	Over 200 Huguenots are murdered in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in France.
1572	English Puritans publish <i>An Admonition To Parliament</i> , calling for reforms in the Anglican Church.
1582	The modern Gregorian Calendar is introduced, correcting the ancient error of too many leap years in the Julian Calendar. Because it is "papist", England doesn't adopt it until 1752, and Russia until 1923.
1587	Mary Stuart ("Mary Queen of Scots") is executed in England because of the assassinations, rebellions, and other plots she has incited against the Protestant government of England.
1587	Pope Sixtus V proclaims a "Crusade" of all Catholic nations against England.
1588	Spain's Philip II launches the "invincible" Spanish Armada to lead a planned invasion of England. But Francis Drake and Charles Howard decisively defeat the Armada, with only a pitiful remnant of it making it back to Spain. A second Armada in 1597 is wrecked by storms.
1589	King Henry III of France is assassinated, and his successor is Henry IV of Navarre, a Huguenot. Henry IV later decides to convert to Catholicism in return for internal peace in France.
1600	Scientist Giordano Bruno is executed by the Pope for teaching that the earth revolves around the sun.
1603	Elizabeth I dies, and her cousin James VI of Scotland becomes King James I of England. The many plots against James include one by Walter Raleigh and "The Gunpowder Plot" by Guy Fawkes.
1607	Military adventurer John Smith (of "Pocahontas" fame) and aide John Rolfe found Jamestown, Virginia, the first English settlement on the American mainland (a commercial, for-profit venture.)
1609	Henry Hudson, an English navigator commissioned by the Dutch, explores large areas of America.
1610	A bad year for monarchs - France's Henry IV is assassinated, and England's James I begins a series of hostile confrontations with Parliament that will eventually lead to civil war during his son's reign.
1611	The "King James" (Authorized Version) Bible is published.
1613	A period of chaos in Russia ends when Michael Romanov becomes Tsar, founding the Romanov dynasty that will last until 1917.
1614	John Smith maps the North Atlantic coast of America and sends a report to James I.
1614	Japan launches a persecution against Christianity. Since 1549, Jesuits and others had converted about 300,000 Japanese, but by 1637 Christianity is gone in Japan.
1618	The Thirty Years war begins - probably the most horrible war of all time, fought non-stop for over a generation on a massive, continent-wide scale. One country after another was dragged in, often on religious grounds. The war was filled with pointless massacres, brutal destruction of defenseless cities, and countless atrocities against civilians - much of this in the name of doing God's will.
1620	The Mayflower arrives at Plymouth Rock, and Puritan settlers establish the Plymouth Bay (Massachusetts bay) colony. Though the Puritans left England to avoid governmental interference, Puritan leaders soon begin persecuting Baptists and others in the new colony.
1622	Based on John Smith's reports, the New Hampshire colony is granted to merchant John Mason.
1624	Lord Herbert, a forerunner of "The Enlightenment", expounds the philosophy of Deism in <i>De Veritate</i>
1632	English Catholics found the Maryland colony in honor of Queen Mary I.
1632	The basis of Mennonite beliefs are laid out in Dordrecht, Holland.
1633	Astronomer Galileo Galilei is called before the Inquisition for the second time, having disobeyed their earlier command that he not do any scientific work because of his belief that the earth revolves around the sun. He is threatened with death and forced to make a public renunciation of his beliefs.
1633	Puritan preacher John Cotton arrives in Massachusetts and encourages persecution of non-Puritans.

1634	Exiles from Puritan Massachusetts begin settling the Connecticut colony (from 1634-1637).
1636	Baptist preacher Roger Williams, ejected from Massachusetts for teaching adult baptism by immersion, founds the colony of Rhode Island and established a Baptist settlement at Providence. In 1638 Anne Hutchinson, also ejected from Massachusetts, founds a second settlement in Rhode Island.
1642	The English Civil War begins, with King Charles I against a coalition of Parliament's "Roundheads", Puritans, and Scottish Presbyterians.
1648	The Peace Of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years War, and the so-called "Age Of Reason" begins.
1649	Charles I is captured and executed, beginning Oliver Cromwell's dictatorship (The "Commonwealth").
1660	Two years after Cromwell's death, Charles I's son is restored to the throne as Charles II.
1661	John Eliot does the first translation of the Bible into a Native American language (Algonquin).
1663	Charles II rewards the nobles who helped restore him to the throne by awarding them a tract of land in America, the Carolina colony. (Later it was split into North Carolina and South Carolina.)
1664	While at war with the Dutch, England seizes their American colonies, New Amsterdam and the New Netherlands. These become the English colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware.
1669	Jesuits begin missions in the Great Lakes area that convert thousands of Native Americans. Later the Moravian Brethren will have success in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and Presbyterian missionary John Eliot will convert many Indians in New England. These missions are among the few bright spots in the history of European interactions with Native Americans.
1682	Because of a debt owed to his father, William Penn is deeded a large tract of unclaimed land in America by Charles II. Penn founds the city of Philadelphia and the colony of Pennsylvania, and uses the land as a haven for unpopular religious groups such as Quakers, Mennonites, and Moravians.
1688	The "Glorious Revolution" in England - the Protestant William of Orange seizes the throne from unpopular Catholic king James II (Charles II's younger brother). The new King William III and his wife Mary II head a "Grand Alliance" in opposition to Louis XIV of France.
1690	John Locke publishes <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> . Besides his significance as a secular philosopher, Locke wrote two significant books on Christianity, <i>The Reasonableness Of Christianity</i> and <i>Essay On Toleration</i> . Locke favored a return to simple New Testament practices and a reliance on rational beliefs without the use of human authority.
1701	The multi-national War Of The Spanish Succession starts from religious differences and the power politics of France's Louis XIV. The war brought fame to John Churchill, Duke Of Marlborough.
1707	Formation of the Philadelphia Baptist Association.
1713	The Treaty Of Utrecht partitions the Spanish Empire.
1716	Teaching of Christianity is made illegal in China.
1726	The "Enlightenment" philosopher Voltaire is banished from France for his Deist beliefs. He goes to England where he studies the works of Isaac Newton, which he later introduces in France.
1728	John Glas and his son-in-law Robert Sandeman start a restoration fellowship in Scotland.
1733	Georgia, the last of the 13 colonies that became the USA, is founded when James Oglethorpe establishes a settlement at Savannah for the poor and religiously persecuted.
1739	John Wesley founds his first Methodist society in Bristol, England.
1741	John Edwards delivers his famous sermon "Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God" at Enfield, Massachusetts. Edwards and George Whitfield, and Anglican immigrant, lead the "Great Awakening" in the American colonies, a revivalist reaction against Puritan worship practices.
1755	A group of Separate Baptists from New England begins a new Baptist church in Sandy Creek, North Carolina - the beginning of the Southern Baptists.
1756	The Seven Years War begins. It has two parts, a multi-national war in Europe and a North American war between France and Britain that is called "The French & Indian War" by most US historians.
1763	In the peace arrangements that end the Seven Years War, England acquires Canada from France. France also gives up its claims to present-day Ohio and Michigan.
1768	Baptist historian Morgan Edwards publishes <i>The Customs Of Primitive Christianity</i> , an influential description of the Baptist view of New Testament Christianity.

1771	John Wesley sends Francis Asbury to America to help with the growing Methodist movement there.
1775	James Watt invents the steam engine, laying the groundwork for the "Industrial Revolution".
1775	Unresolvable disputes with England over taxation, representation, and related issues bring the start of the American Revolution with battles at Lexington, Concord, and Breed's Hill (or "Bunker Hill").
1776	Writing of the Declaration Of Independence.
1778	France recognizes American independence, and sends French ships to help the overmatched American Navy - the turning point of the Revolutionary War.
1781	The successful siege of Yorktown brings the Revolutionary War to an end. U.S. independence is recognized at a peace conference in Paris in 1783.
1784	John Wesley ordains Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke the first "superintendents" of the Methodist Church in the USA.
1787	The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.
1787	The Northwest Ordinance organizes the territory that includes the future state of Ohio.
1789	George Washington becomes the USA's first President.
1789	The Industrial Revolution begins in earnest with the first use of a power engine in manufacturing (a steam-driven cotton processing factory in Manchester, England).
1789	The French revolution breaks out. It begins as an attempt to fulfill the ideals of the "Age Of Reason", but soon degenerates into uncontrollable violence, butchery, and chaos.

Additional Sources & References

Some recommended sources for studying church history in this era:

Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life Of Martin Luther*
 Roland Bainton, *The Reformation In The Sixteenth Century*
 Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation*
 Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church & The Age Of Reason*
 Everett Ferguson, *Church History: Reformation & Modern*
 Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*

Some recommended sources for studying world history during this era:

Daniel Boorstin, *The Discoverers*
 Winston Churchill, *A History Of The English-Speaking Peoples* (volumes 2 and 3)
 Will & Ariel Durant, *The Story Of Civilization, Volumes 9, 10, 11, & 12*
 John Garraty & Peter Gay, *The Columbia History Of The World*
 David Hume, *The History Of England*
 Kinder & Hilgemann (editors), *The Anchor Atlas Of World History, Volume I*
 Thomas Paine, *The Age Of Reason*

Some recommended sources for studying the history of the American colonies and the early USA:

Hamilton, Jay, & Madison, *The Federalist Papers*
 Library Of America, *The Debate On The Constitution*
 Library Of America, *American Sermons: From The Pilgrims To Martin Luther King, Jr.*
 Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum and E Pluribus Unum*
 Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion In A New World: The History Of North American Christianity*
 Barbara Tuchman, *The First Salute: A View Of The American Revolution*
 Mercy Otis Warren, *History Of The Rise, Progress, & Termination Of The American Revolution*

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**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF CHRIST:
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**Chronology Of Biblical And World Events, Part F:
From 1789 To The Present**

Several developments in AD 1789 brought the "Age Of Reason" to a close and began what many have called an Age Of Revolution, or simply the Modern Era. Because of the many events each year that are in some way still significant, this chronology is of necessity somewhat narrowly focused, omitting many interesting events. The recommended sources at the end can help you if you wish to do further study on your own.

1789	George Washington is inaugurated as the USA's first President.
1789	The French Revolution begins.
1789	First use of a power engine in manufacturing (Manchester, England).
1792	James O'Kelly leaves the Methodist Church. His restoration fellowship soon joins the group started in New England by Separate Baptists Elias Smith and Abner Jones, forming the "Christian Connection".
1794	General "Mad" Anthony Wayne defeats the British and allied Native American tribes at Fallen Timbers, near present-day Toledo. The victory ends the "Indian" wars in the Lake Erie region, and makes possible the peaceful American settlement of Ohio. The British also abandon Detroit in 1796.
1801	The Cane Ridge (Kentucky) revival motivates Barton Stone to pursue New Testament Christianity.
1803	Ohio becomes the 17th state of the USA.
1803	The Louisiana Purchase - a huge bargain for the USA because of France's difficulties in Europe.
1803	Barton Stone and 4 other Presbyterian preachers are ejected by the Kentucky Synod for "heresy". They form the Springfield Presbytery as a new fellowship devoted to restoring NT Christianity.
1804	Stone and his associates write "The Last Will & Testament Of The Springfield Presbytery" and sharpen their focus on Scripture, as their fellowship gains a wide following in Kentucky and Ohio.
1804	Napoleon Bonaparte crowns himself emperor of France and touches off a new period of extended war in Europe (immediately following the series of anti-French wars touched off by the Revolution).
1807	Presbyterian preacher Thomas Campbell leaves Northern Ireland and is assigned to western Pennsylvania. But he is soon kicked out for his rejection of creeds and his use of Scripture as the only source of authority. This was precipitated by his practice of sharing the Lord's Supper with rival sects.
1809	Thomas Campbell and Presbyterian exiles form the "Christian Association" to promote a return to New Testament Christianity. Campbell summarizes their goals in the <i>Declaration & Address</i> .
1809	Thomas Campbell's son Alexander arrives in the USA after completing college in Scotland. Alexander has independently come to some of the same conclusions his father had formed.
1812	The War Of 1812 begins - the USA again fights England over controversies that arose from England's policies during its wars with Napoleon. The Lake Erie region is an important battleground of the war. On the same day that war is declared (June 18, 1812) the first public sale of land along Broad Street and High Street takes place, the beginnings of the town of Columbus.
1812	Thomas and Alexander Campbell are baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sin.
1815	Napoleon loses the battle of Waterloo, finally ending the Napoleonic Wars.
1820	The "Missouri Compromise" temporarily heads off a crisis and postpones dealing with slavery.
1821	Mexico achieves independence, followed by other Spanish colonies in South and Central America.
1823	President James Monroe proclaims the "Monroe Doctrine", announcing that the USA will defend the independence of the new South and Central American nations by any means necessary.
1823	Alexander Campbell's series of debates on baptism with Presbyterian W.L. McCalla.
1826	Most members of Barton Stone's Christian church, influenced by Campbell's debates, have now been baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins.
1827	Walter Scott becomes the evangelist of the Mahoning Baptist Association and begins to teach the restoration principles he learned from Alexander Campbell.

1831	Beginning of unity discussions between the Christian Church, Disciples, and similar fellowships
1832	The general union of the Christian Church (Stone), Disciples of Christ (Campbells) and similar smaller groups. The combined new "Church(es) Of Christ" has about 20,000 members.
1833	Slavery is finally abolished across the British Empire (Britain had earlier banned slave trading in 1807), largely due to the efforts of Evangelical Anglican preacher William Wilberforce.
1837	Queen Victoria begins her long reign as queen of England.
1845	James Polk becomes the USA's 11th President and enacts the program of Manifest Destiny. His presidency saw the addition of huge amounts of territory to the USA, which made the country stronger and more powerful than it otherwise would have been. But many of these gains came about by provoking the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), which left a lasting legacy of bitterness.
1848	Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels publish <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> .
1848	A tumultuous year in Europe, as revolts and revolutions break out in many countries. Most of them are suppressed, but the French monarchy falls. Louis Napoleon becomes President (later Emperor).
1849	After a time of unity and growth, the united restoration fellowship of the Churches of Christ-Christian Church-Disciples has about 300,000 members, publishes 28 periodicals, and operates 3 colleges.
1849	Alexander Campbell accepts the presidency of the newly formed American Christian Missionary Society, producing a major controversy in the restoration fellowships. The organizational structure of the Society later developed into the denominational structure of today's Disciples of Christ.
1850	During the most heated crisis yet over slavery, Congress passes the "Compromise Of 1850", a shaky and unpopular collection of measures designed to stave off immediate civil war.
1855	Tolbert Fanning begins publishing the <i>Gospel Advocate</i> .
1859	Charles Darwin publishes the first edition of <i>The Origin Of Species</i> .
1860	In public discussions about the theory of evolution at Oxford University, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce launches a vicious personal attack on Darwin and his spokesman Thomas Huxley. The supporters of evolution reply in kind, setting the tone for the ongoing acrimonious debates on the subject.
1860	Garibaldi begins his campaign to unite Italy, divided into smaller countries since the Middle Ages.
1861	The American Civil war begins, with the Confederacy (South) winning many of the early battles.
1862	The <i>Monitor</i> and the <i>Merrimac</i> (CSS <i>Virginia</i>) fight the first battle between two armored warships.
1863	In January, President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation.
1863	In July, Union (Northern) victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg turn the tide of the Civil War.
1865	The Confederacy surrenders, ending the Civil War, but a few days later Lincoln is assassinated.
1867	Great Britain makes Canada a Dominion, essentially independent though still subject to the British monarch. (Canada takes further steps towards full self-government in 1931 and 1982.)
1867	The Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy is established.
1868	President Andrew Johnson is impeached; but is acquitted by the Senate.
1869	The Cincinnati Reds, baseball's first all-professional team, have an undefeated season. The Reds' popularity leads to the first all-professional baseball leagues in the 1870s.
1869	The First Vatican Council, in which the infallibility of the Pope is proclaimed for the first time (1870).
1870	Italy takes control of the Papal States, leaving only Vatican City under the pope's secular rule.
1871	Otto von Bismarck unifies the German Reich ("The Second Reich") under Prussian domination.
1877	Southern "Reconstruction" ends as part of a deal to resolve the disputed presidential election of 1876.
1881	James Garfield, Ohioan and preacher in the Disciples of Christ, becomes President. Sadly, he is assassinated only a few months later. Isaac Errett of the Church Of Christ gives his funeral oration.
1884	Austin McGary begins the <i>Firm Foundation</i> .
1889	At a meeting in Shelby County, Illinois, the Sand Creek Declaration begins the first open break in the Restoration fellowships. The divisive issues included the Missionary Society and instrumental music in worship, in part aggravated by lingering sectional resentments from the Civil War.
1893	Responding to popular new theories about the human origins of the books of the Bible, J.W. McGarvey begins the column "Biblical Criticism" in the <i>Christian Standard</i> .

1898	The <i>SS Maine</i> sinks in Havana, touching off the brief Spanish-American War
1901	Queen Victoria dies after reigning since 1837.
1903	Henry Ford founds the Ford Motor Company and begins building the Model A.
1906	The US Census Bureau recognizes the break in the Restoration fellowships by listing the Churches of Christ (300,000 members) and the Disciples of Christ (1,300,000) as two distinct groups.
1911	The "open membership" controversy (or "The Great Controversy") begins as the publication <i>Christian Century</i> begins to lobby for the church to accept unimmersed believers as full church members. The discussion becomes intertwined with a move to de-emphasize the role of the Bible in Christianity.
1914	Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated in Sarajevo, and long-standing tensions between the major powers of Europe soon lead to the start of World War I (then simply called "The Great War") between the two main European power blocks. Motivated largely by imperialistic ambitions and nationalistic prejudices, the war calls into question a generation of comfortable assumptions.
1917	With the tsarist armies crumbling in the Great War, revolution breaks out in Russia. In March, the tsar abdicates and Alexander Kerensky forms a Provisional Government - which is in turn overthrown by the Bolsheviks in November (or late October on the Julian calendar that Russia was then using).
1917	Despite a determined desire to remain neutral, the USA enters the Great War on the Allied side. Both sides were now exhausted, and the arrival of a fresh participant soon leads to an Allied victory.
1918	World War I ends, but the vindictive terms of the peace agreements and the naïve ways that European borders are redrawn set the stage for more war later - making a sham of "the war to end all wars".
1919	Observations of a solar eclipse in Brazil and on the island of Principe confirm Einstein's General Theory Of Relativity, fundamentally altering scientific understanding.
1920	The 18th Amendment to the US Constitution takes effect, making alcoholic beverages illegal.
1920	The 19th Amendment to the US Constitution allows women to vote (previously allowed in only a few states), in time for the 1920 Presidential election (in which both major candidates were from Ohio).
1923	E.J. Goodspeed publishes <i>The New Testament: An American Translation</i> . While often reflecting his personal views, it is significant due to its popularity as the first American modern language version.
1925	The Scopes trial, in which a teacher was tried and convicted for teaching the theory of evolution, heightens tensions and bad feelings between scientists and Christians. Three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan prosecutes Scopes, the teacher.
1929	The US stock market crashes in October, the harbinger (but not the cause) of the Great Depression.
1933	The 18th Amendment is repealed, and the Prohibition era ends - the attempt to ban alcohol simply led to rampant smuggling, gangland violence, and other lawlessness.
1933	Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany, and soon the Nazi Party obtains absolute power.
1939	The Nazis invade Poland, beginning World War II. New atrocities and horrible modern weaponry expose the emptiness of the naïve assumptions made in the comfortable aftermath of World War I.
1941	Frustrated by unexpectedly strong British resistance, Hitler orders the invasion of the USSR in June. In December, Pearl Harbor is bombed by Japan, Germany's ally, bringing the USA into the war.
1945	World War II ends as first Germany surrenders, and then Japan surrenders after the USA drops atomic bombs on two of its defenseless cities. Post-war conferences result in the USSR taking effective control of large areas of Eastern Europe, setting the stage for the "Cold War".
1946	The New Testament of the Revised Standard Version, the first standard modern English translation, is published. The RSV Old Testament comes in 1952. Meanwhile, work on the New English Bible begins in Scotland - the first all-new British English translation since the King James. (The English Revised Version in 1881 and the American Standard Version in 1901 were re-workings of the KJV).
1948	Authorized by the UN's partition of Palestine the previous year, the state of Israel is proclaimed - and is quickly attacked by the surrounding Arab countries.
1948	The ecumenical World Council Of Churches is formed.
1949	Mao Tse-Tung defeats Chiang Kai-shek and proclaims the People's Republic of China.
1950	Beginning of the Korean War, a product of Cold War rivalries that ends in 1953.
1954	The US Supreme Court declares racial segregation in schools unconstitutional. In 1955, Rosa Parks'

	bus protest in Alabama inspires civil rights demonstrations, sometimes followed by confrontations.
1957	The first Civil Rights Bill passes Congress. Later in the year, President Eisenhower sends federal troops to Arkansas to enforce court-ordered desegregation.
1957	Ghana becomes the first independent Sub-Saharan African nation since before the era of imperialism. Soon afterwards, other former European colonies in Africa and Asia also become independent.
1957	The United Church Of Christ (no relation to the Church of Christ) is formed from the union of several smaller groups. It includes a block of congregations that began as part of the Christian Connection.
1959	Alaska and Hawaii become the first new US states since 1912, bringing the total to 50.
1959	Fidel Castro takes power in Cuba. Tensions with the USA lead to embarrassments like the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 and near-disasters like the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.
1962	The US Supreme Court declares prayers in public schools to be unconstitutional. The following year, it rules that public schools also cannot have mandatory readings of Bible verses.
1963	Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington. Progress in the Civil Rights movement continues with the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965.
1963	President John Kennedy is assassinated, a national sorrow in its own time and an endless source of material for paranoid conspiracy theorists in later eras.
1964	The Tonkin Gulf naval "engagement" is the USA's first direct involvement in Vietnam, although the USA had become steadily more entangled in Vietnam since sending military advisers there in 1950.
1968	The Disciples Of Christ formally organizes an official church hierarchy.
1968	Martin Luther King, Jr. and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy are both assassinated, adding to the widespread racial and anti-war unrest in the USA in the late 1960s.
1971	First publication of the New American Standard Bible.
1972	President Richard Nixon visits the People's Republic of China, a dramatic opening of diplomatic relations aimed at easing global tensions.
1974	Richard Nixon is forced to resign as President in the scandal surrounding the Watergate break-in.
1975	Final US military withdrawal from Vietnam.
1978	The New International Version is completed (the NT had been published in 1973).
1979	Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain. The policies of Thatcher and of Ronald Reagan, who becomes US President in 1981, define much of the 1980s.
1981	The Iran hostage crisis ends with the release of the hostages on the day Ronald Reagan is inaugurated.
1984	First revision of the NIV is published.
1986	The "Crossroads" or "Boston" churches formally disassociate themselves with mainline Churches of Christ and other Restoration fellowships.
1989	The New Revised Standard Version is published.
1989	The Berlin Wall falls, paving the way for Germany to be re-unified as a single nation in 1990.
1991	The US and its allies win the short Gulf War against Iraq.
1991	The Soviet Union is dissolved with Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation on Christmas Day, after an inept Bolshevik coup attempt earlier in the year is beaten back.
1993	Agreement is reached in South Africa for a new constitution that will grant universal voting rights for the first time. In 1994 Nelson Mandela, released from prison in 1990, is elected President.
1994	A strike by baseball players results in the World Series being unplayed for the first time since 1904. In the fall, a similar dispute almost leads to the cancellation of the entire NHL season.
1998	The US House of Representatives votes to impeach President Bill Clinton, who is then acquitted.
2001	Terrorist attacks destroy the World Trade Center, and the subsequent national desire for retaliation soon leads to a new series of wars in the Middle East.
2008	Sudden devaluations of overpriced high-profile securities create the illusion of an "economic crisis" that in turn leads to some genuine problems when governments, corporations, and citizens overreact.
2009	Barack Obama is inaugurated as the USA's first African-American President.

Additional Sources & References

Some recommended sources for studying mainline church history in this era:

Owen Chadwick, *The Christian Church In The Cold War*
Everett Ferguson, *Church History: Reformation & Modern*
Library Of America, *American Sermons: From The Pilgrims To Martin Luther King, Jr.*
Frank Mead, *Handbook Of Denominations In The United States*
Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*
Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion In A New World: The History Of North American Christianity*
Alec Vidler, *The Church In An Age Of Revolution*

Some recommended sources for studying general world and/or American history during this era:

Winston Churchill, *A History Of The English-Speaking Peoples* (volumes 3 and 4)
Columbia University Press, *Introduction To Contemporary Civilization In The West, Volume II*
Will & Ariel Durant, *The Story Of Civilization, Volumes 10 & 11* (stops in the early 1800s)
John Garraty & Peter Gay, *The Columbia History Of The World*
Bernard Grun, *The Timetables Of History* (chronologies)
Paul Johnson, *Modern Times*
Kinder & Hilgemann (editors), *The Anchor Atlas Of World History, Volume II* (maps & chronologies)
George Knepper, *Ohio And Its People* (Ohio history)
Stefan Lorant, *The Glorious Burden* (US history focusing on the Presidents)
R.R. Palmer & Joel Colton, *A History Of The Modern World Since 1815*
Frank Wallis (editor), *Ribbons Of Time* (chronologies)

Some recommended sources for studying the history of the American Restoration fellowships:

C. Leonard Allen, *Distant Voices - Discovering a Forgotten Past For A Changing Church*
C. L. Allen & Richard Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches Of Christ*
Foster, Blowers, Dunnivant & Williams, *The Encyclopedia Of The Stone-Campbell Movement*
Monroe Hawley, *The Focus Of Our Faith*
Monroe Hawley, *Redigging The Wells*
Monroe Hawley, *Searching For A Better Way*
Richard Hughes, *Reviving The Ancient Faith*
J.D. Murch, *Christians Only - A History Of The Restoration Movement*
J.M. Powell, *The Cause We Plead*
Restoration Quarterly (periodical)
J.W. Shepherd, *The Church, The Falling Away, and the Restoration*
Stone-Campbell Journal (periodical)

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, November 2012*

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THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY, PART TWO

RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO TODAY

Sunday AM Adult Bible Class, Autumn 2012

The autumn study will have three main parts: four weeks on the medieval church, four weeks on the Reformation Era/Age Of Reason, and four weeks on the modern era, most of which will focus on restoration fellowships in the United States. Each study will combine historical material with a look at one or more passages of Scripture illustrating important themes or applications.

Tentative Outline & Schedule:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings From:</u>
Week 1 - Sept 9	Asking For The Ancient Paths	Jeremiah 6 & Acts 2
Week 2 - Sept 16	The Early Middle Ages	Isaiah 1 & Isaiah 10
Week 3 - Sept 23	The Established Churches In The Middle Ages	Romans 10 & 1 Cor. 10
Week 4 - Sept 30	Restoration Fellowships In The Middle Ages	Isaiah 37 & Zechariah 8
Week 5 - Oct 7	Medieval Roots Of The Reformation	John 4 & 1 Corinthians 3
Week 6 - Oct 14	The Protestant Reformation	1 Cor. 3 & Psalm 127
Week 7 - Oct 21	The "Age Of Reason"	Ezekiel 36 & 1 Cor. 1
Week 8 - Oct 28	Christianity In Early America	Romans 9 & Hosea 2
Week 9 - Nov 4	Early American Restoration Fellowships	Isaiah 11 & 1 Cor. 1
Week 10 - Nov 11	Uniting The Threads	Ephesians 4 & 1 Cor. 12
Week 11 - Nov 18	Growing Pains In The 19th Century	Ephesians 6 & James 1
Week 12 - Nov 25	The 20th Century & Beyond	Eph. 1 & Hebrews 13

Primary General Church History References:

Tim Dowley (editor), *Introduction To The History Of Christianity*
Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History Of Christianity* (2 volumes)
John McManners (editor), *Oxford Illustrated History Of Christianity*
Bruce Shelley, *Church History In Plain Language*

Selected General Historical References:

Winston Churchill, *A History Of The English-Speaking Peoples* (4 volumes)
Will & Ariel Durant, *The Story Of Civilization, Volumes 4-12*
John Garraty & Peter Gay, *The Columbia History Of The World*
David Hume, *The History Of England* (6 volumes)
Kinder & Hilgemann, *The Anchor Atlas Of World History, Volume II*

Selected Additional References - Restoration Fellowship History & Perspective:

Monroe Hawley, *The Focus Of Our Faith*
Monroe Hawley, *Searching For A Better Way*
Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving The Ancient Faith - The Story Of Churches Of Christ In America*
J.D. Murch, *Christians Only*
J.M. Powell, *The Cause We Plead*

- Mark Garner, September 2012

RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week One: Asking For The Ancient Paths Readings In Jeremiah 6, Jeremiah 18, & Acts 2

Ever since the New Testament church began to transform into an institution instead of a family, there have been believers who longed to restore the church in its original form. Through the centuries, many fellowships began with this goal in mind yet they have pursued their goal in many different ways. So we shall first consider what it might mean to restore the ancient church.

As for the Ancient Paths in Jeremiah 6 & Jeremiah 18

The need for God's people to return to an older, simpler way of seeking him was present long before Jesus walked the earth. In Jeremiah's day, the people's reliance on ritual and tradition, combined with their violence and materialism, had pushed God's presence far away from them. In Jeremiah's call to them, he also helps us to see what it means to return to the "ancient paths".

When we find the right path to God, it brings rest for our souls (Jeremiah 6:16). Sometimes our physical bodies may be taxed, and our earthly minds may have difficulty understanding, but our souls will find rest and peace. We shall not be restless and dissatisfied, nor shall we feel a sense of rivalry or competition with others. And since the ancient paths bring peace, we do not need to calculate where they lie, nor do we need to use tortuous human logic - we just ask, and walk.

Compare Jeremiah's assurance with the promise of "rest for your souls" that Jesus offers to those who come to him (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus also encourages us simply to come to him and ask for him to make us his, by putting his 'easy' yoke around our necks. Seeking God is and always has been primarily relational, and this also should define our focus as the body of Christ.

Seeking the ancient paths is thus is not a question of correctness versus incorrectness, nor is it a question of productivity versus laziness - it is a matter of pride versus humility. Only those who don't desire to walk in the paths of grace and peace will avoid them, for these paths are open to all. Only those too prideful to accept Jesus' gentle yoke will not come to him. This is the real problem behind the more superficial matters of doctrine and methodology that we often get engrossed in. When we truly realize the depth of our need for grace, and accept Jesus' gracious sacrifice, it makes us much less likely to resist his various specific teachings and directives.

Jeremiah also compares the ancient paths with apparent roads that are not really roads to God at all (Jeremiah 18:14-15). His comparison is somewhat similar to Paul's reproach to the Galatians when they had accepted a gospel that was really not a gospel at all. God himself is always present, and he is always ready for anyone and everyone to come to him. If we cannot see or find the path, we need only ask in humility. But human nature persists in building its own roads to God, in relying on its own fleshly wisdom, in burning incense to its own idols.

The context of Jeremiah 18 is the lesson from the potter's wheel - that God can always tear down or build up as he thinks appropriate, depending on the response he gets from his creations.

This 'another gospel' is not correct, of course; but in the original context (Galatians 1:6-7) Paul is actually emphasizing that it is not good news, which is the literal meaning of "gospel".

Our idols may well make us feel as if we are the ones who are in the right. Our idols may produce outward results that we might even think have come from God. Our idols motivate us to compete with the idols of others, make us feel justified in judging others, and compel us to defend them when they are questioned. But idols cannot give our souls rest - on the contrary - they can only make our souls restless. It is idols that make us impatient to push our favorite factoids, methods, and theories. It is idols that produce factions, envy, and dissension; while the true gospel, the real ancient paths, produces the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why would Jeremiah use the phrase "ancient paths" □
Would it have meant something different to him □ Where do these 'paths' lead □ How
does this help us to find them □ Can we know for certain if we are on the ancient paths □

Proclaim in the good news Acts & Acts

Only Jesus himself, not our actions or our morality or our doctrine, gives our souls lasting rest. Peter's proclamation of the good news reminds us of the things that characterized Jesus' nature, his ministry, and his sacrifice. Jesus himself is the good news from God, and it is only his identity, his blood, and his resurrection that give meaning to everything else we do and believe.

In Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, he summarizes who Jesus was and what Jesus did (Acts 2:22-24). Jesus' sinless life, his death on the cross as a sacrifice for humanity's sins, and his resurrection from the dead - proving once for all the truth of everything else about him - are at the root of everything that matters in Christianity; and they define everything that matters about the church of Christ. Everything else - whether we do it or someone else does it, whether it is 'justified' by results, by bending Scripture or by rationalistic logic - is extraneous.

We can see a connection in the description of the earliest Christians living in grace (2:42-47). They formed a living, caring body, generous with each other and full of humility towards others. This kind of spiritual fruit - love, grace, purity and humility - is always what the New Testament indicates as the closest indication that we are walking in his light.

The best way for us to follow in the ancient paths of the earliest Christians is to adopt these same values. If we wish to restore the New Testament church, then it is more important to adopt the priorities and perspectives of the early believers than it is to focus on outward actions, doctrines, or numerical results. Our teaching should relentlessly come back every time to the nature, life, and ministry of Jesus; and our lives ought to reflect his power, grace, blood, and resurrection.

□ We are using the words 'restore' and 'restoration' in our study because these words are closely associated with, and frequently used by historians of, the Churches of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, the Christian Church, and fellowships closely related to them. One could with equal validity talk of 'returning' to New Testament Christianity, 'rediscovering' it, or any similar term with which we might be comfortable - the specific word is less important than the idea.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How does the lesson in Acts 2 compare with other 'evangelistic' discourses in the book of Acts □ What general lessons should we learn from them □ How can our lives reflect the most important elements of the gospel □

Historical Perspective

In the weeks to come, we shall study both the established (mainline) churches and also those who sought to return to simple New Testament Christianity. As with our study of the ancient church, we shall usually have time only to survey each era and to draw general lessons. Our own questions, struggles, hopes, and mistakes all have numerous parallels in past centuries.

In the Middle Ages, religion played a major role in world affairs. But the church as described in the New Testament was barely visible in any of this. Instead, the scene was dominated by the two large established medieval churches. In the 'West' (most of Europe and North Africa), the (Roman) Catholic Church was more powerful than any government; and this was increasingly so as the era progressed. In the 'East' (Eastern Europe and Western Asia), the Orthodox Church shared power with the Eastern Empire, a trade-off that produced different dynamics.

□ The Middle Ages lasted roughly from the fall of the Western Roman Empire to about 1500. Sometimes the era from the fall of Rome to about AD 600 is considered a transition era, with the Middle Ages then beginning around 600. The end of the Middle Ages has no set date either, but the invention of the moveable type printing press in the 1450's and the first European exploration of the Western Hemisphere in the 1490's are usually considered to mark the end of the Middle Ages.

□ The term "established" is often used specifically to refer to churches recognized or designated by civil governments as the approved or authorized form of religion, often supported with government funds and sometimes declared to be the only legal church.

The two established churches both provided a strong sense of stability and transition during an era that included many tumults, especially in the West; but both churches also aggressively stifled dissent and constantly looked to accumulate their own power and wealth. Both churches encouraged morality and charity, but both churches were guilty of promoting widespread prejudice, persecution and violence.

□ Soon Islam, which began in the 7th century, would take on many of these same characteristics and would add its own mixed legacy to medieval history.

The overall situation did not appeal to everyone, and there were calls throughout the Middle Ages for a reform of the churches or for a complete return to the New Testament pattern. Although none of the medieval restoration fellowships has any direct descendants today, they nonetheless hold considerable significance both spiritually and historically. Groups like the Paulicians, the Bogomils, the Cathars and Albigensians, Peter Waldo and the Waldenses, and the Pauperes Lombardi may differ from us in many outward respects, but they all valued a return to New Testament grace and faith above human tradition or authority.

Widespread dissatisfaction with the late medieval Catholic Church led to the Era of the Protestant Reformation (the early 1500's until 1648 with the end of the Thirty Years War). The religious wars, persecution, and bitterness of the Reformation Era led in turn to what historians call the "Age Of Reason", during which religion of all kinds was widely viewed with skepticism and distrust. The Age Of Reason itself ended in 1789, when the bloody excesses of the French Revolution exposed in turn the folly of believing that human reason could solve all problems.

The medieval roots of the reformation include teachers such as John Wycliffe of England, also of great significance in the history of Bible translation, and John Hus of Bohemia. Their ideas and experiences both have much to teach us. The Protestant Reformation itself offers a strange combination of lessons, with the leading figures of the era eagerly promoting the goal of a return to the New Testament one moment, only then enthusiastically to persecute or kill their opponents

in the next moment. Their theoretical commitment to serve only God, not human institutions, was often severely at odds with their behavior.

□ Although Martin Luther and the Lutheran Church are the ones most associated with the Reformation, the same time period also saw the birth of the Anglican Church (which became the Episcopal Church in the USA) and the Reformed Churches (which became the Presbyterian Church in Scotland).

During the "Age Of Reason", dissatisfaction with both the older churches and the reformation-era churches led to a new generation of would-be church reformers and restorers, who in turn created a wide variety of new churches of their own. The Baptists and the Methodists are just two of the many groups that arose in this era. Once again, the concept of getting "back to the Bible" was popular as an alternative to the existing religious options. This was particularly true in early America, where a unique set of circumstances prevailed.

This in turn brings us to the beginning of the American restoration fellowships, which includes the Churches Of Christ. In the new United States, newer and smaller groups were more common than ever, with many of the new groups sharing a general interest in rediscovering New Testament Christianity. Two restoration-focused fellowships, the Christian Church begun by Barton Stone and the "Disciples" started by Thomas and Alexander Campbell, were the main threads that came together in the 1830s to form the Church(es) of Christ□

□ As the group was most often known for the rest of the 1800s. The three names "Christian Church", Disciples of Christ", and "Church(es) Of Christ" have sometimes been used interchangeably, and not always to refer to the same thing.

Through the rest of the 19th century, the 20th Century, and beyond this new body established itself as a permanent fellowship. We shall survey its struggles, its growth, and its characteristics along with those of the nation itself. For we are all shaped more than we wish to be by our own time and place. Someday our own story may serve as a valuable example for a future generation with its own questions and concerns. Our best hope is that our example to them can be a positive one that will point them to the cross and the empty tomb, rather than becoming just one more group of humans who thought that they were right and everyone else was wrong.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: When we study how various churches began, what should we try to learn from it□ Does it make a difference what era we are studying□ How similar would a fellowship have to be to ours for us to learn from their experience□

Sources & References

See the separate (blue) handout for a list of suggested general references on this autumn's topics, along with the tentative schedule for the quarter. Additional references will be given later for specific topics.

- *Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, September 2012*

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week 10: The Early Middle Ages Readings In Isaiah 1 & Isaiah 10

The Early Middle Ages saw a changed world and changed churches. In many respects, it is a rather depressing time period to study. Yet it nonetheless contains plenty of lessons for us, and like any era it is important in understanding the events and attitudes of subsequent time periods. We should also consider how we might have lived, had we been alive at the time.

Isaiah 1:1-20 & Isaiah 10:1-19

The idea of a faithful remnant recurs often in the history of God's people. It is human nature for us to alternate between humble faithfulness and straying from the truth, both as individuals and as churches. In the book of Isaiah, the prophet's discussions and details of a remnant chosen by grace were meant for his own time and place, yet the lessons could apply in any era.

Facing a time of spiritual and national trouble, Isaiah observed that unless God himself leaves survivors, the nation will perish (Isaiah 1:7-9). In Isaiah's day, this was true both spiritually and physically. Many times, only God's protection prevented the nation from being destroyed completely. And at all times, only God's grace allowed anyone to know him personally or to provide the hope, "that the remnant of men may seek the Lord" (Acts 15:17).

During Isaiah's career, periods of prosperity alternated with times of peril. Chapter 1 summarizes the general themes of his ministry. Chapter 10 (below) takes place during a time of crisis, when the two halves of God's people were at war with each other, and each was trying to enlist pagan nations as allies.

We too always depend completely on God to preserve us physically and spiritually, and we are always entirely dependent on his grace. Human leaders may grab the credit for making us safe or prosperous, but in reality their feeble (and often inappropriate) efforts have little to do with it. Even more so, our relationship with God is based on his grace, not our goodness or knowledge.

So when look at other religious bodies that seem (and could well be) involved in errors greater than our own, we should be grateful and humble, not proud and judgmental. With his people, God always pursues discipline, not destruction. In any body that calls itself 'Christian', no matter how ridiculous their doctrine, no matter how corrupt or immoral their leaders may be, there may be individuals who know God despite the most fatal flaws of the group as a whole.

Yet we must also face and accept the truth that "only a remnant will return" (Isaiah 10:20-23). Numbers do not reveal spiritual reality. In Isaiah's day, the Israelites were "like the sands by the sea"; but the numbers hid the reality of their spiritual emptiness. Even the most religious persons often focus their religion around their actions and beliefs, not around knowing God.

Therefore the concept of the remnant - whether in Israel's history or in the history of the church - is not a call to judge or to analyze: it is a call to humility. The remnant is the remnant by grace, and all it can do on its own is to desire to know God and to be willing to accept his grace.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What is involved in being the "remnant"? Did it change from the old covenant to the new? Is it different now? What is the connection between the remnant and grace? Can we tell if we are part of the remnant?

For many persons who lived in the Early Middle Ages, mere survival was a success. The era is often called the "Dark Ages" because of the widespread turmoil and the great steps backwards from the days when Greek and Roman culture were influential. The daily struggle for existence and struggle for understanding will explain many developments in the churches of the era.

Historians usually divide the medieval period into the Early Middle Ages (about 500-1000 or 600-1000), the High Middle Ages (1000-1300), and the Late Middle Ages (1300-1500). The Early Middle Ages are often called simply the Dark Ages. The Late Middle Ages, together with the period immediately following, are often called the Renaissance.

□ The years AD 500-600 are sometimes seen as a transition era, when Rome's former territories were divided up and when Justinian tried to re-unite the former empire (see below). If they are not part of the Middle Ages proper, then they are an 'introduction' of sorts to the new era.

In the Early Middle Ages it was often a struggle just to survive. The fall of Rome meant a step backwards in safety, standard of living, technology, and culture. And for the former territories of the Western Empire, longstanding security and prosperity gave way to instability and constant violence. To make things worse, just as some progress had been made in re-stabilizing society, two new shocks came: first the Moslem invasions and then the attacks of the Vikings.

In the generation after Mohammed founded Islam, his successors raised large armies of conquest that seized many territories in the east, then swept across North Africa, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and began invading Europe. They were finally stopped by Charles Martel ("The Hammer") at the battle of Tours in France in 732. The Moslem conquerors swept away governments and churches in the areas they captured, replacing them with their own institutions.

The Islamic conquests did bring some significant cultural benefits to the areas they conquered, but the Moslems had at best a limited tolerance for Christianity. They either eliminated the church or reduced it to a subservient shadow. This was especially devastating to the Eastern Church, since the Moslem armies were within easy range of many Byzantine territories, and during the Middle Ages Moslem armies slowly but steadily dismembered the Eastern Empire.

□ In the Early Middle Ages, the Moslems were at the forefront of the efforts to rediscover the learning of ancient Greece. They also brought important innovations of their own, such as our decimal numeral system and the branch of mathematics called algebra, both devised by Arabs in the Middle Ages.

The Viking attacks were much cruder, since the Vikings had no religious or philosophical motivation, only the desire for conquest and gain plus the enjoyment of violence for its own sake. The Viking attacks often came out of nowhere, aided by their famous longboats; and the Vikings were merciless. The Viking invasions plagued different areas from the Moslem attacks, being concentrated in Northern and Western Europe, especially England and Northern France.

□ The Vikings who settled in Northern France took the name Normans and adopted the French language and culture. They remained focused on conquest, but also helped to integrate the Vikings into mainline European civilization. The Normans were the most successful Viking group, conquering England in 1066 and passing around the Straits of Gibraltar to establish kingdoms in the Mediterranean.

The ideals of the early Middle Ages centered around great leaders who supposedly combined spirituality, intelligence, and military skill. Legends of the time show us the desperate desire for peace and security. The most popular hero of the age was Charlemagne, "Charles the Great" of France. He and his close ally Pope Leo III created the "Holy Roman Empire" an attempt to

recapture Rome's lost glory. The Empire went through many changes but lasted well past the end of the Middle Ages, until it was completely dismembered by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1806.

□Voltaire said that it had this name because it wasn't holy, wasn't Roman, and wasn't an empire. Most of its territory was in Germany, with other areas coming and going during its existence. In the Early Middle Ages it was closely allied with the papacy, until Emperor Otto I began an independent policy in 962.

Alfred the Great of England□ had a more lasting impact. The 4th son of King Ethelwulf of Wessex, Alfred became king only because all his brothers died young. Well-educated and devoted to Christianity, Alfred proved skilled both at diplomacy and at military tactics. He built boats to combat the Vikings' seaborne advantage, taught the English how to counter Viking battle tactics, and hoped to use his military victories to convert the Vikings to a gentler way of living. His evangelistic efforts had minimal effect at the time, but planted some important seeds.

□The only English or British monarch whom historians call "The Great".

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What spiritual implications are there to the turmoil of the Early Middle Ages□ Are there any parallels in our experience□ What is more important, the differences between today and the Middle Ages, or the similarities□ What might we learn from the ways they handled their problems□

□□*e Medieval* □□*Eastern* □□*Orthodox* □□*Church* □

Of the two monolithic medieval churches, the Orthodox Church is much less familiar to most Americans. It took a separate path from Catholicism in several respects; and the two churches were in conflict for many centuries. Although our own fellowship has been little influenced by the Orthodox Church, its history and practice are interesting and sometimes instructive.

Relations between church and state in the east were much different from those in the west, because the eastern political leadership and institutions remained intact, centered in Constantinople□(today, Istanbul). So the Eastern Church had a powerful secular ally, but on the other hand the stronger civil government had a much greater ability to meddle in church affairs.

□The city's ancient name, Byzantium, gave rise to the name of the Byzantine Empire.

The greatest names in the history of the Byzantine Empire are Justinian, emperor from 527-565, and his wife Theodora. Empress Theodora was legendarily attractive and intelligent - and she was also a woman of extreme cruelty, deception, and immorality, which she skillfully hid under a façade of lavish religious ritual. Justinian was not very intelligent, yet he was a charismatic and popular leader. But he catered to Theodora's every whim, partly out of infatuation and partly out of fear. The nature of the Orthodox Church owes a great deal to this royal couple.

Justinian dreamed of reuniting the Roman Empire. Thanks to a well-organized army and the military genius of general Belisarius, the Byzantines retook most of North Africa and Italy, plus other areas from the Vandals and Goths. But Theodora hated Belisarius and orchestrated his downfall. The over-extended conquests would have been difficult to defend even with Belisarius in command. Without his strategic talents they were impossible to hold. The biggest prize, Italy, fell to the Lombards in 568; and the rest of Justinian's western conquests fell soon afterwards.

Justinian and Theodora had a more lasting impact on Eastern Orthodox religion. Their policy of complete unity of church and state set a precedent followed in eastern lands long afterwards. And it was Justinian who gave prominence to the use of icons, the key elements of Orthodox

worship and theology. Icons are images, two- or three-dimensional, of Jesus, Mary, or "saints", ranging from small paintings to Justinian's giant statue of Jesus at the main gate of his palace.

Catholicism also encouraged worship of saints, but in Orthodox religion the icons themselves were worshiped. Churches and homes began featuring icons, which were to be kissed and bowed to. The theory of icons is that these images offer a tangible point of contact with the spiritual. They are often described as a 'window' into the spiritual realm. They became popular in Orthodoxy for the same reason that relics became popular in Catholicism: they take away the need to rely completely on an invisible, unseen God, offering a more tangible kind of 'faith'.

□ Orthodox icons can usually be distinguished from Catholic depictions of saints in that Orthodox images usually show a disk behind the head of the person portrayed.

Icons were entrenched in the Eastern Church by the 7th century, but many persons considered them idols, leading to the Iconoclast Controversy under Emperor Leo III (717-741). Leo and the iconoclasts ('image breakers') used many means to fight icons, but they met insurmountable opposition. When Leo sent an official to replace Justinian's statue of Jesus with a large cross, an emotional mob killed the official. John Mansour, the Orthodox Church's most prominent theologian, devised arguments to support icons. Further calls to eliminate icons came, but icons were so popular that this movement never had a chance - even with an emperor behind it.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What lessons might we learn from the Byzantine union of church and state □ What underlying desires led to the use of icons □ What parallels to icons might we have □ What, if anything, is wrong with them □ Why were so many persons angry when Leo III tried to abolish them □ What can we learn from this □

□ *e* □ *estern* □ *urch* □ *Roman* □ *at* □ *olicis* □

In the early Middle Ages, the hierarchy of the Western (Catholic) Church found itself recognized throughout Western Europe and much of North Africa as the absolute authorities on all religious matters. It also accumulated enormous power and influence in secular affairs. As the era went by, it became increasingly recognizable as the forerunner of today's Roman Catholic Church.

The papacy grew ever stronger and more entrenched. Leo I (440-461) was the first bishop of Rome to enjoy undisputed leadership of the Western church. Later bishops of Rome inherited Leo's credibility, and the next step forward in the papacy came under Gregory I "The Great" (590-604). Zealous and ambitious like Leo, Gregory was also a master planner and organizer.

Gregory left two important legacies: he restored a commitment to missions (see below), and his book *On Pastoral Care* became the foundation of Roman Catholic leadership and organization. Most of the book focused on building a powerful and self-perpetuating church hierarchy. From Gregory I until Gregory VII in the 11th century, the church and the papacy enjoyed even greater power and stability than before.

For a long time the Catholic Church had no strong secular government to support it. The heads of the barbarian tribes were unbelievers or Arians. Only the moral authority of the church and the memory of Leo I, whom the barbarians admired for his courage, produced a desire on the part of the barbarians to gain the church's approval. A breakthrough came in 496 when Clovis, king of the Franks, was converted to Catholicism by his wife. Later, Gregory I's missionary projects converted many pagan leaders including the king and queen of the Lombards. The

Roman Church hierarchy gradually achieved close relationships with the new leaders of Western Europe, especially the Franks, who for many years would be the papacy's closest allies.

In 756, the Frankish king Pepin the Short conquered large territories in central Italy and donated them to the Pope as a gesture of loyalty. Thus were created the Papal States, a strategically significant political nation that the popes ruled for over 1000 years. After Pepin died, his son Charles, later called Charles the Great or Charlemagne, carried on the family tradition of closeness with the pope. In 800, when Pope Leo III was besieged by rebel armies, Charles led Frankish armies across the Alps to rescue him. As a special reward, on Christmas Day that year Leo crowned Charles "Holy Roman Emperor", proclaiming him the heir of Rome's past glory.

□Pepin's father was Charles Martel, who stopped the Moslem expansion at Tours (see above).

After Rome fell, relations between East and West were troubled due to different political situations, beliefs, and concerns. A dispute in 484 led to open schism and a papal declaration of excommunication. Public pressure led to an outward reconciliation in 519, but it was a show for public relations purposes. Tension and distrust between the churches continued for many years.

Missions and monasticism both regained significance in this era. Gregory's interest in missions plus his power and strategic ability led to a missionary revival. The missions to Germanic tribes predated Gregory, but his papacy made them more effective and greatly decreased the tensions in Western Europe. Later during the Early Middle Ages, the church both returned to areas where it had disappeared following Rome's fall and also reached entirely new areas like Scandinavia. The Eastern Church also reached new areas, such as Russia in the 10th century.

Not all of the missions were successful. In England, a strong independent church had survived and followed a path different from that of Rome. When Gregory sent Augustine of Canterbury to England in 596, it led to numerous conflicts with the native church. It was not until 664 that Roman officials and English church leaders resolved their differences□at the Synod of Whitby.

□These included dates of special days such as Easter, as well as doctrinal and methodological disputes.

The monastic movement flourished in the Middle Ages, especially in the West. The desire to withdraw from a sinful world is an ancient ideal, but none of the monastic movements in the early church had lasted. The first of the great medieval orders was begun in 529 by Benedict of Nursia, who had studied ancient monastic efforts and sought to avoid their defects by the "Rule", his carefully thought-out set of regulations for monastic life. His monastery at Monte Cassino□ in central Italy emphasized personal spirituality, and imposed a one-year trial period for novices.

□Benedict's monastery was destroyed by Moslem raiders in 884, was rebuilt, and stood until 1944, when it was used as a fortress by Nazi troops and destroyed by an Allied air raid. A new abbey is now on the site.

Other orders followed, and monasticism became one of the hallmarks of medieval Christianity. The variety amongst the groups is interesting, but usually of less spiritual significance than the basic themes. We can well understand the motivation behind monasticism, but in most cases it represents a decision to avoid the problems of the world, rather than trying to help with them.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: If you lived in the Early Middle Ages and knew only of the established churches, could you practice simple New Testament Christianity□Are there any parallels to monasticism today□ Is there anything good about it□

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, September 2012

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Three: The Mainline Church In The Middle Ages Readings In Romans 10 & 1 Corinthians 10

There are two main reasons for us to look at world and church history in the Middle Ages. First, understanding this era and its problems will help us to understand why later events unfolded as they did. And spiritually, there are valuable lessons in the contrast between the dominant mainline churches and the sporadic, struggling attempts to restore New Testament Christianity.

Deal it out no led e Romans & Corinthians

To many persons today, the Middle Ages conjure up images of intense religious activity and observance. Indeed, as the Middle Ages rolled on, the dominance of the mainline churches meant that religion became entrenched in everyday life. Yet a great deal of this incessant activity was based on human will and fleshy righteousness, not the knowledge of God himself.

In discussing Israel's rejection of Jesus, Paul describes two contrasting ways of seeking God (Romans 10:1-11). When the Messiah came, most Israelites were led astray not by erroneous factual knowledge or by a failure to meet a standard, but by seeking human righteousness instead of knowing God. Legalism is not limited to teaching a set of standards required for salvation - it also the thinking that our beliefs, heritage, or performance make us superior to others.

Chapters 9-11 of Romans are an extended discussion on how Israel's rejection of Jesus fits in with the explanation of faith, grace, law, and works in the earlier part of Romans.

God is always near each of us, for God desires above all for us to live by grace in his presence. When we understand this, then "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved". But if we concentrate on determining a list of correct beliefs or required behaviors, then we miss Jesus altogether - even if we say his name 100 times a day. Calling on the name of the Lord has nothing to do with spoken words, but rather involves a humble heart that calls out for his grace.

"These things happened to them as examples to us"; and ancient Israel provides a perspective on church history (1 Corinthians 10:11-13). When we see how easily believers turn to ritual, doctrine, or numerical results instead of seeking to know God, this gives us a reason to remain humble, not a reason to judge. When we see how the medieval churches substituted icons and rituals for faith in the unseen God, it should help us tone down our own craving for tangible results. When we see how Jesus' name was used misused to justify violence and persecution, it should help us see the dangers in our own cravings for sinners to be forced to obey God.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What kind of knowledge did the Israelites lack? How can we tell what Paul means? How would this apply to us? In what ways is ancient Israel an example to us, in the context of these passages? How does this apply to history?

World History: The Early Middle Ages & Late Middle Ages

The transition from the Early Middle Ages to the High Middle Ages took place very gradually, but the world of AD 1000 was noticeably different from that of AD 600. And by AD 1000 there are more sources available to tell us what was going on. The "Dark Ages" are no more, and from many sources we see a sense of confidence that the world was moving in the right direction.

The High Middle Ages are so-called because the values and institutions of the Middle Ages were at their height. Great nations arose all over the world, but Europe emerged dominant, with all of the implications - good and bad - that this had for the future. Europe had a long-term balance of power preventing any nation from dominating and oppressing the others, and it benefitted from favorable geographic conditions and a lack of the kinds of natural and climatic obstacles that, for example, prevented the great medieval empires in Africa from further development. Europe's new position brought both opportunity and responsibility. The Catholic Church benefitted immensely, but the era brought challenges that ultimately the church could not handle.

□ The Franks were now the strong nation of France, the assortment of Angle and Saxon kingdoms were now England, the disconnected German states were the basis of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Norman Vikings had become a traditional nation instead of barbarian raiders. Contrast this with the situation in Asia, where the Mongol dominance was devastating to their neighbors, and also stifled internal change.

The key ideal of the era was the dream of systemizing knowledge. As ancient philosophies and scientific ideas were rediscovered (greatly facilitated by Islamic culture), there was a great desire to interrelate science, religion, culture, politics, and history into a grand unity. In Catholicism, this was exemplified by Thomas Aquinas, whose theologies made him one of the era's heroes - at least to those in positions of power. A different kind of popular 'hero' was produced by the Crusades, but these were shallow heroes of little or no substance such as Richard "Lionheart".

The Late Middle Ages (approx. 1300-1500) saw significant changes. Governments and churches faced the growing pains of a new era. Natural disasters like the Black Death (the bubonic plague), man-made disasters like the Hundred Years War, and the increasing inability of established institutions to meet the world's changing needs made it a tumultuous time.

□ The increased global trade of the era helped spread the plague to more vulnerable areas.

□ Between England and France, it actually lasted 115 years (1338-1453).

There was a widespread questioning of existing values and ideals, including those attached to religion. This was the era when the papacy moved to Avignon and then disintegrated spiritually. Rulers found their thrones uneasy, and several were killed by ambitious rivals. In the established churches, challenges to church dogmas became far more frequent, especially in Catholicism.

Yet at the same time, new technologies and cultural achievements arose. For this was also the time when the Renaissance began, with many illustrious artists, writers, and architects whose works still survive today. But these long-lived cultural achievements can make us forget that, except for the wealthy and powerful, this era was probably a miserable time to be alive. In all this we see the beginnings of the modern world. In particular, the cracking at the seams of the late medieval Catholic Church was about to result in new fellowships, beginning an irrevocable trend towards the multiplicity of denominations of 'Christianity' that is now so familiar.

□ We shall focus more on the Catholic Church than the Orthodox Church for two reasons. The Orthodox Church's influence has always been primarily in one region, while the Catholic Church became a world power in its own right. Also, our own fellowship has been influenced primarily by the denominations that arose from Catholicism, rather than the restoration fellowships that came from the Orthodox churches.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Is there any significance to us in the distinctions between the different eras of history? How does it explain the nature of the churches in these eras? What should our goals be in studying the medieval churches?

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By the High Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church had become the single most powerful and most influential institution in the world. Its rise to institutional power is a story in itself. A key factor was the foundations of the papacy laid by earlier bishops of Rome. But during the late Middle Ages, overconfidence in its own power started to lead the Catholic Church into difficulty.

The medieval papacy continued to build on the foundations laid by Gregory I, whose strategic direction preserved the popes' influence even though many of them had obvious spiritual and intellectual deficiencies. In the High Middle Ages, the church and its leaders sought further to increase their power and position, but the stronger civil governments across Europe made this harder. The key popes of the era are Gregory VII (1073-1085) and Innocent III (1198-1216).

Gregory VII made bold public claims about the papacy and the church, seeking to place the church above all secular rulers once and for all. In the Early Middle Ages, the tradition and moral weight of the church made Western European rulers seek out the pope's favor, but the stronger governments in the High Middle Ages had turned the tables. Gregory wanted monarchs to feel that they needed church approval to rule, not the other way around. A major battleground was control of appointments to church offices - Gregory wanted to take away the power of civil rulers to appoint bishops and the like (the practice called "lay investiture").

□ Since the Orthodox Church always had a strong civil government to share power with, it never really had the chance to acquire the kind of power that the Catholic Church built up. But then it did not face the kinds of crises and massive splits that happened to Catholicism in the Reformation Era.

Gregory was, in a sense, ahead of his time. He claimed papal immunity from judgment, the absolute inerrancy of the church, and the right of the pope to make arbitrary laws. Although some of these beliefs later became part of Catholicism, most of them were rejected in his time. Gregory was far too ambitious, and although he won one dramatic clash of wills with Emperor Henry IV in 1077, by the end of his papacy he was diplomatically isolated and stood alone even against most other church leaders, who had become frightened by his sweeping claims.

□ For example, in 1074 married priests were excommunicated for the first time.

Instead it was the purely practical Innocent III who brought the papacy to the height of its power. Innocent was no visionary or theorist. With keen insight into human nature, he eagerly exploited others' fears and anxieties. Besides using church offices as rewards, Innocent used the interdict (forbidding marriages and other church rites) and indulgences (granting of forgiveness in return for services or payment). Innocent often tangled with equally ruthless rulers such as England's King John and France's Philip Augustus, helping the church gain power, authority, and wealth.

But the papacy began to unravel less than a century after Innocent, as succeeding popes became reckless and high-handed in their dealings with civil leaders. The crisis came in 1303, as a result of Pope Boniface VIII's running feud with King Philip IV of France. When Philip passed a law taxing church revenues, Boniface ordered the French clergy not to pay it. Philip responded crudely but decisively - he sent a squad of thugs to kidnap Boniface and beat him up. Boniface died soon afterwards, and a new and tumultuous era had begun.

Two years later the Frenchman Clement V was elected pope, and he moved the papacy to the town of Avignon, in an area essentially controlled by France. For 70 years the Roman church was led from Avignon, a period called by church historians the "Avignon Captivity", or sometimes the "Babylonian Captivity" (due to the coincidental time spans). In 1377 Gregory XI decided to move the papacy back to Rome, but when he died soon afterwards a new situation

developed, called the "Great Schism". Rival groups of cardinals elected rival popes, one reigning in Rome and one in Avignon. The Council of Pisa was called to settle things, but it only elected a third pope who fought with the other two. This comical situation was finally resolved at the Council of Constance in 1417, when the main factions agreed on Martin V as sole pope. But the sleazy and arrogant Martin was no improvement on any of the popes he replaced.

□ The Council did have one "success" of a kind, when the emperor tricked the reformer Jan Hus into appearing at the Council, and then condemned and executed him.

Though the late medieval papacy thoroughly discredited itself, the worst was yet to come. In the late 15th century, the "Renaissance Papacy" featured an incredible series of thieves, atheists, and libertines, capped off by the notorious Rodrigo Borgia, who managed to get himself elected as Pope Alexander VI. All the while, the church was enriching itself and engaging in the rampant corruption that would soon provoke Martin Luther and others openly to oppose them.

Relations between church and state grew increasingly complex and cynical. Although the masses still largely believed in the slogans, rituals, and other trappings of medieval Catholicism, these had become just the cynical tools used by a cast of calculating popes, cardinals, kings and princes who would rival any group of amoral and venal politicians in today's world.

The era also saw the final, official split between East and West. A new series of disputes led to the spectacle of the leaderships of both churches publicly excommunicating each other in 1054. The Byzantine (Eastern) Empire itself was going through a long, slow period of territorial erosion, as the neighboring Moslem kingdoms gradually reduced it to a sliver of Justinian's empire. In 1453, the Moslems took Constantinople, and the Byzantine Empire came to an end. The Orthodox Church still exists today in several denominations, most of which have changed much less over the centuries than the Catholic and Protestant denominations have.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What can the history of the papacy teach us? Are there any spiritual lessons involved? Why might believers of the time have accepted so much ungodly behavior? Can we learn anything from this?

□ *the Medieval Church* □ *inside & outside*

The Catholic Church's great power enabled it to make significant internal changes and also to have far-reaching effects on the secular world, even where it had no direct presence. Sometimes the church used its power for godly purposes, or at least for significant secular achievements. But far too often the church resorted to force or violence against those who disagreed with it.

Inside the medieval church, monasticism grew rapidly in both east and west; and two important new orders arose. In 1209 Francis of Assisi, a lover of nature and a friend of outcasts, founded the Franciscan Order, based on his belief that 'penance' was the highest form of spirituality (his original name for the order was the "preachers of penance"). In 1215 Dominic Guzman began the Dominican Order. Guzman was a Spaniard who was alarmed that the "heretic" Cathari were drawing away so many members from the Catholic Church, and who felt that the Catholic Church should learn from their appeal. So he established a breeding ground for elite missionaries who would live lives of absolute self-denial and "spirituality".

□ Cathari (or Cathars) means "pure ones". Their aim was to restore New Testament Christianity, but their concept of what this involved was different from our own. We'll study them next week.

The great Gothic-style cathedrals, many of which are still used, also arose in the era. New architectural features like flying buttresses and stronger, thinner support pillars enabled designers to build larger structures without the ponderous walls of early medieval cathedrals. This also left room for more windows, many now done in stained glass. The resulting 'religious' feeling that they instilled was a significant part of Catholicism's hold on the average person.

Reflecting the tenor of the times, the Scholasticism movement, of which Thomas Aquinas was the master practitioner, sought to systematize Catholic doctrine and to integrate other knowledge into a framework designed to suite the church's agenda. Aquinas was skilled at using Scripture to support standard Catholic doctrine and to explain away the church's inconsistencies. His *Summa Theologica* also laid out an accompanying methodology for interpreting Scripture.

Yet there was increasing resistance from independent thinkers. Many of Aquinas's writings were specifically crafted to counter the writings of teachers like Peter Abelard and Arnold of Brescia, whom we shall discuss next week. Aquinas's own methods at first raised questions until church authorities saw his eagerness to support them, and gave his teachings official approval.

In relations with the rest of the world, the most commendable of all characteristics of the High Middle Age churches, especially the Catholic Church, was their commitment to world missions. The Scandinavian and Slavic nations were completely evangelized, and Jesus was taught in China for the first time, all without the benefits of modern communications.

But the lengthy, wasteful, and excruciatingly foolish Crusades left a lasting legacy of hatred and bitterness. Resentful over Moslem control of Christianity's earliest homelands, church and civil leaders resorted to armed force to retake them. In the First Crusade, called by Pope Urban II in 1095, European armies took Jerusalem, Antioch, and other territories away from Moslem rulers, establishing "Christian" kingdoms in their place. But other Crusades were humiliating or disastrous. Illustrious figures like Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and King Louis IX of France died senselessly while crusading, and by 1291 all the territory taken from the Moslems was lost.

□ When Urban announced it at a meeting of church leaders, some of them objected but were shouted down by pre-arranged chants of "Deus vult" ("God wills it"), which became the slogan of the Crusades.

Another disgraceful development, the Inquisition, started in 1184 with a papal directive that bishops 'inquire' into the beliefs of their subjects, to step up attacks on "heretics" □ In 1220 the Inquisition was placed directly under papal control. Those accused of heretical beliefs could either admit it and be executed, or deny it and then be tortured into admitting it before being executed. The Inquisition also tried to head off "heresy" by banning Bible reading by non-clergy in 1229. The Inquisition only represents what many believers would do if they had the power. It is an old human failing to feel justified in forcing others to do what we think is right.

□ As the Catholic Church became increasingly violent and hardened in its persecution of "heretics", the Orthodox Church became less violent as its primary civil support, the Byzantine Empire, crumbled.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How could the same church support world missions and yet practice violence and persecution □ What motivates measures like the Crusades and the Inquisition □ Was anything good about them □ What should we learn from them □

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, September 2012
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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Four: Restoration Fellowship In The Middle Ages Readings In Isaiah 37 & Zechariah 8

Even when the power of the established churches was at its height, many believers sought to return to simple New Testament Christianity. Although most of these efforts had only limited success in worldly terms, they kept alive the ideal of the pure gospel. They can also encourage us by the reminder that God is always there for anyone who seeks him for his own sake.

God Provides For The Remnant In Isaiah & Zechariah

God is always quick to respond to those who seek him. Whenever believers wish to be closer to God's presence and to live by the grace of the gospel, God will provide for every spiritual need that they may have. He can do this no matter what the circumstances might look like from a worldly point of view - and this has been true in every time and place.

When King Hezekiah sought guidance from Isaiah during a time of fear and discouragement, the prophet assured him that no matter what happened God would always allow a remnant to take root (Isaiah 37:30-32). Isaiah foresaw a time of complete dependence on God's Providence for their needs, for the nation would be ravaged by the Assyrians (this is the meaning of verse 30 - it will be three years before the land is even going to be able to be farmed again).

The context of Isaiah 36-37 is Assyria's attack on Judah in 701 BC, when they almost destroyed the nation. In 2 Chronicles 32, the chronicler introduces his account by saying, "after all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah", to emphasize the injustice of Hezekiah's troubles. See also 2 Kings 18:17-19:37, much of which is paralleled in Isaiah.

But then there would be new roots and new fruit. The nation would emerge strengthened by Hezekiah's faithful handling of the crisis, and would enjoy a time of peace. This whole episode has spiritual parallels both in individual lives and in history. In terms of our present study, the times when there seem to be no visible signs of genuine New Testament Christianity are at worst always a time when a remnant is being nurtured. Both the roots and the fruits of the remnant are always by God's grace, not human goodness or brilliance.

In contrast with his father Ahaz, who so miserably handled a similar situation, as described in Isaiah 7-8.

Unfortunately, after Hezekiah's death his son Manasseh would lead Judah back into idolatry and danger.

Zechariah also spoke of an inheritance for the remnant (Zechariah 8:6-12). At a time when the entire nation needed to be rebuilt, God promised to bless the work and to recreate a peaceful and prosperous nation. Though this seemed unattainable to many of the people, it would not be a surprise to God. He would bring back his people from the east and from the west - then referring to the scattered Israelites, but with obvious meaning in later history as well. And again it is God himself who gives his people life and growth, in his grace and his compassion on them.

Zechariah prophesied about 520 BC, as the people were just returning from captivity in Babylon. Judah and Jerusalem were neglected ruins that needed to be rebuilt one step at a time.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What promises does God make to his "remnant"? Which promises does he always make? What promises or blessings might apply only in certain circumstances? How should this influence our perspective on church history?

A Forgotten Story in the Medieval Restoration Fellowship

The medieval restoration fellowships have been largely forgotten, even among those who should most sympathize with their hopes and goals. Much of this has to do with the tendency to look at these bodies from a worldly point of view - whether from the historical viewpoint of the established churches or through the distortions of our own culturally-influenced expectations.

A gracious perspective will help us learn from them and be encouraged by them. Winners write the history books, and we accept their distortions because it is human nature to assume that what happened was somehow meant to happen. The most basic reason for the obscurity of these medieval fellowships is their lack of long-term numerical success. Like the Native American tribes, they were once numerous but then declined through no direct fault of their own. These medieval groups were often deliberately destroyed, and their histories written by their destroyers.

There is also a lack of direct links to the present and to our own fellowship. We are less inclined to think of them as "our" brothers and sisters because of the historical and cultural gap. Then there are external differences, especially in beliefs and doctrines. Most of these groups held eccentric or 'clearly' erroneous beliefs - and their errors are easier for us to spot than our own. But the common hope of returning to simple gospel truths, of replacing human authority and tradition with the grace of the cross, is more important than any of these secondary issues.

The founders of the American Restoration fellowships also had a wide assortment of views that most of us would find bizarre or scandalous. Some founders of the Churches of Christ, Christian Church, and Disciples of Christ would be unwelcome today in their own fellowships. Circumstances change, views change, individuals change. Only the commitment to the grace of Jesus truly and lastingly brings human souls together, now or in any other time and place.

Historians generally call it the American Restoration "Movement". Thinking of these bodies instead as 'fellowships', though, is more in keeping with the values of the cross and the empty tomb. When something becomes a "movement", invariably the focus shifts from genuine spiritual values to institutional goals.

So a belated appreciation is due to these persons who so long ago risked everything to pursue the pure gospel - at a time when the wealthy and powerful were not merely content with the powerful medieval churches, but also devoted their power and wealth to stamping out any alternatives. Our medieval brothers and sisters sacrificed to keep the pure news of the cross and the resurrection in human minds, and we shouldn't fuss at them if they had a few strange ideas.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What features should a true "restoration" fellowship have? What is essential? What is desirable but not essential? Do the Scriptures specify any criteria? What expectations should we have for these medieval restoration groups?

Significant Medieval Fellowship & Leaders

In our brief survey, we shall look at the best-known restoration fellowships and teachers from the Early and High Middle Ages. In the suggested sources, you can learn about other such groups. Through the centuries, there really have been a great many faithful believers who just wanted to know God and to live by the gospel; and we can gain insight and encouragement from them all.

Even before believers from within the established medieval churches began to seek reform or restoration, there were many holdouts from Catholicism and Orthodoxy that lasted well into the Early Middle Ages. In remote areas such as England, Ethiopia, and North Africa, the authority

of the mainline churches was ineffective; and local church leaders often went their own way out of conviction or out of necessity. We shall never know the stories of most such churches, especially as many of them were in the areas most exposed to the Viking and Moslem invasions.

Another intriguing question concerns the many medieval mission churches started in areas far distant from Rome or Constantinople. In many such places, Catholic missionaries (especially) dispensed with many of the trappings of their own religion, and preached the straightforward truths of the gospel. Thus many converts in distant missions responded solely to the gospel, not to a church organization or institution. Afterwards, of course, there were concerted efforts to assimilate them into Catholicism, which could lead them in a number of directions. In most cases, there is no possible way for us to know how things turned out for individual believers.

Of special interest are the groups that broke away deliberately and permanently from one of the mainline churches. A few became large or long-lived enough that they are part of standard church histories, while others saw little or no permanent success from their efforts. Two particularly significant restoration fellowships arose out of the medieval Orthodox Church.

□ Many smaller groups were absorbed by larger fellowships such as the Waldenses (see below). Others ended quickly and left barely enough traces to be remembered, while many have been forgotten forever.

The first major effort to return to ancient Christianity was the Paulicians, beginning in the 6th century. The name came from opponents who mocked them for following the New Testament instead of worshipping 'saints' and icons. The group began in Armenia, but soon spread throughout the Byzantine Empire. Empress Theodora hated them and persecuted them harshly, often boasting that she had tortured or killed over 100,000 Paulicians. Their beliefs were summarized in a book called *The Key Of Truth*. They had two main points: rejecting all church hierarchies (any position above the congregational level), and insisting on baptism only for believing adults, never for infants or children too young to make their own decisions.

□ In the mainline churches, infant baptism became the norm in the 5th century, during the era of the gradual collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Both of the mainline medieval churches practiced it.

Despite persecution, the Paulicians were numerous and widespread for several centuries. Their teachings remained largely the same until the 9th and 10th centuries, when they began to be heavily influenced by other eastern religions, especially Manichaeism, a controversial and dualistic religion. By the High Middle Ages, the Paulicians had dwindled out, a combination of persecution, increasing Moslem conquests in the east, and perhaps blending in with other groups.

□ In dualism there is a good 'god' and an evil 'god' who are evenly matched, so that humanity must help decide which god 'wins'. Mani was a third-century teacher who taught a combination of Gnostic Christianity and Persian religion. The degree to which the Paulicians may have absorbed his teachings later in their history is debatable, because almost everything we know about them comes from their enemies.

Another group, the Bogomils, began in 10th century Bulgaria. A group of Paulicians had been forcibly relocated to Bulgaria, and an Orthodox priest named Bogomil (which, ironically, meant "loved by God") became convinced that the Paulicians were on the right track, especially with their rejection of human church hierarchies. Christianity was then new to Bulgaria, so Bogomil could present the gospel to persons who had little or no acquaintance with the established churches. The Bogomils grew quickly and soon spread southward into the main part of the Byzantine Empire. They were more aggressive than the Paulicians; and Bogomil leaders were unafraid publicly to reproach Orthodox leaders for their preoccupation with wealth and authority.

Bogomil congregations had widely varying beliefs and practices with two main things in common: a complete rejection of hierarchical leadership and an emphasis on individual Christian involvement and sacrifice. They varied widely on most other subjects, including baptism. The Bogomils lasted into the 14th century, when they disappear from history. They are the last large-scale restoration group to come out of the medieval Orthodox Church. In the Late Middle Ages and the Reformation Era, Orthodox Church leaders were more successful than their Catholic counterparts were in maintaining authority and control over believers in their areas.

Meanwhile, some significant restoration fellowships arose out of the Catholic Church in the High Middle Ages, with France often a center of restoration sentiment. The most well-known and controversial of all of these groups was the Cathari, or Cathars ("pure ones"). They arose about 1100, and were devoted to restoring their idea of pure Christianity. The Cathars were widely known for their sincerity and a lifestyle of simplicity and zeal. They began as an extreme reaction to Roman Catholic practices, so they rejected not only church hierarchies and alliances with secular governments, but also all rituals including baptism and the Lord's Supper. For conversion the Cathars practiced the laying on of hands, which they called "spiritual baptism".

□The Cathars' rejection of Catholicism was so extreme that they even turned against some basic teachings about Jesus that they felt were too 'Catholic'. Some Cathars later came to believe that Jesus was not even a literal person, but only a spirit who created the illusion of having a body (this is called "Docetism").

The Cathars quickly spread throughout all of Western Europe except for England. They were especially strong in Italy and in France, where their opponents called them the "Albigensians" because the region of Albi was a stronghold of Cathar teaching. The Catholic hierarchy grew to hate and fear them, to the point that Pope Innocent III (see last week's notes) declared a Crusade against them in 1208 because of their 'heresy'. The Cathars were then relentlessly persecuted, with tens of thousands of them tortured and killed. Meanwhile, the Dominican Order (again see last week's notes) openly appealed to the values of the Cathars, and some Cathars chose this gentler route to return to Catholicism. By about 1300, the Cathars disappeared from history.

□This Crusade was led by Simon de Montfort, whose son (of the same name) would later become famous for his part in creating the British Parliament despite the strong objections of the monarchy.

A group more similar to us began in Lyon, France in the late 12th century. A wealthy merchant named Peter Waldo experienced a spiritual awakening, and was moved to give away his home and property in order to devote himself to teaching the gospel in his community. Initially, Waldo focused his lessons on the Christian lifestyle he saw in the Scriptures, so Catholic authorities tolerated him. But when he began to call for a return to the Bible for all Christian practices and teachings, he was warned at a Council and then excommunicated soon afterwards.

Waldo was especially known for his work in translating the Bible, then available only in Latin, into everyday languages so that all believers could learn it. Waldo first called his fellowship the "poor men of Lyon", and later "the poor in spirit" (*pauperes spiritu*). But the group is known to history by the name Waldenses or Waldensians, the name given them by Catholic authorities.

The Waldenses were the most widespread of the medieval restoration groups. They were strong not only in France and Italy, but also in Central Europe. Many smaller groups with similar origins joined them, one of the best indications that there are many such medieval groups whose full histories will never be known. An offshoot of the Waldenses in Lombardy also united several smaller groups in Northern Italy into the *Pauperes Lombardi* (the Lombardian paupers).

As the Waldenses grew, variations in doctrine and practice became common, with the one

common factor a rejection of leadership positions above the congregational level. Due to their strong aversion to the ritualism of the Catholicism, most Waldenses only observed the Lord's Supper once per year. Despite widespread persecution, they were successful for several centuries; and still existed in many areas when the Protestant Reformation began. Though they were not the direct ancestors of any current group, for a long time they furnished a valuable example of Christianity uncluttered by arbitrary human authority or tradition.

There were also restoration-minded teachers among those who remained loyal to Catholicism. Two of the most influential were Peter Abelard and Arnold of Brescia, both of whom were most active in the mid-12th century. Arnold challenged the church hierarchy to reconsider its proper role; and he publicly called for an end to the massive accumulation of wealth by the church as an institution and its leaders as individuals. Arnold was just beginning to extend this to a general call to return to the simple ways of the New Testament church when he was executed in 1155.

Brilliant, temperamental French theologian Peter Abelard also left a lasting impression. Abelard loved the church but was increasingly disturbed by its reliance on human authority and the inconsistency of its teachings and practices. His enemies tried to discredit him through his romance with a student, Heloise (whose uncle was an important church official). When that did not damage his influence, they hired goons to assault him and castrate him (which also made him ineligible for most church positions). Abelard then entered a monastery to write and lecture, to the great irritation of church leaders. His famous work *Sic et Non* ("Yes and No") is a comprehensive call for the church to change its assumptions and its reliance on human authority.

□ The letters that Abelard and Heloise wrote to each other are today more widely read than any of his philosophical works. Both of them were skilled and expressive writers, and their letters are considered one of the great literary achievements of the era.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What did these groups and teachers have in common? Does this tell us anything about what it means to restore New Testament Christianity? Why were they persecuted? How might their history otherwise have been different? How should we view the ways they differed from us?

□□e □ate Middle Ages □□round□or□□or □□e Reformation

In the 14th and 15th centuries, the spiritual deficiencies of the Catholic Church's leadership and the inconsistency in its teachings had become so obvious that many of its own teachers openly questioned its doctrines. The Reformation was still in the future, but once again we can see the attraction and the spiritual power of the ideals of simple grace-oriented Christianity.

By the Late Middle Ages, we also clearly see the roots of the Reformation. Within the Catholic Church, William of Ockham (or Occam) in the early 1300s continued the tradition of Abelard and Arnold, combining an impressive teaching career with a call to return to the basics of the gospel. Catholic mystics and Humanists also lent their influence to the growing call for reform.

John Wycliffe in England and Jan Hus in Bohemia took a more direct approach, openly challenging the legitimacy of Catholicism's authority. Next week we'll look at the main medieval roots of the Reformation, as the church and the world moved towards a new era.

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, September 2012*

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Five: Medieval Roots Of The Reformation Readings In John 4 & 1 Corinthians 3

The Protestant Reformation in the 1500s was the end result of a long process, with roots in many different places. Many of those involved in the origins of the Reformation held ideals and hopes that closely parallel our own. The entire era held many possibilities both good and bad, making it worth our time to study both for its successes and for its failures.

Old Manes in the Roman Empire & Corinthians

The truths that Jesus and Paul express in these verses apply also to history of any kind. Everything that happens, good or bad, either in the secular world or in the religious world, is heavily affected by the past. Ultimately, everything of spiritual significance and importance can be traced back to the hand of God, who uses many different persons and circumstances.

After Jesus' meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well, he tells his disciples that they have reaped the benefits of work done by others who came before them (John 4:36-38). The prophets, priests, and other spiritual leaders under the Old Covenant could only know that someday the Messiah would come. Physically, the disciples had to work just as hard as believers of earlier ages, but from the beginning they could see Jesus and experience many aspects of his divinity.

Each generation thinks it is at the summit of achievement or knowledge, without truly giving credit to those who have gone before - and this is true in many areas of life. Our own time and place will someday be someone else's ancient history. We cannot change that, but we can allow the struggles and lessons of past eras to make us more humble and appreciative.

In the body of Christ, we all have a role, but "neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything" (1 Corinthians 3:6-9), since all genuine life and growth come from God. Like so many today, the Corinthians were indulging in counter-productive competition, comparing their lives and ministries to determine who was the most 'spiritual', using their own artificial 'standards'. Each individual soul has infinite value, yet there are limitations on what anyone can do by himself or herself. Every ministry in the church, whether it is seen or unseen, praised or ignored, is equally important. No matter what appearances and human logic might tell us, in the body of Christ each part depends on all the others and is inextricably intertwined with all the others.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How do these Scriptures connect with the description of the church as the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12? How would these ideas apply to studying church history? How should they affect our ministries today?

Late Medieval Restoration/Reformation Movements

In the Late Middle Ages, two large-scale efforts arose to call the medieval Catholic Church to return to the principles of New Testament Christianity. Neither of these fellowships attained long-term numerical success, but both had a significant effect on future events. In Wycliffe and Hus, we see both the roots and the possibilities of the coming Reformation.

Most of our studies henceforth will concentrate on efforts to return to New Testament Christianity that arose out of Catholicism, as after the Middle Ages such efforts were rarer in the Orthodox Church.

John Wycliffe (or Wyclif, c. 1302-1384) was a prominent professor at Oxford University, whose career was at its peak during the Avignon papacy, when many questioned the medieval church's hierarchy, wealth, and secular power. Wycliffe's challenges to human authority earned him the nickname "Morningstar Of The Reformation". Like many others, Wycliffe turned to Scripture for answers to his concerns. He particularly focused on the contrast between human authority and divine authority; and he first presented his thoughts in a celebrated lecture series at Oxford in 1376, entitled "On Civil Lordship". Some influential English nobles supported his challenges to church authority and prevented English church leaders from imprisoning or torturing him.

Wycliffe also began working on translating the Bible into English, so that non-scholars could read it and think about its teachings for themselves. Like Peter Waldo and others, Wycliffe realized that the medieval church's prohibition of Bible reading made it impossible for the average person to question or discuss its teachings. Translating from the Latin Vulgate, Wycliffe completed the New Testament in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382.

□The church had banned all Bible reading by non-clergy in 1229. See also the last section below.

□The Vulgate, or "Common" version, was translated by Jerome of Bethlehem in the late 4th century. At the time, it gave Latin-speaking Christians a good quality translation that was (at the time) easy to understand. It became the most popular version of its day; but in the Middle Ages it gradually became the only version used by the Catholic Church, while at the same time far fewer persons could read it.

Wycliffe had many followers, whom he called "the poor preachers", but who were usually called the "Lollards", from a word that meant "mumblers". This came from the characteristic manner of speaking that Wycliffe taught believers to use. Using a page or two of Wycliffe's English translation of Scripture, they would simply comment on it to small informal groups of onlookers. The Catholic hierarchy strongly opposed Wycliffe and his teachings. Church authorities prevented his supporters from obtaining prominent positions, and they pressured Oxford into expelling Wycliffe; but his popular support was too strong for them to do any direct personal harm. Wycliffe's teachings and his memory remained influential long after his death.

□Wycliffe most angered church officials by challenging their doctrine of "transubstantiation", the belief that the Eucharist wafer and wine (parallel to bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper) actually become the literal body and blood of Jesus. Catholic priests claim to possess the unique ability to do this.

□They did get a bizarre revenge in 1428, when they exhumed his dead body and burned it as a "heretic".

Jan Hus (or Huss, 1371-1415) of Bohemia was often called "The Continental Wycliffe". In Wycliffe's writings, Hus found answers to things that troubled him about the state of the Church. But Hus's approach was more aggressive, and combined biblical teachings with a strong nationalist sentiment. He thus soon lost the support of Bohemia's civil leaders, and lacked the kind of protection and advice that allowed Wycliffe (and later Luther) to risk the church's anger.

□The region of Bohemia is today the western half of the Czech Republic.

In 1415, "Holy Roman" Emperor Sigismund summoned Hus to the Council of Constance (during the discussions about the divided papacy) to explain his views, guaranteeing Hus safe conduct to and from the Council. When Hus appeared, the emperor declared that Hus was a heretic, so any promises made to him were invalid. Hus was immediately arrested, tried, and executed. There was a period of unrest in Bohemia, but later some of Hus's followers began to concentrate solely on his teachings from Scripture, separating themselves from his political and nationalist beliefs.

About 50 years after Hus died, some of his followers founded a fellowship called the "Unitas Fratrum" (Unity of Brethren), based on a complete separation of church and state and a return to the principles of simple New Testament Christianity. This group proved ineffective because of internal divisions and leadership rivalries. But it did help to keep alive Hus's memory and teachings long enough to call them to the attention of the 16th century reformers.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What concerns or desires motivated Wycliffe and Hus? How were they affected by their own time and place? What would we have thought of them at the time? How can we learn from their successes and failures?

Internal Calls for Reform

Within the Catholic Church, many of its own teachers and leaders began to call loudly for reform during the Late Middle Ages. None of these had any intention of leaving the church, yet they raised questions significant to us because of their call to replace human authority and tradition with teachings of the Bible. Their range of concerns also gives us some things to consider today.

William Of Ockham (or Occam, c. 1285-1349), an English philosopher and Franciscan friar, is one of the more interesting figures of an interesting era. An independent thinker and an engaging personality, Ockham had a public debate with church officials over "apostolic poverty", a question important to Franciscans but usually left as a matter of silent conviction. In contrast to the massive wealth that the church had accumulated throughout the Middle Ages, Ockham used the lives of Jesus and the apostles to call for change. At a minimum, Ockham called for an end to the church acting as a landlord, owning property on which others lived.

Umberto Eco used Ockham as the hero of his bestselling novel *The Name Of The Rose*.

While Aquinas and the Scholastics stated that every teaching of the church could be logically proven with reason alone, Ockham taught that there is an element of faith that is always part of mortal efforts to seek an eternal God. Ockham is probably most familiar today for the principle usually known as "Occam's Razor", which states that between two equally possible explanations, the simpler one should be preferred. In philosophy, a comprehensive version of Ockham's approach is called Nominalism, while Aquinas's approach is called (Moderate) Realism.

Ockham's original words were, "entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity".

The Late Middle Ages are known for the "Renaissance" and the rise of the philosophy known as Humanism. In its basic form, Humanism emphasizes human creativity, achievement, and knowledge. The Humanists' cultural achievements made them feel as if humanity could accomplish anything it wished to. They also re-popularized the study of long-neglected classical writers. Within the Catholic Church, a group of scholars adopted a different form of Humanism, seeking to apply it to the problems within the church. The Christian Humanists were idealists, believing that they could make the church much better. While secular Humanists revived interest in forgotten ancient pagan writers, the Christian Humanists promoted the study of the Bible, almost completely ignored within the church, and other early Christian writings.

The most celebrated of them was Desiderius Erasmus (or Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1466-1536). Often called "The Prince Of The Christian Humanists", Erasmus was a quiet and peaceable man with no desire to engage in hostility of any kind, who lived in a contentious era in which it was almost impossible not to engage in partisan debate. During the chaotic Reformation era, he remained faithful to the Catholic Church but constantly sought mutual understanding, earning him scorn from extremists on both sides but leaving some valuable thoughts for posterity.

Erasmus studied all available manuscripts of the New Testament in the original Greek, long neglected by the Catholic Church in favor of its Latin translation. Erasmus published a carefully edited original Greek text of the New Testament that proved invaluable to future generations of Bible translators. Erasmus also published voluminous numbers of essays and booklets on a wide variety of subjects, many of them gentle but convincing satires of conventional religion, the most popular and influential of these being called the *Colloquia* (literally, "written dialogues").

□ Earlier translators, such as Wycliffe and Waldo, had to use the Latin Vulgate as their source. So any inaccuracies or biases in the Latin version would be reproduced in their translations.

Erasmus's running discussions with church officials brought out many important ideas related to their differing views on the nature and purpose of the church. The most ironic is the church's constant accusations that Erasmus was a radical seeking to reject old, traditional ways in favor of modern innovations - to which Erasmus simply replied that in truth he sought to return to more ancient biblical truths instead of more recent human doctrines and practices.

Thomas More (1478-1535) of England left a more mixed legacy. Fiercely loyal to the Catholic Church to the point of eagerly persecuting Protestant "heretics", More still saw the deficiencies of Catholicism, and he especially delighted in embarrassing theologians who thought they had logical proofs for every doctrine and method. He often quoted a non-existent Scripture (such as "Matthew 29"), knowing that the theologians would invent an interpretation and then look foolish when told there was no such Scripture. More became King Henry VIII's Lord Chancellor; but they had a strained relationship, and eventually More was beheaded.

□ Also well-known for his role in secular philosophy and for his book *Utopia*.

□ As Lord Chancellor, More ordered a number of well-known Protestants to be burned at the stake.

In this troubled era it was not only scholars and teachers who called for reform. In Florence, Italy, Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) boldly called for moral reform, exhorting the masses to cleanse their lives from sin and challenging church leaders and secular officials to do the same. His outspoken teachings drew a wide following, and he popularized the practice of the "bonfire of the vanities", in which he encouraged others to bring immoral books, religious statuary and the like for public burning. But Savonarola's public support proved fickle, and it was not long before angry authorities captured, tortured, and executed him.

The Christian "Mystics" did not really call for restoration or reform, but rather expressed inner spiritual longings that were unfulfilled by the mainline church. Drawing on the example of Bernard of Clairvaux, a popular 12th century monk, mystics in the High and Late Middle Ages sought what they called "absorption into the divine" through personal piety. They turned away from church rituals and doctrines, and sought to develop a more personal relationship with God.

The best-known mystic writing is the devotional classic *The Imitation Of Christ*, by Thomas Kempis (early 15th century, "if you seek Jesus in all things, you will find him"); but many other voices expressed similar spiritual desires. Earlier, Hildegard of Bingen (late 12th century) left a wide variety of writings and also some of the world's oldest surviving musical compositions. Mystics came from all over Europe - Julian of Norwich (England), Catherine of Siena (Italy), and Meister Eckhart (Germany) - reminding us of the soul's desire to know God within everyone.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What motivated all these calls for change? Are there things that they all have in common? How do they differ? What do we have in common with them? What can we learn from each one? What might we have done at the time?

Printing & the Scriptures

The widespread availability of the Scriptures in everyday languages was a vital factor in the success of the Reformation. For many centuries, the established churches had carefully controlled access to the Bible, but the development of modern printing changed things. Today we still owe a debt to the pioneers who took risks so that others could read God's Word.

For most of the Middle Ages, the Roman Church carefully controlled access to the Scriptures, suppressing versions other than the Latin Vulgate and in 1229 instituting a ban on Bible reading by non-clergy. For most believers, their only contact with the Bible came from the second-hand or third-hand references they heard from Catholic clergy. Even this became rare during the Middle Ages, as Catholic priests of the era generally used a homiletic approach that focused on what they desired church members to do, rather than on expounding the teachings of Scripture.

The medieval Orthodox Church did not suppress Bible reading to the same degree, but it downplayed the importance of Scripture in favor of tradition and ritual, and especially icons. To a large degree, the Orthodox Church taught that the Bible is the result of church tradition and doctrine, not the source of it.

Following Peter Waldo's early efforts to translate Scripture into everyday languages, Wycliffe and other pioneers pursued this goal on a larger scale, hoping to make the Bible available to all who wished to read it. Before the 15th century, this involved not only translation, but also the laborious writing out of each copy of the Bible by hand. This greatly hindered the widespread reading of Scripture, until one of the world's great inventions considerably accelerated the process and provided the final piece of the puzzle needed for the Protestant Reformation.

At the time, it cost the equivalent of a man's yearly salary to buy an entire Bible. Wycliffe famously expressed the desire that, "I will cause that every plowboy in the fields shall be able to read Scripture."

German inventor Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1394-1468) is widely known as the "inventor of printing", and he is remembered for the first book he produced on his new press, a Bible. The Chinese had actually invented various forms of printing centuries before, but what Gutenberg invented was the modern form of printing using moveable type, necessary (before computers) for mass production of written material. Besides printing's benefits in other fields, Bibles and other religious writings could now be distributed widely, quickly, and inexpensively.

The development of moveable type actually involved several separate inventions, all of which were necessary for the process to work. Gutenberg developed a new metal alloy, invented a new type of ink, and re-designed the letters of the alphabet to accommodate the small pieces of metal type.

The invention coincided with a growing desire for new "vernacular" (ordinary language) Bible translations. Several new English language versions appeared in the 1500's; and in 1525 William Tyndale published the first English New Testament translated from the original Greek. Miles Coverdale, Thomas Mathew, and others also produced new versions - and started new debates.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why did reformers like Waldo and Wycliffe put such an emphasis on reading Scripture? What should we learn from them? What are the implications of the effects of the printing press on Christian history? Are they all good?

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, October 2012

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For WeeSi: The Protestant Reformation Readings In Psalm 127 & 1 Corinthians 3

In the early 1500s, growing concerns over the deficiencies of the medieval Catholic Church led to a widespread desire to return to the simpler ideals of the gospel. Within a short time, several large groups split off from the mainline church. Some of their ideals were similar to our own hopes, yet the various branches of the Protestant Reformation took some widely different paths.

Building on the Foundation of Jesus' Gospel & Corinthians

The Reformation Era featured many persons who desired in some way to return to New Testament Christianity and who accomplished numerical success in their efforts. Yet the historical events also show us how easy it is to become derailed from our original hopes and ideals. Our ministries are constantly tested in ways that reveal our foundations for what they are.

Whether in the church or our personal lives, it is always wisest to let the Lord "build the house" (Psalm 127:1-2). Despite the familiar caution that, "unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain"; it is still easy to let our own agendas, emotions, and biases drive our actions and beliefs. This is just human nature. The famous figures in church history have had this struggle, some of them to the point of completely derailing or destroying their original good intentions.

We thus should alternate toiling and resting in our ministry (v.2). It is vain (in both senses) to believe that we need to take all the burdens upon ourselves, to drive each other to constant effort, to persist in aiming for goals that we ourselves have set. If we build on the foundation of Jesus, then we shall always remember that, "my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30).

Paul exhorts Christians to build only on the solid foundation of Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:10-23). He reminds the divided church at Corinth that the proper basis of unity is God's oneness, not human leadership or authority. Works based on human skill or knowledge can last for centuries, but only something built on the foundations and values of the gospel can last for eternity.

See last week's notes for a discussion of the preceding verses (1 Cor. 3:6-9).

In Christ we are called to be careful how we build. Numerical results or external goals do not justify the use of human methodologies that conflict with the grace and truth of the gospel. Neither short-term results nor popular opinion test our foundations, for these often result from work based on human wealth or desires. But, "if any man builds on this foundation ... his work will be shown for what it is." Numbers or wealth cannot hide a lack of grace or compassion.

Hence Paul tells us to become a 'fool' in order to become wise. The world - even the religious world - considers it is foolish to make decisions based on grace, compassion, tolerance, and understanding. Jesus lived this way, and he ended up being nailed to a cross. Yet this approach still embodies genuine spiritual wisdom that transcends the concerns of the moment.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What would it mean to "let the Lord build the house"? Does it mean the same thing in history as it might for us today? In what sense does this require us to become "fools"? How can this idea influence our study of history?

Martin Luther & the Reformation

Martin Luther is the best-known figure of the Protestant Reformation. There were several other influential groups independent of Luther, but he initiated the decisive confrontation that led to an irrevocable split with the established church. Luther also set forth with particular clarity the ways that the theoretical issues involved also affected the daily lives and ministries of believers.

The key issues in the Protestant Reformation long predate Luther, and they combine practical and spiritual concerns. The nature of papal and church authority had been debated for centuries, and by 1500 the corruption and materialism of the Roman Church hierarchy was evident to everyone. Important church offices were openly bought and sold without regard to spiritual qualifications, and the "Renaissance Papacy" openly ran the church as a profit-seeking business.

□ This practice is called "simony", based on the example of Simon Magus in Acts 8:18-19.

On the other hand, the basic questions of salvation - are we saved by works, saved by faith, or saved by grace - are asked in every age. During the Middle Ages, the firmly established use of traditions, sacraments and rituals, the worship of saints and relics, and the overall emphasis on outward forms had conditioned many persons into orienting their lives around these acts of human religion - but they made many others see the need for a better way to seek and know God.

At first, Martin Luther did not intend to challenge the existence of the papacy or to start a new church. Like many others, he merely saw the need for reform in the Catholic Church's policies and leadership. The catalyst that provoked Luther to set a more determined course, and that brought together practical issues and spiritual concerns, was the practice of "indulgences".

In its basic form, an "indulgence" is the granting of forgiveness by the church in return for a good deed or a contribution. For many years, church leaders had used indulgences to get favors or to raise money. The Catholic doctrine of "Purgatory", the place where imperfect Christians supposedly had to go after death to be punished for their sins before being allowed into heaven, opened up many opportunities for indulgences. The church began selling indulgences that would reduce one's time in purgatory proportionally to the donation given.

□ The theory was that only a small number of believers were "good enough" to go directly to heaven; so most Christians would have to spend a few years, a few hundred years, or even a few thousand years in "Purgatory", to be 'purged' of their sinfulness before they could enter heaven. The Renaissance poet Dante described the supposed punishments of Purgatory in lurid detail, adding to the sense of terror in the minds of believers when they thought about what awaited them and their imperfect loved ones.

The church also persuaded believers to give money in order to reduce the purgatory sentence of dead relatives. Indulgences became used for everything from recruiting soldiers for the Crusades (which usually conferred a "plenary indulgence", granting complete forgiveness of all sin, in return for participating) to raising money for new cathedrals. Indulgences became big business, and they attracted the attention of the large European banking houses as well.

The Reformation effectively began in 1517 when Pope Leo X decided to rebuild the St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. A papal representative was sent to Germany with instructions to sell enough indulgences to finance a new cathedral. Luther, then Chair of Bible at Wittenberg University in Saxony, was first saddened and then outraged by seeing scores of German peasants give their hard-earned money to the pope's salesman, knowing that the money would finance a sumptuous new cathedral for an already wealthy pope, while the peasants would receive a worthless piece of

paper promising that the pope would do something he had no ability or authority to do, to meet an alleged need that the peasants did not have□

□Luther was especially sensitive to this because of his own lifelong struggles with fear and guilt.

Luther wrote down a set of 95 specific objections to the entire practice of indulgences - "The 95 Theses" - and nailed them to the door of the cathedral in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. This was a traditional way to invite local discussion - but this time the debate became an international sensation because of its implications. Luther was derided as "The Saxon Hus", and the pope called him "A Wild Boar In The Vineyard". Luther survived the initial controversy because he had the support of Saxony's popular and respected ruler, Elector Frederick "The Wise".

In 1521, Emperor Charles V convened a Diet (a formal assembly) at Worms, in the Rhineland. The Diet became a civil trial of Luther, at which the verdict was rendered by majority vote of the Empire's Electors (the senior princes, who had the privilege of electing the emperor). The Catholic officials debated Luther, pleaded with him, threatened him, threatened his friends, and finally condemned both the man and his views. Luther began by attempting to find a compromise based on the Bible, but when threatened he became much more stubborn, and he closed with his well-known statement that, "here I stand. I cannot do otherwise."

After Luther was condemned, Frederick took him to Wartburg Castle, where Luther stayed under an assumed name and worked on translating the Bible into German□ Popular support for Luther began to grow (as Frederick had foreseen), and within a year Luther returned triumphantly to Wittenberg as the head of a new fellowship, which he called the Evangelical Church.

□Luther's translation is still the most widely read German language version today. It was also important in the history of the German language, as it helped make Luther's Saxon dialect the basis of Modern German.

In Luther's Evangelical Church - known to almost everyone else as the Lutheran Church - he made three noticeable changes from Catholicism. He abolished the Catholic "seven sacraments" with their emphasis on the special powers of the clergy, retaining only a simple Lord's Supper in place of the Eucharist□ Luther also vigorously promoted individual Bible reading, at least at first, with the ideal of basing church doctrine on Scripture instead of human authority. Luther's third major reform was in music - he abolished organs, other musical instruments, and Latin hymns. Luther personally was a prolific writer of hymns, writing them in everyday German.

□ Luther rejected the Roman doctrine of "transubstantiation" and taught instead what he called "consubstantiation" - that is, that the bread and fruit of the vine do not become Jesus' body and blood, but rather call attention to God's presence amongst his believers.

As Luther's popularity and power grew, he made mistakes, especially in the brutal repression of the "Peasants' Revolt" in 1525. Luther attracted many allies in Germany, even amongst Catholic princes loyal to the Catholic religion but resentful of Rome's authority. So when peasants across Germany rose up hoping to throw off both Catholicism and imperial law, Luther had a dilemma. He chose to side with the princes, encouraging and supporting a brutal crackdown in which many were executed, including Anabaptist leader Thomas Munzer (see below). As Luther's popularity and confidence waned, Lutherans increasingly followed his friend Philip Melancthon, who drafted the first complete statement of Lutheran doctrine at Augsburg in 1530.

□questions For Discussion Or Study: To what degree did Luther want to restore New Testament Christianity□ Can we tell what his motivations were□ What can we learn from his challenges to the established church□ What can we learn from his mistakes□

There were actually several different branches of the Reformation, and several of today's major denominations stem directly from one of these groups. Of particular importance, both historically and thematically, is the fellowship that led to the formation of the Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church. It had its roots in Switzerland and in France.

About a year before Luther wrote his 95 Theses, Humanist priest Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) of Zurich, Switzerland decided to abandon the study of Catholic scholars and to read the Bible alone. When Zwingli was made the preacher for the large cathedral church in Zurich in 1519, he set aside the conventional homiletic lessons he was supposed to give, and he started preaching through the New Testament beginning with Matthew.

Unlike Luther, whose convictions were driven largely by personal struggles, Zwingli examined the church from a more detached point of view. Yet Zwingli actually went much further in his calls for reform, attempting to base all of his teachings on the New Testament. He did not have a fixed list of changes, but continually strove to find new ways of returning to the gospel. By 1523 Zwingli had won the support of Zurich's city leaders, and he was able to make more sweeping changes. The cathedral's relics were discarded, the priestly garments were thrown away, the gigantic organ was demolished, and the Eucharist was replaced with a simple Lord's Supper service. Zwingli began to refer to his congregation as the Reformed Church.

Meanwhile, Frenchman John Calvin (1509-1564) had joined the reformers and sought refuge in Basel, Switzerland. There he wrote the first edition of his still-influential book *The Institutes Of The Christian Religion*, a summary and exposition of the major theological points of the reformers. Calvin then went to Geneva and then on to Strasbourg, where he got married and intended to settle down to a quiet life of study and writing. But in 1541 the City Council of Geneva asked him to return, to help them deal with the rampant lawlessness and immorality in their city. Given nearly absolute local power, Calvin soon became internationally famous.

Calvin was more of a flexible pragmatist than his reputation suggests. Although he believed that the saved could never lose their salvation and that God already knew who would be saved, Calvin did not actually believe that our actions were predetermined. Later in the 16th century, the Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius would point out the inconsistencies in Calvin's beliefs, and would establish a separate branch of the Reformed Church devoted to complete free will.

Calvin tarnished his image in 1553 with his persecution of Michael Servetus, a dynamic teacher who challenged both the Catholic Church and the Reformed Church on several issues, including their mutual practice of infant baptism. Although Calvin was initially reluctant to confront the strong-willed Servetus, he eventually debated him in public and called for him to be executed - and so Servetus was burned at the stake. Calvin was still influential enough to found the Geneva Academy in 1559, which became the most influential center of Reformation teachings.

Calvin's most important reform was his plan of organization for the church. Despite his own example, Calvin disapproved of giving too much authority to any one person, and sought a biblical form of local leadership. His solution was the "presbytery" (or "eldership"), which to him combined the pastors (preaching elders) and elders (administrative elders). The deacons and the teachers then formed the other two branches of congregational leadership. But Calvin did not take this insight any further, and his view of the church was basically authoritarian - in particular, like Luther and Zwingli, Calvin embraced a complete union of church and state.

Scotsman John Knox (c. 1515-1572) was a Roman Catholic priest who was imprisoned for sympathizing with the reformers. He escaped, went to England, then had to escape England when Catholic Mary I became queen. Knox went to Geneva, studied under Calvin, then went to Scotland where he established the Reformed Church under the name Presbyterian Church, which was the term most used for the Reformed Church in Great Britain (and later in the USA).

- For some years Knox and Catholic Queen Mary Stuart ("Mary Queen of Scots") had a deadly public rivalry for popular support in Scotland, until Mary's tendency for conspiracy led to her downfall.

There was also a large group of Calvinist Christians in France, where they were called the Huguenots (an adaptation of an old word meaning "companions"). The French government took away most basic civil rights from the Huguenots, and the resulting legal protests on their behalf gave rise to the name "Protestant", which was soon attached to all the Reformation fellowships.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Is there any separate significance to Calvin and Zwingli, as opposed to Luther? Are there any different lessons we can learn from them? What significance is there to the various names used for the Reformation fellowships?

Anabaptists, Anabaptists, and Counter-Reformation & More

The widespread questioning of the established order also led to the new Anglican Church in England. Then, just as the Reformers had questioned Catholic authority, groups like the Anabaptists began in turn to question the Reformation fellowships. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church launched its own Counter-Reformation in hopes of regaining its power.

King Henry VIII of England was a most unlikely religious reformer. Dynamic and intelligent but also cynical and cruel, Henry is mostly remembered today for the rampant executions he ordered during his reign. Henry was at first strongly opposed to the reformers, and to show his loyalty to Catholicism he ordered the execution of William Tyndale in 1525 for printing the Bible in English contrary to the Catholic Church's commands.

The second son of King Henry VII, Henry VIII grew up with a strong interest in religion, and all his life he remained a fanatical devotee of rituals, masses, and other Catholic practices. He unexpectedly became the heir to the throne when his older brother Arthur died of tuberculosis, and Henry was forced to marry his brother's widow, Princess Catherine Of Aragon.

Tyndale's was the first translation of the Bible into English directly from the original Greek and Hebrew.

When Henry VIII grew tired of his first wife Catherine Of Aragon, he requested a divorce, which Catholic officials denied. Henry sent a message to Martin Luther, hinting he would throw his support to Luther if Luther would approve a divorce, but Luther wanted nothing to do with such a cynical deal. Henry was finally offered a solution by the ambitious Thomas Cranmer, whose intellectual sympathies were with Luther but whose true loyalty was to his own self-interest. Cranmer indicated that he would be more than happy to grant Henry an annulment of his inconvenient marriage if Henry could get him appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1533 the deal was made, and in 1534 Henry took the next logical step - he declared the English Church separate from Rome and secured an "Act Of Supremacy" from Parliament recognizing the reigning monarch as the supreme head of the Church Of England or Anglican Church.

In the American colonies, the Anglican Church was renamed the Episcopalian Church.

During his lifetime, Henry kept the English church independent of both Catholicism and Protestantism, eagerly persecuting and executing many persons too closely associated with either

one. After Henry came an extended period of turmoil. His son Edward VI was a boy when he became king, and Cranmer enjoyed unrivaled influence under Edward. But Edward died when he was only a teenager, making his older sister Mary - known as "Bloody Mary" for her cruel persecutions of Protestants - queen. She had Cranmer tortured and executed, along with many other Protestants. Mary too died relatively young, bringing Elizabeth I to the throne. Elizabeth finally brought stability and prosperity; she made the Anglican Church the official church independent of all others, but tolerated Catholics as long as they were loyal to her as their queen.

Amidst all the ongoing conflict, the pope, Luther, Calvin, and the English monarchs all agreed on one thing: that another Reformation fellowship, the Anabaptists, were dangerous heretics. The Anabaptists (literally, "re-baptizers", a name given to them by their opponents) were a loose association of believers who believed in two things: that infant baptism was not supported by the New Testament, and that gospel values called for a complete separation of church and state.

Most Anabaptists were pacifists, but the agitator Thomas Munzer, a former admirer of Luther, was used as a pretext for persecuting other, more peaceful Anabaptists. Many Anabaptists lived in communes or similar voluntary arrangements. Because of the harsh persecution by all the European governments, most Anabaptist fellowships left behind nothing of permanence. An exception was the group led by Dutchman Menno Simons, who unified several groups of pacifist Anabaptists across Western Europe - the fellowship known today as the Mennonites.

□ Munzer organized disturbances and often burglarized church buildings of the established denominations. Some of his associates were sincere believers, but others were thugs he used to intimidate opponents.

Eventually the Catholic Church realized that its own deficiencies had provoked these "heretical" groups, and it instituted the Counter-Reformation, combining needed (and genuine) reforms with an even more aggressive stance in favor of its policies. The effort was spearheaded by the new Society of Jesus, or Jesuits. In the background was an armed conflict between the pope and Emperor Charles V, who at one point hired Lutheran mercenaries to pillage and loot Rome.

□ Founded by Ignatius of Loyola, a licentious nobleman whose personal troubles eventually led him to seek new meaning in his life through deep spirituality.

It was the great Council Of Trent (three sessions from 1546-1563) that finally pulled the Catholic Church out of the Middle Ages. The decisions of the Council, strictly enforced through the edict known as the "Tridentinum", imposed new standards of morality, inspired by the Jesuits, upon church leaders; and it also proclaimed even stricter intolerance of doctrinal deviations. Amongst the measures taken was the "Index", a list of books banned by the church.

Our perspectives on the Reformation are inevitably influenced by our own beliefs, time, and place. But some broad lessons also stand out. All of these fellowships faced at some point a choice between outward success and power versus remaining true to their original ideals of Scripture and the foundation of Jesus. And most of them at some point fell into the age-old, sad human failing of resorting to force to get others to do what they thought was right. These are just two of the many things that this era gives us to think about and to apply to our own time.

Questions for Discussion Or Study: How could so many different groups all claim to be returning to the Bible? How could some of these 'Christian' fellowships resort to force and violence? How do these parallel our own temptations or struggles? Could any of these bodies be said to have returned to New Testament Christianity, to any degree?

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ*, October 2012

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Seven: Christianity In The "Age Of Reason" Readings In Ezekiel 36 & 1 Corinthians 1

Tensions during the Protestant Reformation resulted in a series of armed conflicts, culminating in the horrifying Thirty Years War. In the aftermath of the slaughter, Christianity suffered a widespread loss of credibility that in many ways persists to this day. Yet the disappointments of the Reformation inspired in turn a new series of attempts to return to the values of the gospel.

For the sake of this class we will read Ezekiel & 1 Corinthians

Since we live in a society in which there is a widespread distrust and dislike of Christian beliefs, it is helpful to understand where these come from. Although it is illogical for unbelievers to blame God for the shortcomings of believers, it is also inevitable. It is a sad irony that sometimes believers' determined attempts to promote Christianity actually make things worse.

When God had disciplined the Israelites, he promised also to purify them from uncleanness for the sake of his own name (Ezekiel 36:22-32). Israel's violence, immorality, idolatry, and materialism had brought God's name into disrepute (v. 23). Paul quotes this verse in a more general context (Romans 2:24) to remind Christians that our own actions likewise can be seen as a reflection on God, even if that may be unfair or illogical.

Ezekiel was in the second group of captives taken to Babylon in 597 BC, before the fall of Jerusalem. He thus prophesied at a time when the process of discipline and rebuilding was just beginning to unfold.

God does not want us to feel anxious or guilty, but only to realize that the cleansing and blessings he gives us are by grace alone. If we remain humble and grateful, it is much easier for him to keep us purified and close to him; and it will be much clearer to others that we live by the grace of God rather than by our own righteousness. If instead we are proud, feeling superior to others, then soon we shall profane God's name with our self-righteous "heart of stone" (v. 26).

God chose the weak to shame the strong and to keep us humble and grateful, not proud and boastful (1 Corinthians 1:18-25). The grace and blood of the cross seem foolish to the worldly, who are accustomed to competing and debating for everything. Something that "costs nothing" seems worthless. But to those who 'get' the cross, the message of grace comes as a blessing full of wisdom. When we grasp the message of the cross, we won't rely on "signs" or results, nor will human wisdom be our standard of truth. Nor will we hate even the worst of sinners, but shall share God's desire to see them forgiven and cleansed - and others will see the difference.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What causes unbelievers to have a negative view of Christianity? Are any of their objections valid? Which ones are caused by Christians (or those who call themselves Christians) themselves? Can we change any of this?

Religious Wars in the Reformation Era and Christianity's Discredited

Human nature is never crueler than when the flesh is absolutely convinced that it is right and others are wrong. During the Reformation Era there were more religious wars and more religiously-motivated violence than we could cover in a short class. Yet even a short survey can help us to how all this affected the ways that Christianity was perceived.

The early conflicts of the Reformation Era (see last week's notes) illustrate the hardened hearts and attitudes that characterized the era. Catholics and Protestants alike developed the emotional conviction that because they were so "right" they had a reason to harm those who weren't. The matter of religion was also used as a pretext to settle old differences, such as the violent attempt of Emperor Charles V to break the alliance between the papacy and France.

Seeing the potential for worse horrors, representatives of the Catholic and Lutheran Churches arranged a peace agreement at Augsburg in 1555. This specified that in any territory ruled either by a Catholic or Lutheran, the inhabitants would share the monarch's religion, with no outside interference. The agreement proved ineffective and unsatisfying, both because its other terms were vague and also because the other churches refused to join it. Internal conflicts persisted across Europe, often resulting in hatred and slaughter that did lasting harm.

□ We shall detail examples of these only in France and England. Spain and the Netherlands had problems just as violent, and numerous other areas had the same kind of problems to a lesser degree.

France had a large population of Calvinists called the Huguenots, and the French government strictly curtailed their civil rights and also looked the other way when they were mistreated. In 1572 the "St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre" led to wholesale slaughter of the Huguenots and a period of open religious fighting. In 1574 Henry III, who had enthusiastically participated in the massacre, became king. But his attitude gradually softened through his interactions with the patient, gracious, and widely respected Huguenot leader Henry of Navarre.

Sadly, as Henry III started to scale back the persecutions of Protestants, a fanatic Catholic priest assassinated him in 1589. With no natural heir, the dying king named Henry of Navarre as his successor, Henry IV. After a period of extreme tension, Henry IV agreed to convert personally to Catholicism in return for toleration of the Huguenots, which was enacted in the Edict Of Nantes in 1598. But after a period of peace, Henry IV too was assassinated, opening a new period of hatred. Later, King Louis XIV revoked the Edict Of Nantes altogether.

In England, religious tensions led to a full-scale Civil War. During Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603) she faced constant opposition from Puritans and Presbyterians, but her impressive diplomatic skills held the peace. But she was succeeded by her belligerent and impatient cousin James I (1603-1625), whose constant arguments with the Church of England and with Parliament created a toxic situation for which his son Charles I (1625-1649) paid the price.

□ James Stuart's mother was Mary Stuart ("Mary Queen of Scots"), a radical Catholic; but James was impatient with both established churches. Though known for authorizing the great Bible translation known as the King James Version, James himself was openly homosexual and a devotee of witchcraft and sorcery.

Charles worked closely with William Laud, the overbearing Archbishop of Canterbury, helping the Anglican Church greatly increase its wealth in return for its unwavering support of the monarchy's absolute power. Opposition came together under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, a fanatical Puritan Member of Parliament. The English Civil War began in 1642, with Charles and the Church of England arrayed against armies raised by Parliament, Puritans, Presbyterians, and Scottish forces. During the war Cromwell executed Laud in 1646, and when Parliamentary forces were ultimately victorious, King Charles himself was beheaded as a traitor in 1649.

□ Cromwell then became dictator over what he called the "Commonwealth" of Britain. During his term, Cromwell was especially vicious in persecuting Catholics. After massacring thousands of helpless Irish civilians at Drogheda, he proudly wrote to a friend that, "it hath pleased God to bless our endeavors".

But the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) made all this seem like family entertainment. This horrifying conflict began when a group of Catholic diplomats were literally thrown out of a window by Protestant Bohemian nationalists. A coalition of Catholic armies invaded Bohemia, provoking a chaotic international war. At first the sides were chosen based on religious affiliation, but as the struggle dragged on, those were forgotten in the mayhem. Civilians suffered the most, for the human leaders involved all assured their armies that since the opposing side was just "wrong" in God's eyes, they should feel free to rob, rape, mutilate, and kill civilians of the "wrong" religion - and that is exactly what all sides did. As the war dragged on, alliances and fortunes changed chaotically, and the slaughter became random and indiscriminate.

□ In 1630, neutral Sweden jumped into the war under King Gustavus Adolphus, a brilliant strategist and leader. The Swedes won a dramatic series of victories that looked as if they would end the war, but in 1632 Adolphus was killed in battle at Lützen, crushing the Swedish army's morale and ending its effectiveness.

The Thirty Years War finally creaked to a close in 1648 with the complicated and largely unsatisfying "Peace Of Westphalia". It settled nothing and changed little - except for leaving a lasting suspicion of Christianity in all its visible forms. Although such horrors are fortunately rare today, they still leave us with a strong caution to soften our attitudes and our hearts before we get to the point of profaning God's name by having it associated with anger and hatred.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How could 'Christians' resort to violence and war to force others to adopt their views? Was it right for others to blame this on Christianity? What feelings of our own could harden into aggression? What can we learn from this?

□ *e A e* □ *f Reason*

Fairly or not, the accumulated horrors of the Late Middle Ages and the Reformation Era were strongly associated with Christianity in the public mind. Historians call the result "The Age Of Reason", in which influential leaders and philosophers hoped to find new meaning in life by rejecting the Bible and other overt Christian influences, replacing them with science and learning.

The Age Of Reason (1648-1789) brought a sudden, widespread, and determined change of focus that historians call the "Enlightenment", when anything supernatural, spiritual, or religious was distrusted if not rejected outright. The watchword of the era was Rationalism, as the leaders and rulers of the day sought to base their beliefs and actions solely on reason and logic.

Yet the innate realization that there is a Creator, which many Rationalists themselves admitted when they looked at the natural world, led to a highly influential philosophy called Deism. The Deists believed in a benevolent yet passive Creator who had little interaction with his creation. The Deists denied the value of the Bible and religious literature, seeking truth solely through science, philosophy, and human learning. French philosopher and writer Voltaire popularized the Deistic slogan, "*écrasez l'infame*" ("wipe out the infamy"), to describe his crusade to wipe out Bible reading. The Deists liked to call theirs and similar philosophies "natural religion".

□ Its principles had first been stated by Lord Herbert of Cherbury in *De Veritate* ("The Truth") in 1624.

□ Many founders of the USA were Deists, most notably Thomas Jefferson, who published his own version of the New Testament that removed passages about miracles, the supernatural, and the like.

A somewhat different school of thought during the era was based on "Empiricism", the belief that we should not accept anything as fact unless we can demonstrate it by direct (empirical) observation. The most famous empiricist was the English philosopher David Hume (1711-1776). Hume applied empiricism consistently and relentlessly, even to denying cause and

effect - claiming we can never prove that one event caused another; all we can know is that one happened after the other. Hume's powerful opponent Immanuel Kant (1724-1804, *The Critique Of Pure Reason*) presented the case for accepting that there are many important truths that by their very nature lie outside the domain of reason alone. Meanwhile, John Locke (see below) sought to harmonize the most valid principles of Empiricism with the New Testament.

□ Hume's philosophical works are antagonistic towards God and the Bible, but he wrote a multi-volume history of England that is still an invaluable source of insight into British history.

The established churches took a dim view of Rationalism and Empiricism, and where they were strongly supported by the civil government they attacked anti-religious teachers. Voltaire, for example, was exiled from France and spent several years taking refuge in England. But often both Catholic and Protestant churches had to fight to maintain their own secular power. Sentiment was growing for the elimination of governmental support for official religions.

Conflicts between the established churches and scientists also became commonplace, in part because the Age Of Reason was filled with noteworthy scientific advances. The tensions between Christianity and science were never part of the early church, and arose for the first time when the Copernican Theory of the solar system was devised in the 1500's □ During the Reformation Era, persecution of scientists added to the general discrediting of religion: in 1600, Giordano Bruno was executed by the Inquisition for teaching that the earth revolves around the sun; and in 1633 Galileo Galilei was tortured into publicly denying the Copernican Theory.

□ Thomas Aquinas and the medieval Scholastics were the first to promote the Bible as a source of scientific teachings. One of their teachings was that the earth was the center of the universe, with the sun revolving around it, based on an overly literal interpretation of Ecclesiastes 1:5 and Joshua 10:13.

Established churches felt threatened by the Empiricists, and took things to opposite extremes. For example, in the 1600s Anglican theologians originated the theory that the earth was only a few thousand years old - this was never a teaching of the ancient or even of the medieval church. But many scientists felt caught in the middle between the unnecessary extremism in the churches and the overtly anti-supernatural approach of the Empiricists. An example is the great Isaac Newton, who gave the world many important discoveries while also maintaining a strong faith in the New Testament. Newton thus received pressure from both extremes, and constantly worried that he might accidentally discover something that could be misused by either side.

The Bible, history, and our own experience help us to see that reason is valuable, yet also has its limits. Without faith, reason alone cannot lead us to belief in Jesus. Without love, reason cannot bring us to know or serve God as he wishes us to. Europe spent almost 150 years trying to use reason alone to solve its problems - and the end result was the French Revolution, which began as an exhilarating opportunity to apply the principles of the Age of Reason on a grand scale.

Yet "reason" had already proven incapable of solving the problems that led to the Revolution - reason by itself cannot prevent or repair human inequality and injustice; nor can it heal the tensions that these problems cause. The French Revolution quickly degenerated into butchery, with mass executions based on the flimsiest pretexts. "Reason" proved that it too could be used to justify violence and hatred. It took an extreme authoritarian leader, Napoleon Bonaparte, to end the slaughter in France and restore order and stability - and then Napoleon plunged all of Europe into a new era of warfare on a massive scale. The Age Of Reason was truly over.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What attitudes or beliefs of the "Age Of Reason" are prevalent today? What attracts many persons to Rationalism and Empiricism? How can Christians help others discard their prejudices against the Bible? What should we avoid?

Restorers & Reformers of the 18th Generation

While the religious wars and massacres were turning many Europeans into unbelievers, a new generation of believers saw both the established churches and the new Protestant fellowships in a different light. They saw the defects clearly, but they saw that humanity did not need an Age Of Reason - the real need was to keep trying to return to the gospel of grace and to God's presence.

The Puritans arose during the reign of Elizabeth I, when her cautious policies kept England stable but left unsatisfied those who saw the sweeping changes in other Reformation churches. The Puritans first became influential in 1572 when its leaders wrote a rousing and controversial letter to Parliament, *An Admonition to Parliament*, calling for reforms such as the elimination of rituals and a crackdown on moral laxity. Some Puritans thought it best to remain within the established church and work for change, and we have seen (above) their highly mixed effect on England's history. Other Puritans, the Separatists, emigrated in large numbers to Holland and also to America, known to American history as the "Pilgrims".

The Baptists arose from within the Puritan movement. Most Puritans practiced infant baptism, believing that their own 'moral' lives proved that they were saved. But a minority, the Baptists, called for a return to baptism of believers and soon split off from the Puritans, although their beliefs on other topics were generally the same. The earliest Baptist churches arose in England and Holland in the early 1600s; and Baptist fellowships soon began in the American colonies. The European Baptists soon divided because of an arcane debate on the nature of Jesus' sacrifice. The General Baptists believed that Jesus died for everyone who chose to accept his sacrifice, while the Particular Baptists believed he only died for the spiritual "elect".

The colony of Rhode Island was founded by a Baptist preacher, Roger Williams, who had been kicked out of Puritan Massachusetts because of his teaching against infant baptism.

New fellowships of the era included some unique understandings of New Testament Christianity. The Quakers (Society of Friends) focused on pacifism, temperance, education, and abolition of slavery. They arose in England, but became more influential in America. Mennonites (see last week's notes) also came to America in large numbers, but their habit of maintaining closed communities (a reaction against European persecution of Anabaptists) limited their influence. The Brethren (called "Dunkers"), had many basic beliefs in common with our own fellowship, but retained the archaic customs of the Mennonites and thus had a limited influence. On the other hand the Moravians, or Moravian Brethren (survivors of the Hussite *Congregatio Fratrum*), were enthusiastic evangelists, and particularly sought to take the gospel to Native American tribes.

In Scotland, Robert Glas started an effort to return to simple New Testament practices, but his son-in-law Robert Sandeman became more influential and instituted infant baptism plus personal beliefs like vegetarianism. The main group was called the "Sandemanians", while those who broke off to practice believers' baptism were called the Scotch Baptists. The Scotch Baptists were later used as an example by some of the founders of the American Restoration fellowships.

One of the most significant of the 18th century reformers was John Wesley (1703-1791). At Oxford University in the 1720s, John and his brother Charles were part of an ultra-serious Anglican study group known to outsiders as the "Holy Club", "Bible Moths", or "Methodists" -

the latter being the name Wesley himself would later adopt. An admirer of the Moravians (see above), Wesley sought out Moravian leader Peter Bohler and soon had a spiritual transformation that led him to found the "Methodist Society" within the Church of England.

□ In 1735, Wesley and his brother Charles had been invited to visit the new Georgia colony along with a group of Moravians, and the two stone-faced Anglicans were embarrassed by the way that their own icy reserve contrasted with the friendliness, simple sincerity, and joyfulness of the Moravians.

Methodism, devoted to evangelism and personal spirituality, took England by storm. Some historians credit it with improving the lives of England's lower classes by its positive moral influence. In the American colonies it was largely unsuccessful in the cities, but won many converts on the frontiers. The foundation of the American Methodist Church in 1784 actually predates Methodism becoming independent back in England.

John Locke and the philosophers known as the supernatural rationalists are significant in a different way. Locke was one of the few leaders of his day to see that the atrocities and embarrassments committed in the name of God stemmed from human failing, not from any defects of the Bible or the gospel. Locke's book *The Reasonableness Of Christianity* detailed how the beliefs of the gospel fit together in philosophical harmony once one removes the bias against the supernatural and the human agendas that distort the gospel. Locke was a primary influence on Alexander Campbell and other founders of American Restoration fellowships.

□ Locke's most influential purely philosophical work is *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Another work, *Essay On Toleration*, describes a New Testament church free from secular human authority.

□ Locke also strongly influenced Thomas Jefferson and other founders of the USA - in fact, many of the ideas and phrases in the Declaration Of Independence come straight from Locke's works.

For the rest of our study, we shall narrow our focus to the USA and then to the fellowships related to the Churches of Christ. Yet the numerous similar efforts to restore New Testament Christianity in other nations in the 19th and 20th centuries deserve at least a brief mention.

In the early 1800s, the Plymouth Brethren in England attempted to unite the small independent churches, but eventually the group splintered because they could not come to a consensus on matters like baptism and pre-millennialism. Also in the early 1800s, James and Robert Haldane led a similar effort in Scotland, but the Haldanes' defense of infant baptism was at odds with the rest of the group, which soon petered out.

In Russia, Tsar Alexander I's efforts to promote Bible reading led to several revivalist groups in the 19th century. One, the Evangelical Christians, had a restoration approach and continued to persevere throughout the Tsarist and Bolshevik eras. In the 20th century, China's "Little Flock" (who simply call themselves Christians), best known for writer Watchman Nee, have had a strong focus on restoring the New Testament Christianity, and have made a thorough study of other groups that shared that goal.

□ Ivan Prokhanov's book *In The Cauldron Of Russia* details the history of this fellowship along with general observations on Christianity's trials and successes under the Tsars and the Bolsheviks.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What did these groups have in common? What were the key differences? Which are more important, the similarities or the differences? What similar problems did they encounter? What overall lessons can we learn from them?

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, October 2012

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Eight: Christianity In Early America Readings In Romans 9 & Hosea 2

During the "Age Of Reason", many powerful and influential persons turned against Christianity and the Bible. Meanwhile, the established churches became more conformist and authoritarian, hoping to regain some of their lost power. But in the new American colonies, more distant from the powerful European governments, conditions were different and more promising.

Readings: *Romans 9* & *Hosea 2*

We are all tempted to believe that God's blessings are given us because we are somehow worthy of them. Yet in both the Old Testament and the New, God makes sure to dispel any such ideas. No person, culture, or nation ever has or ever will have a claim on God. The root of every healthy relationship with God is the awareness that we are his children by grace, not by merit.

God displays extraordinary patience in teaching and blessing both those who acknowledge him and those who do not (Romans 9:22-33). God gives the necessities of life plus extra good things to everyone, whether they deserve them or not. His own compassion is sufficient motivation to bless even those whose sin and rebellion ultimately make them objects of his wrath, to give them a chance to come to him. The objects of his mercy receive even more abundant grace, for they receive forgiveness of sins, a relationship with their Creator, and an eternal home. God gives us a lifetime to choose whether to seek him, defying human logic by not only tolerating the objects of his wrath, but also nurturing and caring for them like the wise farmer in the Parable Of The Weeds (Matthew 13:24-30). Only humans are impatient to judge and evaluate.

Yet God's grace through Jesus can also become a stumbling stone if we seek him based on our works, heritage, or knowledge. An irony of the gospel is that those who realize they have no claim on God can become closer to him, while those who feel that their culture or righteousness entitles them to know God are in fact the farthest from him. God's true people are not those with some fleshly claim to be his people, but those who realize that they must rely on his grace alone.

The quotation in verse 33 ties together Isaiah 9:14 and Isaiah 28:16, both of which describe the unwillingness of the Israelites to accept their relationship with God on the basis of grace. The Isaiah 28 passage specifically looks ahead to the Messiah, forewarning the Israelites that they will reject the Messiah unless they accept him by grace instead of as something they have earned.

God's people have this status by grace, not by earning it (Hosea 2:21-23, see also 1:10, 2:1). "I will call them my people who are not my people" - God has always accepted those cast off by the world, those considered useless or objectionable, those crushed or burdened by the world's idolatry. God sows the seed, not human leaders or experts. If there is anything unique about our own nation from a Christian perspective, it is because of its origins amongst disreputable persons and social outcasts, not because there is anything inherently more righteous about the USA itself. If there is something especially admirable, it is the long-standing commitment to religious liberty, not a superior moral code or a special list of religious beliefs.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why is it appropriate for God to call those who are not his people "my people"? How does this apply to history? How should it affect our own sense of identity? What does God ask in return for his patience with us?

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The story of European colonization in North America is complex, because the relative freedom offered by the "new world" attracted different persons for different reasons. Although many persons greatly overstate the role that religion played in early America, nevertheless even secular histories acknowledge that the search for religious freedom was an important factor.

Though there were many reasons why individuals and groups came from the Eastern Hemisphere to the Americas, the motivation for most European colonists was economic or religious. The financial motive came first - Europeans of the era saw the Americas as a potentially unlimited source of natural resources, trade, and profit. Settlers from all of the strongest European nations were willing to take considerable risks for the possibility of immense gain. The Spanish and Portuguese primarily explored and settled in South and Central America□, while the English, French, and Dutch enterprises were primarily in what is now the USA and Canada.

□ Spain also temporarily controlled parts of the future USA. Both the Spanish and Portuguese were overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, which gave the religious history of their territories a different course.

Yet freedom of religion (and freedom of thought in general) also drew many persons to North America. The new colonies offered a fresh start for those whose religious or philosophical beliefs were unpopular or even illegal in their original homelands. Some of these persons, softened by the persecutions, were sincere, peaceful, and endlessly grateful for the chance to live as they chose ("consider it pure joy ... whenever you face trials of many kinds ... " - James 1:2). Others were hardened by persecution - and they sought a change of scenery where they might now have the chance to force others to adapt to their ways.

These motivations frequently clashed in colonial history, and indeed that has never changed. America has always been a land devoted to freedom, religion, and profits - not necessarily in any order - and these often do not harmonize. Moreover, there were others who became part of the "New World" for entirely different reasons. Many simply sought adventure or even lawlessness. Still others were in fact convicted criminals from England, who were offered terms of indentured servitude in America in lieu of imprisonment because of overcrowding in English prisons□

□ Later, the nation of Australia was founded almost exclusively by convicts and their guards.

With long-established native societies often forced to compete with the newcomers on uneven terms, plus many thousands of persons brought here forcibly as slaves, the early history of the USA was complicated and contradictory. Both the strengths and weaknesses of the present-day USA can be traced in large part to its origins. Moreover, the balance between the two main motivations for European settlement can be seen in the early histories of the individual colonies, as six of them were founded for religious motivations and seven began as for-profit ventures.

When the Puritans founded the Massachusetts colony to escape persecution by the Church of England, they immediately established their version of the church as the only accepted religion in the colony. □ quickly forgetting what it was like to be a minority, they persecuted anyone who disagreed with their doctrines and practices. In the 1630's, Baptist leaders Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson were forced out of Massachusetts and led separate groups of colonists to found the new colony of Rhode Island□. About the same time, other former Puritans exiled from Massachusetts began the neighboring colony of Connecticut.

□ See below for more on the Baptists and Puritans In America.

In contrast, three other colonies began as refuges for members of persecuted religions. In 1632, devout Catholic George Calvert ("Lord Baltimore") founded Maryland as a haven for Catholics being persecuted in England. In the 1680s, William Penn was awarded land by Charles II to repay a debt owed Penn's father, and he decided to make the colony of Pennsylvania a refuge for Quakers, Mennonites, Moravians and similar groups unpopular in Europe. Since Pennsylvania became one of the largest colonies, these religions had a strong voice in early America. Finally, Georgia - the last of the 13 original colonies to be founded - began in 1733 with a settlement at Savanna for the poor and religiously persecuted.

Named in honor of Catholic Queen Mary I (aka "Bloody Mary").

Unfortunately, the Georgia colony was soon taken over by slave-owners who redefined its focus.

The remaining colonies arose as commercial ventures. Four of the original states began as British colonies for profit: Virginia, New Hampshire, and the Carolinas (originally one colony, later split in two). The other colonies were originally Dutch. During the Maritime War in the 1660s, England seized the Dutch American colonies of New Amsterdam and New Netherlands, re-organizing them into New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. So the coalition of colonies that fought for independence from Britain formed a heterogeneous mix of origins and cultures.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: In what ways is it significant to know the reasons behind European settlements in North America? How have these motivations affected our nation's history? Do they still affect our nation? Do they have spiritual significance?

United States

The coalition of colonies that won independence in the struggle of 1775-1783 was a heterogeneous mix in even their basic purposes and nature. The different and often competing interests and cultures made for a unique new nation, and among the questions facing the young USA was how to handle the widely differing religious practices across the former colonies.

During the Revolutionary War, colonial leaders struggled to maintain unity; and in the aftermath of the military victory the newly independent colonies had to redefine themselves as a unified nation capable of defending its hard-won independence. It took several years after independence was recognized (1783) for the US Constitution to be drafted (1787) and ratified (by 1789), to replace the old Articles of Confederation that previously regulated a looser union of the states. This is itself a fascinating and instructive story; but most of it is outside the scope of our study.

Church and state was a key issue in discussions about the US Constitution and the new state constitutions. Several colonies had imitated European practice by establishing a state church. In Massachusetts, Puritan religion, under the name of the Congregationalist Church, was the state religion and tolerated no rivals. In several southern colonies, influential landowners had established the Anglican Church as the state religion, even in once-Catholic Maryland. In the wake of independence, there was widespread sentiment for now creating full religious freedom.

There was similar strong sentiment for the abolition of slavery. At this time, slavery was still legal and practiced in all 13 states, not just the southern ones. After independence and the focus on personal liberty, the northern states began to outlaw it, though sometimes abolition did not have full force until years later. In the south there was also widespread support for abolition, even amongst many slaveholders. Only a small but vocal faction of the wealthiest and most obstinate slaveholders, mostly from South Carolina and Georgia, stood in the way - and unfortunately the rest of the Convention lacked the will to face them down. Afterwards southern attitudes began to harden, and the opportunity for peaceful abolition was lost.

Persons of many faiths, from Deists like Thomas Jefferson to Anglicans like James Madison, urged "dis-establishment" of all state churches. Virginia was the first to do so, revoking the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church's status as state church in 1786. Most others followed quickly, although Puritan Massachusetts held out until 1833 before finally enacting disestablishment.

□ After the Revolution, the American Anglican Church was forced to re-organize (as Anglican clergy were required to swear an oath of allegiance to the British monarch), and was renamed the Episcopalian Church.

At the Constitutional Convention began in 1787, the delegates meticulously avoided any clause that might favor one particular denomination or sect. The concept of "building a wall of separation" between church and state was discussed, in the shared desire to preserve religious freedom. The original Constitution simply put all religions on shared neutral ground, at least on a national level. Soon afterwards, the Bill of Rights added the explicit prohibition against Congress establishing any religion or interfering with the free practice of religion. The United States became the first major nation since ancient times without an established state religion.

Of course, in practice the principle of separation of church and state can be misused or misapplied by those whose agenda is not religious freedom, but anti-religion. Yet New Testament Christians should rejoice that separation of church and state is part of our country's foundations. Even for adherents of denominational religions, being part of a government-established church is at best a mixed blessing. And for those who see the gospel as a non-denominational message based solely on God's wisdom and authority, the separation of church and state affords an invaluable protection against being forced to worship or minister according to a human agenda.

America's religious diversity is largely due to the principle of separation. Even today, many countries are dominated by one government-supported church, which possesses the membership but not the hearts of the majority of the population. Non-supported groups inevitably end up being smaller and scattered. And we constantly see, for example, the ways that Islamic governments distort their own religion in the pursuit of worldly agendas. In the USA, a fellowship of New Testament Christians can stand on its own without hindrance - and in return we ought to let others assemble and worship as they wish, even if we think they are "wrong".

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why do many Christians automatically oppose the separation of church and state? What did it mean in its original context? How does it benefit believers in New Testament Christianity? What does Scripture teach about it?

Christianity in the Colonial Era

Early America was home to a wide variety of religious fellowships, ranging from the established churches to groups hoping to return to simple New Testament Christianity. Many churches that were persecuted in Europe found things much more favorable in the colonies. Some of these groups enjoyed and appreciated their new freedom - but some became oppressors themselves.

American Puritans began coming from England in 1620, seeking to live and worship without interference or threats from the government or the Anglican Church. The original intent changed in 1633 when Puritan preacher John Cotton arrived in Massachusetts with a group of followers. Cotton's goal was to see that only Puritan religion was practiced in the colony; and from that time onward the Puritans oppressed both non-Puritan outsiders and also members of their own fellowship who fell short in some way. Cotton was especially angered by Baptists Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, who taught the necessity of belief in Jesus before baptism.

Cotton exemplifies the complex, not to say contradictory, nature of the Puritan perspective. He had a strong desire to restore New Testament Christianity, but his concept of this was very narrow. He hated the ways Puritans were persecuted in England, yet his heart was hard and he became a persecutor himself. Perhaps his greatest mistake was in believing that he and the Puritans had completed the task of restoring the NT church, and no longer needed to listen to anyone else. In particular, their rigid moral code convinced them that they must be saved, and hence they considered that (their own) infant baptisms must have been sufficient for salvation.

The early Baptists had humble origins in Europe, but would become one of the most influential denominations in the USA. The first American Baptists to strike out on their own were Williams and Hutchinson, when they left Massachusetts and founded Rhode Island. Williams in particular left a lasting impact on American and church history, leaving behind extensive writings and research into the history of the church since ancient times. Williams had combined historical study with constant prayer, leaving him with a deep commitment both to the gospel as described in Scripture and to the necessity of allowing each person to develop his or her own beliefs.

□ Williams was a pioneer in re-evaluating the changes that Constantine had brought to the ancient church; and he used this as a springboard for a more comprehensive study of church and state.

Williams, though, became deeply discouraged by divisions and disputes amongst his own fellow Baptists in Rhode Island. He ended up believing and teaching that the 'modern world' was just too overrun by sin to make it possible to restore the New Testament church. Williams' pessimistic idealism makes a fascinating contrast with Cotton's overbearing self-confidence, and once again we can see how both views have affected not just churches but the nation.

□ Towards the end of his life, Williams simply gave up on ministry, believing that only some kind of miraculous divine intervention could ever make it possible for humans again to follow the pure gospel.

Despite their own problems, Baptist Churches became numerous and influential in the 1700s. The Philadelphia Baptist Association, founded in 1707, became the center of American Baptist teaching and opinion. In the 1760's, Baptist historian Morgan Edwards wrote an influential manual for Baptist church practices and doctrines, based on Scripture and early church practices. Yet within Baptist fellowships, there were tensions over the degree to which the church needed to follow New Testament practice. Most Baptist churches adopted a denominational hierarchy, though some remained independent or later joined the American Restoration fellowships.

Even within the established churches, the unique conditions in colonial America caused them to develop much differently than their European counterparts did. Most notable were the American emphasis on missions and the phenomenon called "The Great Awakening".

It is distressing, yet undeniable, that much of the prosperity of the USA in its early history came at the expense of the tribes native to North America. While it is not part of our study to detail the cruelties and deceits to which the "Indians" were subjected, we can note that some of the rarer positive interactions between the contrasting cultures came from Christian mission efforts. In contrast to the Spanish colonizers of South and Central America, who brought only Catholicism and often 'converted' natives by force, settlers in the future USA and Canada brought a variety of religions, and many tried peacefully to persuade Native Americans to accept their faiths.

Already in 1661, efforts began to translate the Scriptures into (Native) American languages. The translation into Algonquian (or "Mohican") by Presbyterian John Eliot was the first of many such efforts. Missionaries of many denominations established positive economic and cultural exchanges. Perhaps the most surprising bright spot came from the French Jesuits, so feared in

Europe by Protestants and their fellow Catholics alike. Many Jesuits willingly gave up a European lifestyle and lived like the "Indians" in the hopes of bringing them to faith in Jesus. Besides their mission efforts, for a time the Jesuits furnished a helpful buffer in protecting some of the tribes from the most ruthless predations of other Europeans□

□In some places, non-French settlers learned to speak basic French in case of confrontations with hostile "Indians", because some tribes treated Frenchmen differently out of respect to the French Jesuits.

The "Great Awakening" refers to the wave of religious revival that swept across the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s. Frustration with the rigidity and lifelessness of the established religions, exposure to the cruelties and violence of frontier society, and the wide-open nature of colonial culture combined to produce forceful preachers like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, whose emotional calls for repentance and revival found an eager audience. Edwards' famous sermon "Sinners In The Hands Of An Angry God" typifies the tone of the new preaching.

The Great Awakening affected all of the major US denominations, and caused splits or divisions within most of them. The terms "Old Lights" and "New Lights" became used regularly in most of the denominations, to designate respectively those who disapproved of the revival movements and wanted to be disassociated from them, and those who favored and appreciated the revivalists.

In the Baptist Church, the most radical of the New Lights called themselves "Separates", and out of this group eventually came the Separate Baptists, who taught baptism by immersion of believing adults as the point of salvation, and who abolished all creeds, confessions of faith, and leadership hierarchies. The Separate Baptists originally arose in New England under the guidance of Isaac Backus (1724-1806), but they became much more influential in the south.

The Separate Baptists also provide something of a link as we look ahead to the American Restoration fellowships. In 1755, a group of Separate Baptists moved to Sandy Creek, North Carolina, and from there the movement spread quickly across the south and to the western frontier. In the early 1800s, large numbers of Separate Baptist congregations□joined Barton Stone's Christian Church, which in turn formed a major pillar of the new Churches Of Christ.

□Other Separate Baptists later formed the nucleus of the large and influential Southern Baptist fellowship; while still others would join the Landmark Baptists under the leadership of the persuasive but inflammatory James R. Graves. Graves sought a return to New Testament Christianity, but added many ideas of his own.

Around the turn of the century (1800), a new wave of revival sentiment called the "Second Great Awakening" swept the young USA, this time characterized by prolonged camp meetings. This phenomenon, and especially one particular camp meeting, set into motion the chain of events that led to Barton Stone beginning the Christian Church, which eventually became an important part of the new Churches Of Christ.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How did believers like John Cotton and Roger Williams affect the development of our country□ Are their perspectives still present□ What characteristics of American churches today come from the Great Awakening□

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, October 2012*
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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Nine: Early American Restoration Fellowship Readings In Isaiah 11 & 1 Corinthians 12

What we know as the Church of Christ originally formed from several smaller fellowships. Although they had some important things in common, the separate threads of the "American Restoration Movement" began with their own histories, goals, and leaders. This week we shall look at each of these separately, and next week we shall see how they came together.

A Remnant of Israel & Corinthians

We have seen that through the centuries many persons have sensed the importance of allowing God and his Word to be our sole source of guidance in Christian ministry. Long before Jesus, God had already promised to build a highway to allow the scattered remnant of those seeking him to find their way back to him - and we know that this highway is Jesus Christ crucified.

Long before Jesus, the spiritual troubles of the Israelites led Isaiah to encourage them with the promise that God would one day assemble the scattered remnant of his people (Isaiah 11:10-16). The imagery in this passage describes a time of rest (verse 10), harmony (verse 13), and security. And they would not have to fight to gain this, for God would create a highway for them, making it as easy as if they could cross the great Euphrates River on foot.

For much of Isaiah's lifetime the nation was split into two rival kingdoms, Judah in the south and northern Israel, usually called Ephraim. The northern kingdom fell to Assyria while Isaiah was still alive.

All this would happen under the banner of the "root of Jesse (David's father)". On a smaller scale, this looks ahead to the exile and rebuilding of the physical nation; but the ultimate fulfillment would be found in the Messiah Jesus. Jesus is a highway open to all, from any place and time - he brings spiritual rest, harmony, and security to all who trust in his grace. Yet he can be a stumbling stone (see last week's notes) to those who try to gain these things by themselves.

And so Paul resolved to "know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Corinthians 1:26-2:4). After Paul's often-quoted reminder that God uses the lowly and the foolish to shame those who are self-satisfied and self-confident, he quotes from Jeremiah that, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord". This is not at all the same thing as merely giving verbal 'credit' to God for our own accomplishments. Rather, it means to be able to "boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses", and to "delight in weaknesses, in insults ... in difficulties" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10)

Our faith must be in God himself, not in our knowledge, even our knowledge of God. Our faith must be in the gospel itself, not in our presentation of it. If there is something especially beneficial about our fellowship, it is that we make a sincere effort to stand back and let God's Word speak. In its origins we can also see that whatever strengths it has come not from having it founded by men of unusual intelligence or righteousness, but from its origins amongst a variety of spiritual leaders who knew they needed to help each other and keep each other humble.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How do Isaiah's teachings about the remnant apply to Christianity? How do the spiritual principles of Isaiah 11 apply? How do we see the wisdom of Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 1-2 illustrated in the church history that we have already studied? How could we learn from them today?

□□e □arliest A□erican Restoration □ello □s □i □s

Even before Barton Stone and the Campbells formed the two largest fellowships that would become part of the Church(es) Of Christ, others in the new United States were taking advantage of the young nation's religious freedom to begin their own groups devoted to a return to New Testament Christianity. These too deserved to be remembered.

James O'Kelly was a Methodist travelling preacher ('circuit rider') in Virginia and North Carolina in the 1790s. When John Wesley sent his "superintendents" to impose rigid institutional control over the doctrine and worship of American Methodists, O'Kelly was disenchanted. He and a group of former Methodist preachers formed a simpler fellowship, centered on what he called the "Five Cardinal Principles": that Jesus was the only head of the church, the name Christian should supersede all party or sectarian names, the Bible should be the only creed, Christian character (or "vital piety") should be the only test of fellowship, and that every Christian had both the right and the responsibility to form his or her personal understanding of God.

O'Kelly's group essentially combined Methodist perspectives (evangelism, personal spirituality and morality) with the guidance of the New Testament instead of an institutional structure. For a time they continued to identify themselves as Methodists□ until influential preacher Rice Haggard joined their group and suggested simply calling themselves "Christians" in keeping with their basic focus. The O'Kelly fellowship retained many Methodist doctrines (in particular, infant baptism) but consistently avoided any sectarian labels or denominational hierarchy.

□ O'Kelly originally named them the "Republican Methodists" - in the 1790s, "Republican" simply meant opposition to or distrust of centralized authority, not a collection of beliefs on specific issues.

Meanwhile, in New England two Baptists, Elias Smith□ and Abner Jones, started a similar effort to break free from institutionalized Christianity. Smith and Jones united some Separate Baptist congregations across New England, and then began establishing new congregations. Eventually, they came in contact with O'Kelly's fellowship, and the two groups decided to form the "Christian Connection" as a unity movement seeking to return to New Testament Christianity.

□ Elias Smith was well-known politically as one of the region's leading supporters of Thomas Jefferson, but he left politics to pursue his dream of establishing a church free of human traditions and doctrines.

Many members of the Christian Connection later joined the Christian Church. Others continued to practice infant baptism and remained a separate, independent fellowship, later (in the 1950s) absorbed into the new ecumenical denomination of the United Church Of Christ. The Christian Connection is largely ignored even by Restoration historians, but it was the first group of its kind in the USA; and it was an important, if small, part of the foundation of the Churches Of Christ.

□uestions For Discussion Or Study: What can we learn from a group like the Christian Connection□ Does it matter what their beliefs were on specific issues□ Are there groups like this today□ What would the Bible say about O'Kelly's "Five Cardinal Principles"□

□arton Stone & □□e □□ristian □□urch □

During the renewed wave of religious revivalism that swept the USA in the early 1800s, Presbyterian preacher Barton Stone became the center of a new fellowship that sought a new identity for believers based on a return to the teachings of Scripture alone. The resulting Christian Church combined this with a strong focus on the eternal implications of the gospel.

About the turn of the century, a renewed wave of religious revivalism called "The Second Great Awakening" swept across the country, especially in rural areas. Somewhat different in tone from the earlier "Great Awakening", the revival featured extended "camp meetings" that could last for days at a time. When Presbyterian preacher Barton Stone (1772-1844) was assigned to help organize one of these meetings, it helped him towards some important spiritual realizations.

□ Whether coincidentally or not, the presidential election of 1800 was long known as one of the nastiest political campaigns in our country's history.

The camp meeting known as The Cane Ridge Revival (Cane Ridge, Kentucky, 1801) was one of the largest. Stone, one of the local organizers, had recently become discouraged by the heavy Calvinist teachings that characterized the Presbyterian Church. He felt a deep need for a better understanding of God and for a better way to help others to know God. The revival atmosphere lifted his spirits, yet he also saw that revivalism itself could not answer the most crucial questions about God. Stone then found that some of his friends were having similar thoughts.

Encouraged by the way that the revival movement had set aside denominational creeds and hierarchies, Stone and his associates founded the new Springfield Presbytery in 1803 and devoted themselves to a study of Scripture only, setting aside all human doctrines and rituals as far as possible. Their original plan was to remain Presbyterians and minister to Presbyterians, but to worship and minister based on Scripture alone without the use of Calvinist theology. But within a short time, they came to a new conclusion.

□ A presbytery or group of senior elder-preachers being a standard unit of Presbyterian organization.

Because their study of the New Testament persuaded them that any level of church authority above the congregational level was inappropriate in gospel ministry, in 1804 Stone and his associates dissolved their own project and wrote a document called *The Last Will & Testament Of The Springfield Presbytery*, in which they explained their motives and called for a simpler way of Christian worship and ministry. Stating that, "we will that this body (*i.e.* the presbytery) die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large ...", they detailed many of their conclusions on what it would mean to base Christianity solely on the gospel of Jesus.

Stone and his followers found that they had much in common with some other groups trying to do the same thing, especially the Christian Connection; and so they joined together as a broader fellowship. Again Rice Haggard appealed to the group to keep the name simple and completely non-sectarian; so they simply called themselves Christians or The Christian Church. Although many persons contributed to its formation, in its early years the Christian Church reflected a good deal of Stone's own perspectives.

Barton Stone was motivated above all by the identity problem that confronts a sincere believer in his or her search for God. Stone was never comfortable with this world, for he was not comfortable with technology and he held a pessimistic view of human nature. Yet he had a deep understanding of our need for divine grace, and this was what first led him to seek guidance from God's Word alone. Stone saw that human-made religions and creeds, no matter how well-intentioned, invariably led believers to put their faith in the wrong place.

Like Martin Luther long before him, Stone was interested first of all in the importance of an individual's relationship with God. But Stone continued more consistently with his intention of returning to Scripture alone, resisting the temptation to set himself up as an authority figure, and teaching what he understood the New Testament to teach even when it led him to unpopular or

inconvenient conclusions. Stone also had a different, and in some ways deeper, understanding of Christian identity. Stone saw humanity as eternal beings trapped temporarily inside physical bodies, which were in turn trapped temporarily in an unpleasant, fallen world hostile to genuine spirituality. His focus was consistently on the eternal destiny of himself and others.

The best example of this is in regards to baptism. Once he was convinced that the New Testament taught baptism of believers by immersion for forgiveness of sins, Stone unhesitatingly accepted that he needed to be immersed, and that other believers, no matter how religious they seemed, also needed to do so.

This used to be widely called an "apocalyptic worldview"; but the term "apocalyptic" is so often misused that today it is more often associated with an entirely different set of beliefs.

Stone's perspective left a lasting impression on the nature not only of the Christian Church but also on the later Churches Of Christ. His attitudes form an interesting and instructive contrast with the perspectives of the Campbells (see next section), and the unusual blend of these two main influences gave the American Restoration fellowships a balance that was often lacking in many of the earlier fellowships that we have studied.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What aspects of the two "Great Awakenings" helped those who were searching for New Testament Christianity? How can we apply this today? What aspects of Barton Stone's personal perspective should we try to adopt?

the Campbells & the Disciples

Not long after Stone and his associates began their efforts to worship and minister based on Scripture alone, the father and son team of Thomas and Alexander Campbell were pursuing a similar ministry in their part of the country. Despite the similar focus, there were some interesting differences in experience and perspective between these two groups.

Presbyterian preacher Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) left Ireland to come to Pennsylvania in 1807. The Presbyterian Church was split into several rival factions, and Campbell went out of his way to seek common ground with the other factions, even to the point of sharing with them in the observance of the Lord's Supper. This angered the Presbyterian authorities, with the result that Campbell and several other preachers were soon ejected from the Presbyterian Church.

Campbell had also already developed an awareness of the importance of the Lord's Supper, and he emphasized it much more than the Presbyterian authorities would have liked him to.

So in 1809 Campbell and the other exiles started a new fellowship, The Christian Association of Washington (for Washington County, Pennsylvania). They realized, as so many others had, that most of the problems they had encountered stemmed not from the gospel or from God, but from the ways that human authority, creeds, and methodology had replaced Scripture. So they too resolved to search and use Scripture alone as their guide to worship and ministry.

The group published an explanation of their goals and an exhortation to others called the *Declaration & Address*. This was not a statement of beliefs in itself, but rather a discussion of the need to allow God's Word to supersede all human belief and opinion. The emphasis was on unity and on the hope that by setting aside human doctrines it would become easier for members of the various denominations to come together. Campbell and his associated considered the disunity of Christianity - the proliferation of so many denominations and sects - as one of the primary evils caused by the departure from the simple gospel. Thus the Christian Association recognized a different aspect of the restoring the New Testament church than Stone did.

Thomas's son Alexander Campbell (1786-1866) became the group's most prominent spokesman. While Thomas began his ministry in America, Alexander was finishing school in Scotland. Alexander independently came to many of the same conclusions, and had resolved to withdraw from the Presbyterian Church in order to pursue a form of Christianity based on the New Testament alone. Alexander was also motivated by the dream of a unified church undivided by human creeds and methods. In 1809, Alexander came to the USA; and father and son discovered to their mutual and pleasant surprise that they had both come to the same conclusions on their own. In 1812, they became further persuaded of the need to be baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins; they were both immersed and made that an essential part of their message.

The Campbells established a church in Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia) called the Brush Run Church, and promoted the goal of unity through restoration in the region. The Campbells wanted a generic, non-sectarian name for their fellowship, and eventually settled on the name "Disciples" or "Disciples Of Christ" as their preferred choice. In their writings they also often referred to the "Church Of Christ" or the "church of Christ"□ They attempted to use these names only for purposes of identification, not wishing them to become denominational labels.

□Their opponents began to call the whole group "Campbellites", a term often found in writings of the time.

Alexander Campbell had been very well-educated, especially in philosophy. He became known as a skilled speaker, especially in debates and spontaneous speaking, and as a master organizer and planner. He had developed a strong sense of the value and importance of the Bible, and is perhaps best-remembered today for his often-stated principle that, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak, and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." On matters not covered in the New Testament, Alexander Campbell was tolerant and understood that there could be a broad range of opinions. This principle came often to be stated as, "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."

Campbell's perspective was much different than Stone's. He had been heavily influenced by the Supernatural Rationalist philosopher John Locke (see Week Seven notes). In the combination of Scripture and Locke's philosophy he saw the ideal that he hoped would guide his search for pure Christianity. In contrast with Stone, Campbell was an optimist who hoped that believers from all denominations would respond to the message of simple gospel Christianity, gladly leaving behind their sectarian doctrines and practices, if only the message were presented properly. Campbell had studied the various attempts to restore New Testament Christianity in Scotland (such as Glas and the Haldanes), hoping to improve on them; and he also embraced secular advances in science and technology, seeing them as God's blessings on humanity.

While the contrast between Stone and the Campbells eventually provided an important balance to the early Church Of Christ, they would not unite their efforts for some years yet. In the meantime, an important balance to the Campbells came when Walter Scott□(1796-1861) joined the Disciples of Christ in the 1820s. By nature a seeker rather than a leader, Scott nevertheless became one of the most influential voices in the Disciples. Already convinced of the need for non-denominational Christianity and that believers needed to be baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins□□, Scott met Alexander Campbell in 1821 and became his lifelong friend and supporter, while also providing an important balance to Campbell's personality and methods.

□Scott was related to the famous novelist of the same name, 'Sir' Walter Scott (1771-1832).

□□Educated in Scotland and an accomplished musician, Scott came to New York to visit an uncle and later moved to Pittsburgh where he joined a non-denominational church led by George Forrester, who based his

approach on that of the Haldanes, whom he in turn had known in Scotland. After Forrester accidentally drowned, Scott became the unofficial leader of the group.

Scott worked for a time with the Baptists, but found that their view of baptism did not match his understanding of Scripture. Chosen in 1827 as evangelist of the Mahoning Baptist Association□, which had loose ties with the Campbells, Scott used it to promote New Testament teachings on baptism and other matters. Since this did not accord with Baptist doctrines, the Mahoning Association and several others disbanded, with most of their members joining the Disciples.

□Centered in Ohio's Mahoning River valley, near present-day Youngstown.

Biographies and personal accounts of Scott invariably mention his warm compassion for others and his many acts of sacrificial giving. Sensitive and shy, Scott was not a skilled speaker; his motivation in ministry was his concern for others' well-being, and he disliked bringing up controversial issues. Yet he regularly proclaimed New Testament teachings on baptism, church leadership, and other matters to hostile audiences, relying not on eloquence as Campbell did□, but on the hope that his audiences would see his simple and sincere love for them.

□ "Raccoon John" Smith, a former Baptist preacher who joined the Disciples, once commented that he heard Campbell speak for what seemed like 20 minutes or so - only to find out that two and a half hours had passed. By contrast, Scott was often uncertain or insecure when speaking to large groups; yet he could be remarkably effective in spite of this.

On several occasions, Scott persuaded prominent denominational leaders to be baptized by immersion. His simple human compassion was able to reach persons who might have been unmoved by Campbell's great eloquence and knowledge. Campbell, for his part, was quite happy to work closely with someone so different from himself, just as later he would embrace Barton Stone and his own distinctive understanding of the gospel.

Scott influenced our fellowship in many small ways, such as the phrases he used regularly. He would close his messages to groups outside of the Disciples with what he called a "Restoration Plea" for them to set aside denominational loyalties to pursue New Testament worship, using the term "restoration"□as opposed to "reformation" or other new synonyms. Scott's habit of offering an "invitation song" after his sermons as an opportunity to request baptism or prayers has long been a feature of worship in our fellowship. Scott's simple way of presenting the gospel also popularized phrases like "the gospel plan of salvation" and the often-imitated and adapted "five finger exercise", which he would teach to children and encourage them to tell it to their parents.

□Historians of the Churches of Christ, Disciples Of Christ, and Christian Church usually use the term, "Restoration Movement", or "American Restoration Movement" to describe our family of fellowships.

In themselves, these believers were similar to many others before them who had similar goals. If they came closer to returning to the simple teachings of Scripture, it is because they saw their own limitations and sought only to lead others to Jesus, not to themselves or to an institution.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What aspects of New Testament Christianity did the Campbells especially understand□ What aspects of their approach should we try to adopt□ How would someone like Walter Scott complement the Campbells□ What lessons could we learn from this today□

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, November 2012
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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Ten: American Restoration Fellowship's Uniting The Threads Readings In Ephesians 4 & 1 Corinthians 12

The Church of Christ originated as a collection of smaller fellowships, each trying in its own way to restore New Testament Christianity. The leaders and perspectives of these groups, especially the two largest ones, differed considerably yet they worked together to accomplish unity while still maintaining a distinctive identity based on returning to the values of Scripture.

A Unit Made of Many Parts: Ephesians & Corinthians

Maintaining unity while also remaining faithful to the truths of the gospel is never easy. The Scriptures never tell us exactly what we must have in common in order to become one. They do remind us that we have a powerful foundation for unity, if we make use of it. And they give us the model of a body, with many parts doing very different things, yet able to function together.

The call to "keep the unity of the Spirit" is an implicit reminder that this is not always easy (Ephesians 4:1-6). We 'keep' rather than 'create' unity, for genuine unity comes only from God, the gospel, and the Spirit's guidance, not from human methods or doctrines. So unity begins with humility and gentleness, realizing that we did not (and could not) produce unity ourselves.

Ephesians 4 is known for its list of "ones", yet it is often used as a check-list that provokes division rather than unity. These important 'ones' are instead a reminder of the powerful foundations of unity. That we all have the same God and the same Savior reminds us to be humble and allow God's strength and wisdom to overcome our impulse for division and rivalry.

The apostle reminds us, with logic and with humor, that each part of the body is genuinely important (1 Corinthians 12:12-26). The parts of our physical bodies are mutually dependent whether they wish to be or not. And in the body of Jesus we are all mutually dependent, whether we wish to be or not. None of us is more like Jesus than anyone else is, any more than the hand is greater than the foot. God arranged the parts of the physical body as he knew best; and so too in the body of Christ we have different strengths, different ministries, and different functions.

God gives honor to all the parts of the body, even those that humans ignore or denigrate. If another believer seems to us to have no real role in the body, the fault is either with our perception of others or else with our treatment of others, for no soul is ever useless to God. On those rare occasions when we see others as God does, it leads to some very encouraging things.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why is unity important? How does it balance with other spiritual priorities? What other Scriptures discuss unity? What ought we be willing to sacrifice for unity? Is there anything we should never give up for the sake of unity?

The Restoration Fellowship's Stables and Unit

Barton Stone, the Campbells, and their associates formed a unified fellowship from believers with a variety of perspectives and priorities. Their unification was hardly the result of agreement on every issue or topic; and it was even less because any of them were 'right' about everything. On the contrary, unity came in spite of a long list of dissimilarities and imperfections.

Any time that two persons, let alone two large fellowships, try to unite there will be differences in spiritual priorities and perspectives. Even in their basic hopes for the church, Barton Stone and the Campbells had different sets of goals that were reflected in their respective fellowships.

The early Christian Church, like Stone himself, focused first of all on personal closeness with God. The church was there to help believers find God, and so Stone's view of restoring the New Testament church centered on removing all the obstacles that humans had created - the doctrines, hierarchies, creeds, and tests of fellowship that put the focus on human authority and human righteousness. The Christian Church kept things simple, wanting to be accessible and welcoming to believers from other churches who were looking for more closeness with God. The Christian Church and Stone himself both had little interest in trying to bring back neglected practices or teachings; they just wanted to make it easy for seekers to find God himself.

The Campbells and the Disciples, on the other hand, were very much interested in building a better church - if not perfect, then at least something far closer to what they found in the New Testament. Alexander Campbell's own innate optimism rubbed off on the Disciples, who kept looking for new ways to improve the church by imitating what they saw in the New Testament: baptism by immersion, congregational autonomy, pluralities of elders in each congregation, having the Lord's Supper weekly, and so forth. Campbell and most of his associates felt that the only real problem was to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials.

Alexander Campbell, especially, sincerely believed that this process held unlimited potential for the church. And Alexander Campbell's optimism extended even a step further, because for most of his life he held out the hope of a "millennial kingdom" that he honestly believed would come if the Disciples were able to complete the job of restoring the New Testament church. All of this was quite contrary to what Stone and the Christian Church believed.

□That is, he hoped for a literal fulfillment of Revelation 20:1-3. Note, though, that Campbell's "millennial" beliefs were quite different from the forms of millennialism or pre-millennialism that are common now.

The two main groups also held different beliefs and practices on a wide range of topics, both doctrinal and practical. For example, Stone was very interested in the Holy Spirit, felt that there was much we could learn from his influence in the New Testament, and believed in the possibility of miracles occurring in any era; while the Disciples, drawing from Alexander Campbell's rationalism, strongly downplayed the role of the Holy Spirit and in particular insisted that miracles were limited to the biblical era. The Disciples also considered that baptism by immersion was clearly required by Scripture, and so they drew a sharp line of fellowship, excluding anyone who had not been immersed as a believing adult for the forgiveness of sins. Stone, though he believed that this was the correct teaching of baptism, did not consider it so obvious; and so the Christian Church did not make this a strict test of fellowship.

□Perhaps in keeping with his own pessimistic nature, Stone would tell others that it was only his own lack of faith that prevented him from being able to see miracles himself.

They also approached social and political issues quite differently, even when on a simplistic level they 'agreed' on right and wrong. This is best exemplified by slavery, the crucial national issue of the era. Stone, the Campbells, and the other leaders of both churches were anti-slavery, but they put these views into practice in surprisingly different ways. Stone felt that among believers there could be no question of accepting slavery, and as a result most early Christian Church congregations refused to allow slave-holders to attend until unless they freed their slaves. Moreover, most congregations would not accept into fellowship anyone who objected to mixed-

race ministry and worship. But Stone believed that it did no good to try to persuade the unsaved to give up slavery, so he had little outside involvement with the abolition movement.

□ Stone had the same approach to a number of other moral issues as well.

The Disciples, on the other hand, viewed slavery purely as a political issue on which personal judgment was required, and so they did not force slave-owning church members to free their slaves. Alexander Campbell, though, openly promoted abolition both in the church and in secular forums when he could. So his approach was almost the exact opposite of Stone's.

Within the Christian Church, many congregations used women as evangelistic preachers. Stone and the Christian Church were largely influenced by the Christian Connection congregations that had joined their fellowship, and so it was especially common for their congregations in the northeast to use women as public speakers, especially in evangelistic settings. They saw this as a parallel to the daughters of Philip the Evangelist (Acts 21:8-9). On the other hand, the early Christian Church did not appoint women to positions of 'official' congregational leadership.

□ Some of the better-known such preachers were Nancy Cram, Abigail Roberts, and Nancy Towle.

The Disciples, in contrast, did not consider public speaking to be appropriate for women. Yet some congregations, especially those with close ties to Alexander Campbell himself, gave considerable support for independent women's ministries, and in a few cases women leading those ministries were appointed to congregational positions essentially equivalent to deacons.

□ Campbell was always an enthusiastic supporter of women's ministry, though he considered that it should be a separate ministry of the church. He personally advocated the appointment of women deacons for that purpose, though that was not widespread among the Disciples. We'll follow up on this topic next week.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Which features of the Christian Church and the Disciples would have been most beneficial to everyone? What aspects would have provided the biggest obstacles to unity? How do their strengths and weaknesses parallel things in today's church? What could we learn from the historical situation?

Buildings of Faith

These obstacles to unity were not overcome by ignoring them, sacrificing important truths, or making unprincipled compromises. Instead they used positive building blocks that in turn reflect God's wisdom. If a body unites on a flimsy foundation, it will splinter at the first sign of trouble. But if the grounds of unity are strong and important, then unity can withstand many challenges.

Besides their mutual desire to follow Scripture alone as their guide to understanding God, both the Christian Church and the Disciples offered particular qualities that could be even better used as parts of a larger body, rather than in their smaller independent fellowships. The Christian Church was noted for high moral standards based on a love and appreciation for God rather than legalistic rules, while the Disciples became known for their enthusiasm for ministry and their quest for knowledge. The Christian Church offered a welcoming home for those discouraged by a sinful world; while the Disciples created an atmosphere of growth and learning.

□ In much of this, the churches reflected their founders' values. This was especially true of the Disciples, who from the start promoted the kind of biblical scholarship that Campbell himself highly valued.

Yet these very strengths could have become weaknesses, just as the strengths of earlier efforts to return to the gospel became distorted and led astray some well-meaning leaders and their

followers. Maintaining moral standards without resorting to legalistic rules is always tricky, and one of the best ways to avoid descending into legalism is to balance morality with outward-looking ministry. Learning and study of Scripture is wonderful in itself, but history and the present time are both full of highly educated persons - including many Christians - who feel that their learning allows them special privileges or entitles them to force their ways on others.

In building up the body, it is important to have persons of different strengths and weaknesses. Holy living, Bible knowledge, evangelism, serving, giving and many other ministries all are valuable, but none of them is all-important. No one or two specific ministries are the most crucial. If we seek results, fleshly righteousness, or self-satisfaction, then we shall end up trying to force others to be like us. But if we seek spiritual health, then we shall learn to listen to, understand, and appreciate persons of widely varying personalities and perspectives.

To build genuine Christian unity, we must desire unity for its own sake, out of the realization that we have been called into one body by one God and Father, with one Savior who gave his life for all his scattered sheep. We have to reverse the trend that pervades most of human society, which finds disunity attractive - if not in itself, then highly preferable to humility or to yielding to the will of others. The surface issues that create divisions - political, social, or religious - are usually mere stand-ins for the flesh's simple resentment of seeing others "get their way", obtain positions or wealth, or be able to state their views without opposition.

In the early 1830s, the Christian Church and the Disciples simply desired to work together and to figure out how to make it happen. Both churches had avoided the common mistake of thinking that they had completed the job of restoring the New Testament church, and had the humility to realize that they still had many things to learn and change. They also made the key decision of recognizing common ground. Despite differing in ways that many persons would consider crucial, they saw that what they had in common was more important: a desire to know and serve God, and a willingness to seek truth by letting God's Word supersede their own convictions and traditions. Though our fellowship often struggles with divisions over petty matters, its early history provides a good example of what can happen if we remain humble seekers of the cross.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: If you had been a member of one of these churches in the 1820s, what positive things would you have anticipated about unifying? What might have made you uncomfortable? How could we apply this today?

Articles of Faith of the Restoration Movement

The historical events that brought together the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ are not as important in themselves as they are insofar as they illustrate spiritual principles that can help us and others with our own struggles to find unity. Yet the historical events are interesting, while at the same time providing an encouraging example of overcoming differences.

Although the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ had been aware of each other for some time, it was after the Campbell-McCalla debates in 1823 that significant contacts between them began. Alexander Campbell had a reputation as a formidable debater, and many of the major denominations resented this and sent some of their own most learned and eloquent speakers to challenge him. After Campbell and his father were both baptized by immersion for the forgiveness of sins in 1812, this became one of Alexander Campbell's favorite debating topics.

Campbell was also well-known for debating atheists regarding the existence of God. His debate with Scottish atheist Robert Owen in 1829 was one of the best-known religious debates of the era.

Campbell debated baptism with leaders from several major denominations. In 1820 Campbell debated Presbyterian John Walker on baptism, but Walker did not put up a good showing. The Presbyterians requested another chance in 1823, now choosing W.D. McCalla, more evenly matched as a debater. The debates clarified the differences of viewpoint for many persons.

□ In the early 1820's, the Campbells and Walter Scott had close ties with the Baptists, but by this time most Baptist churches already taught baptism as an after-the-fact confirmation of salvation.

Barton Stone and many members of the Christian Church attended them, and the vast majority of them were persuaded by the way that Campbell used Scripture without resorting to human authority. By 1826, most members of the Christian Church had been baptized in accordance with the principles Campbell had presented (which are very close to the ways baptism is most often taught in today's Churches Of Christ). Members of both churches began to talk about the possibility of joining together, just as each church had previously absorbed or joined with other smaller fellowships that shared their goal of using only the New Testament as their guide.

In 1831 there was a series of "unity meetings" between members of the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ. Since neither group believed in having a denominational hierarchy to standardize doctrine and practice, many differences remained matters of individual or at most congregational judgment. Instead of a list of beliefs, they confirmed the unwritten but mutual commitment to let God's Word be their guide. Campbell's understanding of baptism was not officially bound on everyone, but it was understood now to be their mutual practice. Because of this, some of the former Christian Connection congregations that had originated under James O'Kelly decided not to join the new larger fellowship, because they continued to practice infant baptism. The general union of the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ was completed in 1832. A few other smaller groups decided not to join the larger fellowship, but a wide majority from both churches joined, giving the new combined fellowship about 20,000 members.

□ See last week's notes for more on O'Kelly and the Christian Connection. Aside from infant baptism, they were for a time fully integrated into the Barton Stone-led Christian Church.

Although everyone continued to prefer a generic name, and most were willing to accept either or both names for the new group, Barton Stone expressed his personal discomfort with the name "Disciples", fearing that it put emphasis on humans rather than on Jesus himself. In hopes of not giving preference to either branch of the new church, they all decided that the terms "Church Of Christ" or "Churches Of Christ" would be used interchangeably to refer to the whole fellowship. Not wanting to make that or any name a sectarian label, it was left up to individual congregations whether to adopt that name or to continue calling themselves by one of the older names.

□ For most of the 19th century, the terms "Disciples (of Christ), Church(es) of Christ, and Christian Church were used more or less interchangeably, especially by outside sources.

The spiritual balance of the new Churches of Christ served them well, and for 17 years the new body saw a time of unity and growth. By 1849 it had an estimated 300,000 members. But keeping unity amidst such growth, as well as the changes in the nation around them, brought challenges and eventually conflict. The church would need a strong foundation just to survive.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What reasons could there have been for singling out a very few things as a basis for uniting these two churches? Can this help us today? What significance should the name "Church(es) Of Christ" have to us today?

- Mark Garner, Northland Church Of Christ, November 2012

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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Eleven: Growing Pains In The 19th Century Readings In Ephesians 6 & James 1

The formation of the Churches of Christ and the growth that followed provide an encouraging reminder of what can happen when we humbly allow God and the gospel to guide us. Yet unity and growth inevitably bring challenges of their own. For much of the 19th century, the church struggled to remain united, while the nation around it was tormented by its own weaknesses.

Encouraged or Struggles of Ephesians 6 & James 1

Struggles and trials are part of the Christian life, just as they are for everyone in this fallen, perishable world. Instead of resenting the problems that come our way, it is best to be spiritually prepared for them. God has provided us with spiritual resources much more powerful than human weapons; and most of all he is always present himself to help us when we need him.

God gives us spiritual resources in an unspiritual world (Ephesians 6:10-18). Divisions and the like come from relying on worldly things to pursue our goals. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood" - no human being, no matter how foolish or destructive, is truly a spiritual enemy or adversary. Even the most destructive humans merely reflect the underlying vices, prejudices, and evil of their societies. So we should put away our rivalries and our fixations on trivial matters, and instead 'arm ourselves' with truth, peace, faith, and other spiritual resources. These will not equip us for worldly success or results, but that is not our true purpose in Jesus. They do help us stand by grace in God's presence, and help others to see God's light, love, and grace.

This also helps us in our trials (James 1:2-5). To "consider it pure joy" when we struggle does not mean that we are to be masochists or defeatists. Rather, we find a deeper form of joy as we learn perseverance and patience. "If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance" - (2 Corinthians 1:6). Our trials also help us understand and appreciate what Jesus endured for our sakes.

2 Corinthians provides one of several examples of times when Paul was deeply distressed or discouraged. This can be a fruitful topic of study, reminding us that such feelings do not mean that we have gone astray.

We can turn struggles and trials into something positive if we seek help from God, not from the world. Look to God for spiritual wisdom, spiritual strength, and spiritual energy, rather than seeking the worldly versions of these qualities and becoming "double-minded". God has an abundant supply of all that we need, but in his graciousness he will not force his ways on us.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How can we put into practice the spiritual resources described in Ephesians 6? What situations are they meant for? What should our expectations of them be? In what sense are trials a joy? What help can God give us?

The SA in the 19th Century: A Brief Overview

The United States itself came of age during the 19th century, only to find that its own growth and prosperity came at a high cost. The nation was beset by divisions and other problems of its own making, leading to some troubled times. Our survey will of necessity be brief, designed mainly to provide some context for the developments within the church that we shall cover.

The USA dramatically expanded in the first part of the 1800s. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the annexation of Texas and California in the 1840s made the USA a sea-to-sea nation; while industrialization, mechanization, and modernization both accompanied and also made possible this rapid expansion of territory. The first great railways, burgeoning factories, and a wide range of practical inventions turned a largely agricultural nation into a broad-based, thoroughly modern economy. These advances and changes were especially sweeping in the northern states.

Yet all this was overshadowed by slavery, with its moral and practical implications. In the late 1700s, the nation's founders condoned slavery as a "temporary" evil, hoping (or rationalizing) that in time its defenders would acknowledge their error. But after the lost opportunity of the 1780s, many southerners hardened their attitudes as slavery became intertwined with other institutions in the south. Soon, powerful southerners lobbied for slavery to be extended into the newly acquired territories. In 1820 and again in 1850, fragile compromises had to be pieced together to prevent an immediate split. By the time Abraham Lincoln became President in 1861, the delicate and unnatural balance could no longer hold, and 11 slave-owning states seceded.

□ See also the notes from Week Nine - the best opportunity for peacefully eliminating slavery probably came in the mid 1780s, right after the USA's independence was recognized by Great Britain and a wave of sentiment for personal freedoms prevailed on all the major issues of the day.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) dramatically changed the nation. Large areas of the country were ravaged by the fighting, and no area was spared the enormous death toll of its young men who served as soldiers. The enormous tragedy was compounded by the bitter attitudes that both caused and resulted from the conflict. President Lincoln's hope of showing "charity to all, and malice towards none" died when he was assassinated.

□ Besides battle casualties, many more deaths resulted from primitive medical treatment and from diseases spread by wartime conditions. All told, the Civil War caused more American deaths than any other war.

The post-war USA was more cynical, self-centered, amoral, and materialistic than any previous generation of Americans. Historians have adopted Mark Twain's famous term "The Gilded Age" to describe the last part of the 19th century. Frantic industrialization continued, but it was now motivated by greed and callousness rather than idealism and hope. Northern "robber baron" industrialists profited from desperate workers and a gullible public, while resentful former slave-owners in the south found new ways to oppress the freed slaves. The south itself was exploited by the "carpet-baggers", northern profiteers who took political offices in the south during Reconstruction and milked them for personal gain. These were times of general prosperity but widespread unhappiness, when crass and insensitive displays of wealth were admired.

□ After the war, the south was treated like a conquered foreign nation, and only gradually was each state allowed back into the union. During this "Reconstruction" era many southerners had limited rights.

The major Protestant denominations in the USA were powerfully affected by these upheavals. Several were torn apart by slavery and the war; in some cases this split was repaired after the war but in others it was permanent. Meanwhile, the new theory of evolution, first published by Charles Darwin in 1859, had already become a topic of ugly arguments in England, and as soon as the war was over it became a contentious subject in the USA too. Most of the Protestant denominations immediately took a defensive, and often hostile, position on evolution.

The Churches of Christ were less harmed by all this, at least at first, than were the major Protestant denominations. During the Civil War, southern congregations almost universally took a pacifist view. Northern churches struggled with the dilemma between the horrifying nature of

slavery and the horrifying nature of war, but the majority took the approach that killing was worse. There were a few exceptions, but most of the fighting within the church took place on the written page. There were many hard feelings, and the sectional bitterness would crop up in the post-war years; but there were no open breaks caused directly by the Civil War.

There was still a strong feeling of having citizenship in heaven, not on earth. Alexander Campbell's pacifist writings (many from the Mexican-American War) also influenced many church members.

The theory of evolution had even less of an effect on the Churches of Christ in the 19th century. The church at that time was more conscious of the gulf between secular culture and spiritual identity, and it simply did not surprise any of our 19th century brothers and sisters that unbelievers would come up a new theory to support their atheistic attitudes towards life.

Several other developments also shook the Protestant denominations right away, and had a delayed effect on the Churches of Christ. During the "Gilded Age", the worship of materialism led to a new trend in religion that welcomed expensive musical instruments and lavish church decorations. Church hierarchies arose in fellowships that previously had viewed them with suspicion. And the "biblical criticism" movement produced a generation of church leaders who did not accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The challenges of our own day are no more traumatic than the things faithful believers had to wrestle with during the Gilded Age.

"Biblical criticism" involves an investigation into the ways that the various books were written, with an emphasis on the human motivations and agendas that were supposedly behind the writings of Scripture. While it is possible to practice biblical criticism in order to deepen our understanding of Scripture's origins, most biblical critics make the overt assumption that the Scriptures were not inspired by a divine God.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How might church members today respond to the problems they had to face in the 19th century? In what ways are the challenges similar to those we face today? How are they different? Are these trials a "joy" in any way?

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No matter how healthy the church may be, challenges and growing pains are inevitable - in fact, some of them come about as inevitable consequences of natural growth and development. Many of the things that caused discord in the church were in fact matters that needed to be addressed; but other problems were purely self-inflicted and could have been handled better.

The Churches of Christ have always had to balance the Christian Church view of the church as a haven from the world with the Disciples of Christ dream of perfecting the church. These perspectives influence the ways that believers respond differently to events both within the church and outside of it. Indeed today we still see this underlying diversity, which either can guide us into a healthy synthesis or can cause bitter conflicts, depending on how we handle it.

The leaders were changing too. Barton Stone was less active after the union of 1832, and died in 1844. The Churches of Christ saw influential writers and editors become even more prominent than preachers, and this affected the way matters were addressed. The natural change of leaders from one generation to the next can again be either good or bad, depending on how we respond.

The influence of periodicals has been part of our fellowship since the early days, partly from Alexander Campbell's influence and partly due to the lack of a church hierarchy. Campbell began several magazines himself, starting with the *Christian Baptist* in 1823 and the *Millennial Harbinger* in 1830. Many others started publications for a wide range of reasons. Some periodicals were started by persons aggressively wishing to standardize doctrine - one 19th century magazine was even called the *Heretic Detector*.

Of the many leaders and personalities in the mid-19th century Churches of Christ, a few were especially influential. Until his death in 1866, Alexander Campbell remained a revered elder whose approval was sought by everyone in the church. Although Campbell never accepted the Protestant denominations as New Testament Christians, late in life he began to see Protestantism as a useful ally in upholding Christian principles in secular settings. In return, many Protestant leaders abandoned their antagonism towards Campbell and accorded him a grudging respect.

□ In the 1820s, denominational leaders sometimes wrote entire articles or booklets denouncing Campbell. Later, his influence became such that he is even mentioned in some secular histories of the era.

In mid-century, two of Campbell's close friends became influential representatives of different viewpoints within the church. Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874) absorbed Campbell's enthusiasm for ministry and also his rationalistic, empiricist approach. Fanning founded the long-running magazine *Gospel Advocate* in 1855, and tirelessly promoted the goal of restoring New Testament Christianity. Fanning's wife Charlotte was also an important voice in women's ministry.

Robert Richardson (1806-1876), a Pittsburgh native who as a boy was tutored by Walter Scott, represented a different perspective. A Chemistry professor at Bethany College and Alexander Campbell's personal physician, he was known for his "communion meditations" focusing on the Holy Spirit living and working among believers. Richardson's focus on the Spirit contrasted with Fanning's rationalism, and the two had respectful but spirited discussions on this topic and on whose approach most faithfully continued the work of their mutual friend Campbell.

The most distinctive voice of the era was David Lipscomb of Tennessee (1831-1917), a man of deep faith and an independent thinker who became editor of the *Gospel Advocate* in 1866. Never afraid to be alone or unpopular, more than anyone of the era Lipscomb continually sought to combine the best features of the Campbell's rationalism with the deeper truths of Barton Stone's eternal perspective on Christianity. Lipscomb was widely known for his tireless advocacy of help for the poor, his deep suspicion of earthly governments, his absolute pacifism, and his consistent advocacy of racial integration at a time when this was quite rare.

□ Lipscomb's suspicion of secular governments was so strong that he never voted, and he also urged other Christians to abstain. During the Civil War he made many enemies for his outspoken preaching against enlistment in the Confederate army. He analyzed these and other topics in his book *On Civil Government*.

Several 19th century issues illustrate the underlying differences in the church, and also help to explain its future direction. The role of the Holy Spirit was widely discussed, with Fanning representing the rationalistic perspective (shared by Alexander Campbell) that the Spirit's indwelling was purely static, and that any active work was done strictly through the written Word. Richardson took a different view, emphasizing the Spirit's presence in the assembled body and his ability to work in individual lives. In their day, both teachers and their view were highly regarded and respected; but an unrelated incident brought the discussion to an abrupt end.

A young, popular Nashville preacher named Jesse Ferguson began to promote inappropriate and increasingly bizarre teachings about the Spirit, culminating in his announcement that the Spirit was enabling him to communicate with dead persons. By the time he left the pulpit, Ferguson had done great harm to his congregation, and the incident left many church members with a lasting suspicion of any teachings about the Spirit's active work.

As the Churches of Christ grew, they faced questions about the nature of Christian leadership. In the 19th century the central debate was whether elder and deacons held "offices", or merely responsibilities. Lipscomb and E.G. Sewell promoted the view that such roles are strictly

responsibilities, conferring a certain moral authority but no tangible power. Lipscomb, in particular, warned of the danger of imitating capitalistic businesses. Alexander Campbell and other rationalists considered them offices, useful for efficient organization of the church. The 19th discussion was actually a worthwhile one that could deepen our own perspectives today.

As a generality, women had a more prominent role in the 19th century Churches of Christ than they do today, and the discussions about their role took place on different terms. It was not considered important to respond one way or another to secular practices or values - instead, the discussion was on what the Scriptures taught and gave as examples for women's ministry. This involved the nature of leadership, whether there was a difference between public and private worship, and whether women's ministry should have its own appointed leaders.

□ Secular opinions about the roles of women go in cycles, as they do with most things. In the early 1800s, it was more common for women to perform the same tasks as men, but in the aftermath of the Civil War expectations changed to what historians call the "cult of domesticity", putting greater pressure on women to stay in the home. In the late 1800s there were again calls for increased rights for women, most visibly from Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other leaders of the women's suffrage movement.

Some congregations appointed women to positions equivalent to deacons, though these women were involved strictly in ministry to other women. Although this never became widespread - it was often regarded as a personal preference of Campbell's (though also promoted by Tolbert and Charlotte Fanning) - there were also no objections to it except from those who wanted to make sure that it conferred responsibility only, not power or an 'office' (see above).

Charlotte Fanning and the more vocal Selena Holman were well-known as Bible teachers and as leaders in secular areas - Holman as a leading temperance (anti-alcohol) lobbyist, and Charlotte Fanning as a writer and the founder of several schools. Holman aggressively sought increased ministry roles for women. For a time David Lipscomb published her articles on the subject, sometimes alongside his own more restrained views, in the *Gospel Advocate*. Whether because Holman was overly aggressive, or whether the tone of the times and other controversies made it inevitable, prevailing opinion within the church turned towards a more restrictive role for women by the early 20th century - just as the nation as a whole started to move in the opposite direction.

Meanwhile, the sad trend towards segregated congregations took place with little discussion. In the post-war nation, racial integration was not popular anywhere; and worse, both the theory of evolution and Scripture were used to justify preferential treatment of 'whites' at the expense of other races. The Churches of Christ and most other religious groups silently gave in to this pressure. Except for David Lipscomb, whose persistent pleas for brotherhood and unity were ignored despite his great stature in the church, few leaders stood against the trend. The result was a quiet but complete reversal of one of the best features of the early Churches of Christ.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: How do past discussions affect today's church? Which were handled well? Which could have been handled differently? Do the views of 19th century leaders have any relevance today? What can we learn from studying them?

□ *Major* □ *Centuries* □ *Controversies*

In contrast to the issues that arose inevitably in the 19th century church, which if not always resolved appropriately were at least often constructively discussed, two major controversies led to a large-scale division. One of these problems remains a familiar topic of discussion today, while the other may at first seem incomprehensible to those hearing of it for the first time.

In 1849, Alexander Campbell called a convention in Cincinnati for those interested in formulating an organized approach to foreign missions. The resulting new organization was named the American Christian Missionary Society, and Campbell was its first president. In the next few years, it appointed officers and obtained the cooperation of many congregations that agreed to allow the Society to plan and coordinate all of their mission efforts. But from the beginning it was the subject of concern and even direct attacks because of its similarity to denominational hierarchies. In the 1850s, Campbell's guidance gave the Society a low profile that prevented the difference of opinion from becoming an open split. But after he died in 1866, the Society's leaders openly sought more influence and authority, provoking a major division.

While acknowledging the efficiency of the Society, opponents felt that both Scripture and early church history warned against any kind of hierarchy. After Campbell's death, the Society's leaders began to make decisions and pass resolutions standardizing doctrine for its activities, and even some of its supporters became concerned over the attempt to establish fixed 'church policy'.

The other major topic, musical instruments in worship, is familiar today; but the background and the terms of 19th century discussions were different. Before the Civil War, most Protestant denominations were firmly against the use of instruments. A cappella singing was a hallmark of most of Reformation churches, and for centuries the use of organs and the use of lavish church buildings was strongly associated with Catholicism. But during the Gilded Age, amidst the nation's sudden enthusiasm for materialism, Protestant churches began to splurge by erecting impressive edifices and filling them with expensive organs and other lavish furnishings.

□ Instruments in the Catholic Church go back to the Early Middle Ages. The first definite use was by Pope Vitalian in the 7th century, and they were an integral part of Catholic worship by the 8th century. Though sometimes debated today, in the 19th century it was universally acknowledged that there were no instruments in early church worship - those favoring them simply pointed to the lack of direct Scriptural prohibition, and promoted them as an acceptable option that could attract more persons to worship.

Many Churches of Christ joined the trend, and in some cities there was even a competition to have the most impressive building. The musical instruments became the most divisive issue because, while a building and other furnishings could be ignored during worship, organ music could not be. At first, believers could favor both the Society and the use of instruments, oppose both, or approve of one but not the other. But discussions of other matters started coming back to what the parties felt about the Society and instruments. Those who sought some kind of middle ground, such as the renowned scholar J.W. McGarvey, became increasingly isolated.

The two major controversies became linked in believers' minds; and before long almost everyone was either for both or against both. In 1889, a coalition of church leaders opposed to both met at Sand Creek, Illinois to draft a proclamation including personal attacks on those who disagreed with them, hardening attitudes on both sides. There were now effectively two different churches, the same in name only. In 1906, church leaders requested the US Census Bureau to recognize the division officially, re-designating congregations who accepted the Society and instruments as the Disciples of Christ, and those who disapproved of both as the Churches of Christ. On this note, the church entered a new century, with other challenges already waiting for it.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Why did the Missionary Society and musical instruments become the two most unresolvable conflicts? Could the final split have been prevented? Should it have been? What could we learn from these divisions?

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, November 2012*
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RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE PRESENT

Notes For Week Twelve: The 20th Century & Beyond Readings In Ephesians 1 & Hebrews 13

The last hundred years have been full of upheavals in the world and in the church. We could never cover all of the important events in one short study, so instead we shall take a panoramic perspective to help us understand how we got to the present time. History can help us to see the need for a more eternal, spiritual perspective that lifts our minds above the turmoil in this world.

Yesterday & Today & Forever *in Ephesians* *and Hebrews*

Things in this world change constantly, and nothing is ever definite about tomorrow. But God does not change; he never loses his power or his love or his wisdom. Whatever tumults there may be, either in the past, the present or the future, God is greater than all our troubles. God has always been here to help those who seek him, and he always will be.

God always desires for us to be with him, in the present age and in eternity (Ephesians 1:18-23). Paul's prayer uses the curious phrase "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened", because Jesus calls us to an entirely new perspective, not just outward change. The eyes in our head may help us learn facts, but the eyes of the heart help us learn deeper and more crucial lessons. Both in this life and the next, Jesus Christ is meant to be above all else. God has called us to allow Jesus' grace, truth, and love to take precedence over all human goals and loyalties.

Part of this perspective is the awareness that Jesus is always the same (Hebrews 13:8-14). Whether in the first century, the 21st, or the 41st, he will always teach the same message of grace, faith, and love. He will always call us to be strengthened by grace, not by our knowledge or ability. He will always call us to follow the cross instead of human ideologies and agendas.

Genuine followers of Jesus can make this earth more livable for others by showing them the grace, light, and gentleness of Jesus. But our own true hope and true home are not here - not in this world and not even in the church. Our hope and our home are in "the city that is to come". It should never trouble us that the world and even the church are so imperfect. Instead, we should love and forgive unbelievers and believers alike, maintaining a spiritual and eternal perspective on both the present day and history alike.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What does "eyes of your heart" mean? How can this idea guide our view of history and the present? What aspects of Jesus never change? How can his unchanging nature affect our perspectives on ministry and history?

The Defining Issues of Twentieth Century Christianity

Early in the 20th century, two issues began to define the direction that many churches would take in the years ahead. Skeptical views of the Bible became common even in church leaders, while the ecumenical movement challenged centuries of division and sectarianism. Besides influencing Protestant denominations, these issues affected Restoration bodies in their own way.

Around 1900, leaders of the biblical criticism movement began to reach the highest levels of the hierarchies of many Protestant denominations, making changes that at the time were called "The

Great Apostasy" by conservative church historians of several denominations. Biblical criticism had been around for centuries, but the modern movement made more sweeping assumptions.

□ In this context, "conservative" simply refers to someone who believes the Bible to be the inspired Word of a divine God. It is entirely possible to be a biblical conservative and a political liberal, and vice versa.

□ In the academic sense, 'criticism' (or 'higher criticism') simply refers to the analysis of a text. Analysis of the biblical text goes back at least to Erasmus of Rotterdam in the early 1500s, when he attempted to reconstruct the original Greek text of the New Testament.

The new school of biblical criticism assumed that there was no such thing as divine inspiration, and thus that each book had human origins that in turn reflected some human agenda. With these assumptions, biblical critics devised theories - sometimes plausible and sometimes bizarre - for each book of the Bible. All this had practical implications because the structure of many denominations gave great weight to the few most prominent academics in their seminaries. So, in the early 1900s some Protestant denominations were suddenly in a crisis, as their most influential leaders held views differing considerably from established doctrines or practice. In some, a small group of leaders redefined policy against the wishes of a wide majority, through effective use of the hierarchical machinery. Within a fairly short time, some denominations (but not, notably, the Baptists) turned away from teaching the Bible as God's perfect Word, and began using a different set of methods to determine policy.

This did not have an immediate effect on Restoration fellowships, which were already undergoing their own serious division. And at first, most Restoration leaders saw biblical criticism as a concern only for other denominations. Until well into the 20th century, its main effect on the Restoration fellowships was in creating a general cultural atmosphere in the nation in which biblical Christianity became less popular and less respected than it had been in the past.

□ An exception was J.W. McGarvey, who sought to provide church members with an understanding of the issues involved and of what it meant for the Bible to be inspired by God. For some years he wrote a regular column on biblical criticism in the *Christian Standard*, although his efforts were not then widely followed.

The ecumenical movement - efforts to re-unite Christian denominations into a single body - also became popular in the 20th century. Within the Restoration fellowships, it took the form of the open membership debate, which historian J.D. Murch of the Disciples of Christ calls "The Great Controversy". Ecumenism usually seeks common ground at all costs, amongst denominations of Christianity or sometimes between Christianity and other religions. Despite its willingness to overlook almost any doctrinal difference, the movement achieved relatively little success, at least in the USA, finding the hold of tradition and long-held doctrines to be unexpectedly strong. Its most significant American triumph was the formation of the United Church Of Christ in 1957.

The "open membership" debate actually predates the height of ecumenism. In 1908, Charles Clayton Morrison led a group of scholars influenced by the biblical criticism movement in founding the magazine *Christian Century* as an outlet for their views. In 1911 (the year that J.W. McGarvey died, coincidental or not), the magazine began campaigning for congregations of the Restoration fellowships (including the Churches of Christ, Disciples of Christ, and Christian Church) to accept into full fellowship anyone who proclaimed belief in Jesus, without regard to whether the person had been immersed after believing the gospel, or baptized in any other way.

The open membership discussions created a further separation between the two major factions of the Restoration fellowships. There was a good deal of support for open membership within the Disciples of Christ, but it also proved to be a divisive issue that drove off many of their members. The question was never really resolved to everyone's satisfaction within the Disciples.

The open membership proposal received very little support within the Church(es) of Christ. Even members who held the Barton Stone–David Lipscomb perspective on baptism generally disapproved of open membership, feeling that it was the church's responsibility to teach immersion of believers even if it acknowledged that some other means might also work. Several influential leaders of the Disciples with similar views switched to the Churches of Christ. Even though the Churches of Christ were in a sense going against the prevailing trend on this topic, they still experienced considerable growth during the early 1900s.

Stone taught immersion of adult believers for the forgiveness of sins as the proper means of conversion, but thought that other means might be acceptable to God. Lipscomb essentially believed that anyone who believed in Jesus and was immersed was saved, regardless of how much they understood about the details.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Should 'biblical criticism' worry us now? Could or should we respond to similar teachings? What elements of ecumenism can we learn from? What should we avoid? Is the "open membership" discussion still significant?

20th Century World A Brief Overview

The 20th century saw a steady stream of technological advances combined with an endless array of disasters and tragedies of human making. This is probably the hardest era of history for us to view objectively, since our lives are still affected by many of its events. Yet this also provides us a chance to develop a deeper awareness of Jesus' presence even in the worst of times.

The 20th century world saw great progress, at least in a worldly sense, and great suffering, in every sense. Technological advances changed daily life in many unforeseen ways, and created euphorically optimistic expectations. Yet day-to-day ease and material prosperity usually do little to meet deeper spiritual needs. And even as science and technology have displayed the potential of human ingenuity, some of history's greatest horrors have reminded us of the human capacity for hatred and senseless destruction. The massive slaughter of World War I, the bizarre and self-righteous attitudes during that war that then produced World War II, the mass murders committed by Nazis, Bolsheviks and other groups, and many smaller acts of hatred and vengeance have left a trail of suffering that will amaze and disturb historians for centuries.

Even when it did not lead to open war, competition dominated the era. New technologies raised rivalries over territory, resources, and wealth to new levels of crassness and callousness. Rival ideologies led to global bitterness and to wars both hot and cold. Islam, Christianity, and other great religions have often been discredited by those using them to justify aggression or prejudice.

Christianity faced these external influences while wrestling with internal conflicts. The 20th century trend of fundamentalism became an outlet for those distressed by the world's emptiness; yet fundamentalists often put their faith in ideology instead of in God, leading to excesses that discredit the gospel. At the other extreme, modernism and post-modernism have created quasi-religious "Christian" groups that have little to do with the truths of the gospel. Yet the 20th century also saw a revival of mission activity that has taken the gospel to more remote places than ever. Our own fellowship's 20th century history also reflects a confusing array of themes.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: Are the wars, violence, and sin of the 20th century unusual in historical terms? What general perspective should believers have when living in times of such turmoil? What parallels do fundamentalism and (post-)modernism have in our fellowship? Is there anything positive we can gain from them?

The recent history of our fellowship often reflects the narrower range of perspectives within the church that remained after the formal division of 1906. At other times, the church was reluctantly forced to deal with problems that also troubled the nation. The Churches of Christ and the other Restoration fellowships continue to face both internal and external challenges.

After 1906, the "Disciples of Christ" were congregations that accepted both musical instruments and the American Missionary Society. In 1968, the Disciples officially adopted a hierarchy modeled after the Society. Though labeled as the "liberal" branch of the Restoration fellowships, most Disciples profess belief in the divine inspiration of Scripture - differences in doctrine and practice come from their means of interpreting it and from their hierarchical administration.

Barton Stone's old name "Christian Church" was brought back to describe congregations seeking a middle ground, in most cases by rejecting the Missionary Society but accepting instruments in worship, while otherwise largely the same as Churches of Christ. In some cases, congregations themselves do not use instruments in worship but associate closely with congregations that do.

To make things even more confusing, in recent decades it has become common for congregations to have the name Church of Christ and yet use musical instruments in worship.

For historical reasons, the Christian Church is often combined with the Disciples in reference works under the heading "Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)", although many congregations of the Christian Church do not accept the Disciples' denominational hierarchy. The inconsistent labeling of these bodies should simply remind us not to over-emphasize the importance of a sectarian label - after all, that was one of the founding principles of our fellowship.

The Churches Of Christ began their recent history with a period of growth in the early 20th century. In 1906, the Churches of Christ had 300,000 members and the Disciples of Christ had 1,300,000; but by mid-century the Churches of Christ were larger. Even after slowing down, in 1960 the Churches of Christ still had over 2,000,000 members. Influential Restoration historian J.D. Murch (a member of the Disciples of Christ) believes the Churches of Christ's characteristic focus on Scripture above scholarly or societal trends has given it a more well-defined identity, both to members and to others seeking a church with a strongly identifiable focus on Scripture.

Census figures for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) decreased for about 20 years after the split, then increased for a few years, and then had a long, slow decline leaving them under 1 million members.

But divisions, controversies, and external stresses have long-term effects. By the middle of the 20th century, exhaustion from controversies, fear of the effects of biblical criticism (or "biblical liberals"), and other stresses left many members of the Churches of Christ weary of tackling future issues with patient endurance and charitable forbearance. This led to the emergence of what came to be called the "Hard Style" or "Fighting Style", a feature of the church ever since.

The "Hard Style's" roots go back to 1884, when Austin McGary founded the *Firm Foundation* to oppose David Lipscomb's writings. McGary was a former sheriff from rural Texas, hot-tempered and widely feared, who saw New Testament Christianity strictly as a list of do's and don'ts. McGary opposed Lipscomb on almost every issue with a new combative style that quickly became popular with many church members who were worried about the upheavals of the era and who thought that Lipscomb's quieter approach only encouraged false beliefs. One of McGary's most popular contributors was T.R. Burnett, a writer of sarcastic poems with a knack

for writing satires based on popular hymns. Barnett lampooned denominational practices, and also mocked and criticized those within the church who held views opposed to McGary's.

The most influential practitioner of the approach was Foy Wallace Jr. (1896-1979), who grew up revering McGary. Wallace had strong faith and commitment, but was incapable of gentleness and was notoriously impatient and intolerant towards those with different views. Wallace's influence was at its peak in the 1930s and 1940s, but today's church still reflects his impact. He targeted anything in the church that he considered "soft", militantly writing and speaking using numerous unusual attack words like "plush-mouthed", "wibble-wabble" and "lily-fingered".

Wallace's attacking style even influenced many of his opponents, creating discussions in which both sides used the "Hard Style". There were times when Wallace's efforts did squelch potentially damaging errors. But there were many other times when he aggressively silenced those making important points about grace and faith. And any short-term benefits of the "Hard Style" were eventually outweighed by the intimidation and conformity it produced□

□ Sometimes it left a mixed legacy, such as in Wallace's ruthless purge of pre-millennialism. Pre-millennialism is a silly belief; but before the mid-1900s in the church it was considered an eccentric but non-essential belief, until Wallace's relentless attacks eliminated any tolerance for it. In the process, his methods destroyed the reputations and careers of teachers like R.H. Boll of the Nashville Bible School.

Two prominent exceptions to the new "Fighting Style" were G.C. Brewer and K.C. Moser□, whose grace-centered teachings attempted to prevent the church from moving towards a completely rigid approach. Later, new publications like the short-lived but influential *Christian Reader* and the more long-running *20th Century Christian*□ focused on retaining the church's familiar core teachings but proclaiming them with optimism, grace, and patience.

□ Moser's book *The Way of Salvation*, still widely read, was a counter-weight to Wallace's teachings about baptism and conversion. Moser teaches the familiar repentance and baptism by immersion, but harmonizes these with salvation through grace and humble belief, rather than perfect correctness of belief and action.

□ Started by four Nashville graduate students using their own money, the *20th Century Christian* grew into an influential periodical and publishing house.

The popularity of the "Hard Style" heavily influenced mid-century conflicts like the acrimonious anti-institutionalism controversy. Anti-institutional churches (or "anti churches", or just "antis") opposed having congregations work together, in matters ranging from local evangelism to support for Christian colleges□. In one sense, this was a logical (or illogical) extreme of the Restoration churches' long-standing suspicion of hierarchical or institutional authority. But the discussion was conducted with the new "Hard Style", producing divisions and hard feelings all around. Church growth was badly hurt, indirectly leading to other problems later on.

□ During the "anti" debate, Foy Wallace Jr.'s hard-edged attack on those who supported Christian colleges boomeranged, and cost him a considerable amount of influence afterwards.

This debate and its confrontational tone also hindered the Churches of Christ in joining the mission revival of the era. Old debates from the days of the Missionary Society were replayed, alongside new personality conflicts. Even with the unnecessary controversy, after World War II the church took great steps in its commitment to world missions, as many sincere believers tried to make up for lost time - yet the church was well behind the denominations in this respect.

Meanwhile, for decades the African-American Churches of Christ had been forced to pursue an independent course. Many problems in the main-line churches did not affect them - their main concerns were with limited resources, as economic and similar obstacles caused constant anxiety.

For years, a defining question for African-American churches was how to respond to the attitudes and activities of "white" congregations. When mainline congregations offered financial or other forms of support, too often these offers came with humiliating or patronizing conditions.

Renowned evangelist Marshall Keeble, who may have baptized more persons than anyone in the history of the Restoration churches, exemplifies one perspective. Keeble's deep commitment to personal salvation led him to accept any form of support, regardless of the conditions, if it could lead others to faith in Jesus. Keeble was famously humble and patient, graciously enduring many petty humiliations from ignorant persons both inside and outside the church. On the other hand, the great teacher and writer G.P. Bowser felt that in his ministry it was crucial not to accept any treatment, of himself or of others, that involved discrimination. Passing up many opportunities for support that would have compromised his principles, Bowser still started several schools and publications on his own terms, and left a legacy of direction and leadership□

□ One of Bowser's close associates was Annie Tuggle, a missionary, teacher, and historian who for many years maintained an unofficial directory of African-American congregations and leaders. Tuggle's autobiography *Another World Wonder* serves as an informal history of 20th century African-American Churches of Christ, besides chronicling her own amazing life.

In the 1960s, the nation's long-standing racial segregation combined with generational conflict, brought into the open by the Vietnam War, in a time of unrest and frequent violence. Within the Churches of Christ, some of these problems were of lesser concern, but the church now had to face its own long-standing, self-inflicted racial divide. As the national Civil Rights movement became prominent, African-American church leaders like Fred Gray and Roosevelt Wells, with help from mainline leaders like John Allen Chalk of the "Herald Of Truth" radio program, finally helped bring the first long overdue small changes within the Churches of Christ□

□ A particular battleground was the Christian colleges, many of which had long been segregated. In some cases they changed willingly in the 1960s, while in other cases they did so grudgingly. One of the sad ironies of the time is that college named after David Lipscomb was one of the last in the nation to integrate.

Many recent developments are better understood from the perspective of the century as a whole. The "Hard Style", ever more deeply entrenched, crushed independent thought and harmed church growth and unity. Aggressive attitudes and the plateau in growth led to new controversies such as the infamous Crossroads (or "Boston") Movement, an extreme reaction to the lack of growth and mission activity that adopted the "Hard Style" in its own attacks on the mainline church. Many recent debates over trivia or secular events likewise reflect a combination of hardened attitudes with an inward focus that expects perfection in the church instead of grace and humility.

History shows us that external things may change, yet humanity's spiritual needs stay the same. Every human institution, including the church, is to a large degree the product of its time and place. Today's church is imperfect, and tomorrow's church will be imperfect as well. We do not have to feel bad about this - just humble. Only Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever. If we base our ministries on his grace, his love, the cross, and the resurrection, we can offer the world what everyone needs in every era.

Questions For Discussion Or Study: What are the most notable long-term changes in the Churches of Christ since their beginnings in the 1800s□ What is the same□ How do recent problems reflect what happened earlier□ How can this help us to deal with them□

- Mark Garner, *Northland Church Of Christ, November 2012*
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