

# ***GOING SEPARATE WAYS: What Really Happened in 1906? (Why Churches of Christ and Christian Churches Served God Apart in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)***

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THE YEAR 1906 is securely deposited in my memory bank (though I was not born until 1945) for a number of reasons, namely:

1. It was the year of the great San Francisco earthquake. Three thousand souls perished in the 7.8 magnitude quake.
2. It was the year one of my heroes, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, was born (Feb. 4).
3. It was the year those "loveable losers," the Chicago Cubs, went to the World Series. They lost to their cross-town rivals, the Chicago White Sox, four games to two. "They wouldn't be the Cubbies if they didn't break your heart."
4. And something that did break the hearts of many people in the American Restoration Movement, to say nothing of the heart of God, it was the year that a division occurred among the Disciples of Christ.

"Conventional wisdom" today says that David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, acting unilaterally for some churches who opposed instrumental music in worship and the American Christian Missionary Society, sought and received separate listing for Churches of Christ in the 1906 U. S. Census of Religious Bodies. The year 2006, according to "conventional wisdom," is the hundredth year since the separation between Churches of Christ (a cappella or non-instrumental) and Christian Churches (instrumental) took place.

But "conventional wisdom," as is often the case, is not exactly what it appears to be. In the first place, Christian Churches, as such, and as the term is used today, did not exist in 1906. The division was between the emerging non-instrumental (some were actually *anti*-instrumental) Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ. This latter group, the Disciples of Christ, because of a conservative ele-

ment, was basically a conservative, non-denominational fellowship in 1906. Today they are basically a liberal mainline denomination, known as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), having voted to become a full-fledged denomination in 1968. Christian Churches (also known as Churches of Christ) began separating from the Disciples in 1927, for some of the same reasons the a cappella brethren had departed, when they formed the North American Christian Convention (independent of the Disciples' International Convention, hence the term "Independents"). To challenge "conventional wisdom" even further, the 1906 Census of Religious Bodies in the United States was not actually published until 1910. In all probability, the actual division may have occurred as early as 1889, the year of the infamous Sand Creek "Address and Declaration," or even before, with the equally infamous "loyalty resolutions" passed by Northern members of the ACMS in 1861 and 1863, when Southern brethren were called "armed traitors."

## ***Past is Prologue***

To understand whatever transpired in 1906, however, we must back up into the previous century to understand the underlying reasons why Churches of Christ emerged as a "distinct and separate" fellowship from their instrumental counterparts in the American Restoration Movement. Past is prologue. This paper will reflect my understanding of the separation. The last six months I have been working with co-author William E. Paul (*Taking a Stand: The Story of the Ottumwa Brethren*, College Press 1996) to prepare the late Donald G. Hunt's final book, *Emerging from the Wilderness: A Study of Restoration History* [to be released by DonMar Publications in August, 2006]. I have also just finished reading *Torn Asunder: The Civil War and the 1906 Division of the Disciples* by Ben Brewster (2006, available from [www.behindtherestoration.com](http://www.behindtherestoration.com)). It is one fascinating read. I have

also taken a second look at several important books I have referenced in the past. These would include:

- *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement*, Henry Webb (ACU Press, 2003)
- *The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement*, Volumes I & II, Earl Irvin West (Gospel Advocate Company, 1974)
- *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches*, Leroy Garrett (College Press, 1987 edition)
- *Renewing God's People: A Concise History of Churches of Christ*, Gary Holloway & Douglas A. Foster (ACU Press, 2001)
- *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Robert E. Hooper (Howard Publishing, 1993)
- *Union in Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement*, James B. North (Standard Publishing, 1994)
- *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement*, James DeForest Murch (Standard Publishing, 1962)
- *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, edited by Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, & D. Newell Williams (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004)

Everything that exists had to have a beginning and for argument's sake let us say the American Restoration Movement had its beginning around 1801 with the storied Cane Ridge Revival in Kentucky. Shortly thereafter several Presbyterian ministers, including Barton W. Stone, formed a church organization known as the Springfield Presbytery. In 1804 they disbanded it and wrote the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery." Five years later another Presbyterian preacher, Thomas Campbell, wrote a second seminal document called "Declaration and Address." Both documents (position papers as we might call them today) stated that all Christians should unite on the Word of God alone. Stone preferred the name Christian while Campbell opted for the term Disciples. Congregations were called Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, or Disciples of Christ. In 1824 Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell met for the first time, in Georgetown, Kentucky. Following a year-end meeting in Lexington in 1831, the two movements joined forces

in a great New Year's Day meeting in Georgetown, January 1, 1832.

Hooper notes that before the Civil War, religious societies pervaded the American scene. Nearly every denomination had a Bible, tract, or missionary society to help further the work of evangelism. D. S. Burnet, dubbed the "father" of organized societies among Disciples of Christ, helped create the American Christian Bible Society and the Cincinnati Tract Society. In 1849 Burnet and others organized the American Christian Missionary Society in Cincinnati. Alexander Campbell, though not present, was elected its first president. Not everyone was happy with the ACMS. Tolbert Fanning's first editorials in the *Gospel Advocate* (established in 1855 in Nashville) took aim at the ACMS and anything else that smacked of "innovation" (such as salaried ministers). Fanning would soon be joined by Benjamin Franklin, founder of the *American Christian Review* (1856), in his denunciation of the ACMS, though Franklin was at first in sympathy with the society.

The Civil War began in 1861. In the same year, at a convention of the ACMS in Cincinnati, a motion was made (though the convention was in recess) in support of the Union. The aged Campbell was present but Isaac Errett was presiding. The legality and wisdom of this "loyalty resolution" was questioned by Burnet but was ruled in order by Errett and passed with only one dissenting vote. Holloway and Foster note that the worst was yet to come. At the 1863 meeting, the ACMS passed an even stronger "loyalty resolution" branding those who fought for the Confederacy as "armed traitors." North called this uncharitable action "a slap in the face to Southern Christians. There was no immediate division, but the seeds of division were watered heavily..." David Lipscomb said the ACMS had committed a great wrong against the church and the cause of God. In my opinion, the two ill-timed and misguided "loyalty resolutions" were the first cracks in the solidarity that would result in formal division in 1906. The ACMS should have stuck with its purpose of proclaiming the gospel instead of passing "loyalty resolutions."

Even before the Civil War began there were differences of opinion over the issue of slavery. Holloway and Foster point out that in 1860 there were about 1,200 churches in the North and 800 in the South. At the heart of the conflict was slavery and race. Stone and Campbell (both slave

owners) opposed slavery but were also opposed to abolition. When war broke out, Lipscomb took a pacifist position and was lambasted from his brethren on both sides. Others choosing pacifism included Campbell, Stone, Franklin, J. W. McGarvey and Moses Lard. Franklin said, "We will not take up arms against, fight, and kill the brethren we have labored for twenty-five years to bring into the kingdom of God." But North notes, "When the shooting started, Christians of the Restoration Movement on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line acted just like their neighbors – and joined the armies of the blue or gray and tried to kill as many of the enemy as possible." That this drastic action contributed to a division of the Movement in the future is beyond question, despite Lard's contention in 1866 that the Movement could never divide. In 1866, the Civil War came to an end, as did life itself for Alexander Campbell. His passing was noted on the front page of the new weekly journal published in Cincinnati, the *Christian Standard*, edited by Isaac Errett.

Holloway and Foster contend that it was not just the war, "but its aftermath, particularly Reconstruction in the South, that broke Christian fellowship." "After the war, many churches in the prosperous Northern cities became successful in society. They built large buildings with expensive stained glass. They preferred educated ministers. They could even afford expensive organs for their new buildings. ...By contrast, Southern members faced starvation, disease, and economic ruin. Although some Northern church leaders, such as Errett, made an effort to raise humanitarian support for the South, little aid actually arrived. To Southerners, it was inconceivable that their fellow Christians in the North could spend money on buildings and organs while their brothers and sisters in the South were struggling to just stay alive." As Jack Reese has noted, "No one today is guilty for what happened a hundred years ago...", but I am deeply sorry, as one born and raised above the Mason-Dixon line, that my forebears could be so insensitive to the sufferings of those below the line, and could not forego their instruments to send aid instead.

Webb concurs with Holloway and Foster regarding Reconstruction. Noting that the economy was crippled, currency was worthless, and carpetbaggers preyed on the people, who were literally starving. The postwar North was remarkably different with new factories, railroads, inventions, and technology. The prosperity permitted churches in the North

to call salaried ministers and buy organs and melodeons to aid them in their congregational singing.

### ***Instrumental music comes into play***

The issue of instrumental music now came into play more prominently in post-Civil War days. True, the first recorded instance of a Restoration congregation using instrumental music was back in 1859 when L. L. Pinkerton introduced a small melodeon in the church at Midway, Kentucky. (It did not help matters that Pinkerton had seconded the first "loyalty resolution," was a chaplain for the Union in the Civil War, and would, in 1869, renounce the plenary inspiration of the Bible!) Pinkerton said the congregational singing had degenerated into such "screeching and bawling" that it would "scare even the rats from worship." About a year after the melodeon appeared, deemed an "instrument of Satan" by opponents, it mysteriously disappeared! One night Adam Hibler, an elder at Midway, assisted by a slave named Rueben, removed the instrument from the premises. Hibler faded into the night with the little melodeon. The fate of the instrument was unknown until the early 1900s when it was discovered in the home of the Nugent sisters, who acquired it at a sale for \$1.65. Today it can be seen in the vestibule of Midway College, Kentucky's only college for women, in a glass case, under lock and key!

It is my belief that instrumental music was strictly a cultural issue in the days preceding and following the Civil War. Those who opposed its use argued from *culture*, not Scripture. Campbell's oft-quoted remark that it was about as appropriate for worship as "a cow bell in a concert" is based on culture, not Scripture. Those who favored instrumental music believed it was an expedient, an aid to worshippers, like church buildings, song leaders, hymnals or tuning forks. Hooper notes that Lipscomb (who was tone deaf) did not address the issue until 1874 and did not confront it until 1878, and then it was from the argument of silence. Webb contends that in the "context of southern resentment, following the war, the use of an instrument of music became the 'test of fellowship' needed to facilitate division" and became "the touchstone upon which the division would be predicated."

North, Murch, and Webb all believe economics lay at the heart of the matter. City churches in the North could afford both salaried ministers and musical instruments.

Rural churches in the South could afford neither. When the Eighth and Walnut church in Cincinnati constructed a new church in 1870 (including an \$8,000 pipe organ) at a cost of \$140,000, eyebrows were raised and murmurings were heard in the South.

### ***A line is drawn in the sand at Sand Creek***

One of those voices was that of Daniel Sommer, who in 1887 had followed Benjamin Franklin as editor of the *American Christian Review*. Sommer began to make a distinction between “the Church of Christ and the so-called Christian Church.” At an annual gathering of brethren at Sand Creek, Illinois in 1889, Sommer’s “Address and Declaration” was read August 18 to the assembled multitude of 6,000 by elder P. D. Warren. (Sommer was only 39 at the time.) The address cited such innovations as the salaried minister, missionary societies, modern methods of raising money, choirs, and instrumental music. It stated that those who opposed such innovations were “more thoughtful” and “better informed in the Scriptures” and that those who favored them “must certainly know” that they were out of step with Scripture. The closing sentence of the manifesto stated that if those who practiced innovations failed to “turn away from such abominations” then those who opposed them “can not and will not regard them as brethren.”

A line in the sand had been drawn at Sand Creek. (In fact, in a book released by Gospel Advocate Company in 2005, *Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures*, author Jimmy Jividen contends that the 1889 Sand Creek Declaration “marked the split between the a cappella and instrumental churches.”) Lipscomb at first praised the document but quickly changed his mind. J. C. McQuiddy of the *Gospel Advocate* called the manifesto “manifest folly.” *Christian Standard* opined that Sommer was no more to be identified with the Disciples than was Sidney Rigdon (who had defected to the Mormons). Sommer replied, “The Sand Creek Declaration is being adopted, and those who will not do right are purged out as leaven. In course of a few years the Church of Christ will be entirely separated from the Christian Church as any other branch of sectarianism. Hallelujah.” Murch notes that in the same year, 1889, J. W. McGarvey joined the *Christian Standard’s* staff, while retaining his views on instrumental music and holding his membership in an a cappella congregation until his death in 1911. McGarvey said, “I have never proposed to withdraw fellowship

from brethren simply because of their use of instrumental music in worship.” T. B. Larimore also refused to take sides, saying he preferred to “sit on the issues and stand on Jesus Christ.” The majority, however, chose up sides.

### ***The real issue***

North is of the opinion that issues like the missionary society and instrumental music were only symptoms of the real issue: biblical authority and how it is applied. He contends that neither side had a problem with the first half of Thomas Campbell’s motto, “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak.” It was the second statement that created the chaos: “Where the Scriptures are silent, we will be silent.” Two views quickly emerged. One viewpoint was that silence prohibits. The other viewpoint states that silence is permissive. (This is nothing new. Historian B. K. Kuiper writes that Martin Luther retained everything that is not expressly forbidden by the Bible while John Calvin permitted only what is expressly commanded by the Bible.) North notes that these two views are parallel to the two views that were adopted toward the U. S. Constitution after its ratification in 1789: “loose construction” and “strict construction.” “The strict constructionists insisted that the federal government could do only what was explicitly authorized for it to do in the Constitution. The loose constructionists insisted that as long as the federal government stayed within the guidelines of both the letter and spirit of the Constitution, it could do whatever was necessary to get the job done.” In the Restoration Movement, those below the Mason-Dixon Line argued that the Bible does not authorize societies, instrumental music, or choirs. Those above the Mason-Dixon Line contended that these are expedients to get the job of evangelism, worship, and ministry done. [Webb notes, “It is especially interesting to note that, in Tennessee, the lines of separation correspond exactly to the North-South wartime division. East Tennessee, which remained with the Union during the war, found no problem in accepting musical instruments or missionary societies. Middle and West Tennessee, which joined the Confederacy, chose overwhelmingly to withdraw from the Disciples.”]

Strict construction can lead to legalism. Loose construction can lead to liberalism. Both legalism and liberalism will create division. Our sad history clearly reveals that this became reality in our movement.

## 1906 – “Distinct and Separate”

Murch states that by 1906, when leaders of Churches of Christ “took their drastic step for national separation,” there seemed to be a “fair degree of unanimity” on making a “test of fellowship” on instrumental music and the missionary society. The story of the 1906 division is chronicled by Douglas A. Foster in two excellently researched pieces that have recently been published: “1906 – A Play in One Act” (*One Body*, Winter 2006) and “What really happened in 1906?” (*The Christian Chronicle*, April 2006). I will rely heavily on Foster’s research at this point.

In the early days of the United States, Congress instructed census takers to gather religious information. By the late 1880s many Stone-Campbell churches had created a yearbook listing their congregations. They were listed as Disciples of Christ or Churches of Christ, but not separately. When the time came for the 1906 Census of Religious Bodies, census officials noted that the *Gospel Advocate*, which they had assumed was a Disciples paper based on 1890 data, seemed to distance itself from that body of believers. Simon Newton Dexter North, the director, received a letter from one William J. Campbell in Marshalltown, Iowa asserting that 3,000 “churches of Christ” were no longer connected with the Disciples. A list of preachers was included – printed by the McQuiddy Printing Company (printers of the *Gospel Advocate*). Accordingly, North wrote to David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, inquiring, among other things, if there was a religious body called “church of Christ” that was not affiliated with the Disciples of Christ. This was on June 17, 1907, the 1906 census data not being published until 1910. The mail service must have been fairly good in those days for on June 22, less than a week after receiving the letter from Washington, D.C., Lipscomb wrote back to North. While laying no claim to “earthly headquarters” Lipscomb did affirm that the Movement of which he belonged began with Thomas Campbell’s “Declaration and Address.” He contended that the Christians or Disciples had “increased in number and wealth” and many, desiring “to become popular” had sought to “adopt... human inventions” such as the missionary society, and instrumental music. He concluded by saying, “There is a distinct people taking the word of God as their only and sufficient rule of faith, calling their churches ‘churches of Christ,’ or ‘churches of God,’ distinct and separate from all other bodies or peoples.” Lipscomb then promised North that he would “cheerfully assist

in any way in my power in gaining correct information of these churches.”

This did not set well at all with J. H. Garrison, editor of the St. Louis-based *Christian-Evangelist* (begun in 1882), who said the division was “news to us” in his December 1907 editorial and asked “by whose authority?” did Brother Lipscomb make this pronouncement. A series of letters and editorials ensued, Garrison charging Lipscomb with creating a division and Lipscomb defending himself by saying he had done nothing but try to be true to God and his word.

In 1910 the Bureau of the Census published the data compiled in the 1906 Census of Religious Bodies. Listed under “New Denominations and Denominational Families” that had emerged from other religious groups since the 1890 census: Churches of Christ, formerly part of the Disciples of Christ. Churches of Christ numbered 2,642 with 159,123 members. Disciples of Christ reported 7,799 churches with 923,698 members. Foster notes, “The data reflected what had already happened (and what continued to happen for at least another decade) ... it worsened the antagonism between those already taking sides.” For all practical purposes, Churches of Christ had now gone their separate way.

### **Birth of the conservatives or “independent” Christian Churches**

With the departure of the Churches of Christ it would be left to the conservatives within the Disciples of Christ to do battle with what James B. North calls “the incursion of liberalism” among the Disciples that “all but destroyed the Restoration Movement.” As early as 1869, L. L. Pinkerton had denied the plenary inspiration of Scripture. In 1873 he endorsed open membership (receiving the non-immersed) in the church at Midway, Kentucky. In 1889, R. C. Cave denied the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Christ in a sermon delivered in St. Louis. Beginning about 1890, *Christian-Evangelist* became more liberal while *Christian Standard* became the voice of the conservatives. J. W. McGarvey became the champion for the conservative cause, writing a weekly column on “Biblical Criticism” in *Christian Standard*. But the “incursion of liberalism” continued among Disciples with the creation of the Disciples Divinity House at the University of Chicago (1894), the Campbell Institute (1896), E. S. Ames’ practice of open membership in Chicago (1903),

and the Chicago Christian Missionary Society's support of open membership (1906).

Post-1906 events included the last bright spot among the Disciples of Christ before the 1927 departure of the conservatives, the 1909 Centennial celebration of Thomas Campbell's "Declaration and Address" in Pittsburgh (largely shunned by Churches of Christ). In 1917 charges of liberalism were leveled at the College of the Bible. The Disciples merged all their missionary societies into one United Christian Missionary Society in 1919. A year later the UCMS was charged with practicing open membership in China. Soon conservative Bible colleges were established: McGarvey Bible College and Cincinnati Bible Institute in 1923. The next year the two colleges merged becoming Cincinnati Bible Seminary. At the 1926 Disciples' International Convention in Memphis, conservatives, convinced that the UCMS was practicing open membership at both home and abroad, were defeated. In 1927 the conservatives, with the backing of *Christian Standard*, began the North American Christian Convention in Indianapolis. North writes, "In effect, the Disciples had split ... There was liberalism in the schools, open membership in the churches and agencies, and comity agreements with regard to mission work. This resulted in a split within the Movement, and the conservatives began to erect new agencies to replace the ones that went liberal – the Cincinnati Bible Seminary to replace College of the Bible, Christian Restoration Association to replace the United Christian Missionary Society, and the North American Christian Convention to replace the International Convention. It took several decades for this division to work its way down through other schools, state missionary societies, and other institutions, but for all practical purposes, after 1927 the two sides had already withdrawn from each other."

Today this fellowship is known as the "independent" or conservative Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. During the decade of the 1990s they became the fastest growing evangelical church in America, growing at a rate of 18.6 percent.

### **Summing it up**

Is 1906 the year of the actual division or, as some have suggested, should it be placed earlier? Was David Lipscomb speaking for all Churches of Christ when he and J. W. Shepherd took unilateral action in cooperating with the 1906 U.

S. Census of Religious Bodies? In retrospect, what were the real reasons why Churches of Christ, at least in Lipscomb's view, were "distinct and separate" from Disciples of Christ and all other religious bodies?

As to the date of division, it is hard to pin down. My personal view is that cracks in the unity began to appear when the two "loyalty resolutions" were passed by the ACMS in 1861 and 1863. The Civil War (1861-1866) greatly exacerbated the problem as brethren on both sides of the conflict took up arms and slew one another. Reconstruction poured salt in the wound of division with Northern brethren failing to come to the aid of their Southern brethren in a greater way than they did, creating bitterness and resentment. The introduction of instrumental music (1859) did not divide the Movement because it was at first clearly a cultural and economic issue, later opposed on the basis of what the Bible does not say, i.e., the argument from silence. The line drawn in the sand at Sand Creek with Daniel Sommer's August 18, 1889 "Address and Declaration" certainly created a regional division in Illinois, but was probably not a national division. The drawing up of the list of 3,000 churches of Christ, printed by the McQuiddy Company and sent by William J. Campbell of Marshalltown, Iowa to the Office of the Census Director in 1907, claiming that said churches were now separate from the Disciples, might qualify as the precursor to the national division. Lipscomb's rather rapid response of June 22, 1907 to the Census people in Washington, D. C., pledging support to secure a complete listing of Churches of Christ gives us an actual date for division. Yet, Lipscomb clearly believed the division had already occurred. (A personal aside: exactly 51 years later, June 22, 1958, I was baptized into Christ at the Park Church of Christ in Goldfield, Iowa.) I do not believe Lipscomb spoke for all in Churches of Christ but he, as editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, was the most respected and influential voice among Churches of Christ. The results of the 1906 Census of Religious Bodies, which took three years to compile, was not published until 1910. By then the division was complete.

Both sides say the real reason for the division was the question of biblical authority. But as we have seen, the question was not so much where the Scriptures speak as it was where the Scriptures are silent. The unresolved conflict of Calvin and Luther remains equally unresolved among the adherents of the Stone-Campbell Movement today.

In closing, I would suggest three other reasons why we divided (you pick the date: August 18, 1889, the 1906 Census (published in 1910), June 22, 1907, or dates even earlier or later).

First, a lack of and loss of personal relationships. In reading Foster's "1906 – A Play in One Act" I was struck by the bitter exchange between David Lipscomb and J. H. Garrison, fellow editors. I asked Doug if the two ever met and to his knowledge they never had. What might have happened if one of them had taken a train to either St. Louis or Nashville and spent a few days together in cordial conversation? What if they had knelt together as men of God and prayed with each other – for each other? What if they had reverently read Scripture together – in particular, Jesus' dying prayer for the oneness of all believers? Isaac Errett did meet David Lipscomb and their relationship was much more friendly and irenic. This is why meetings like the Pepperdine Bible Lectures (1943 – present) and the Restoration Forum (1984 – present) are so valuable and helpful.

I am also struck by Sam Carter's powerful description of what happened after Sand Creek (*The Truth*, February 1975). "The Declaration had bluntly stated that fellowship was to be withdrawn from those with whom the conservatives could not agree. This meant, in practical terms, that lifelong friends could not worship together unless somebody relented. It meant that women who had spent mornings on the back porch snapping beans or putting up pickles together may never meet again in a house of worship. Men who had shucked corn and baled hay and swapped stories together for years would never share participation in a mutual worship service again. Children who had played and hunted and swam together would never again attend services with their friends because their parents could not agree on how to run church. It meant that family ties would be strained to the breaking point, and that tears and heartbreak would ensue as a result of hurt feelings and injured pride. Never again would peace reign in the community. All attempts at communication and understanding and compromise were to be halted, never to be resumed again. It was simply finished; forgotten."

Second, a lack of "gentle forbearance." Do you recall the words of a hymn we have all sung, "Stepping in the Light"? The third stanza begins with these words: "Walking in footsteps of gentle forbearance, footsteps of faithfulness, mercy, and love." There was little, if any, "gentle forbearance" during

the Civil War, or Reconstruction, or Sand Creek. I would like to insert here a few excerpts from my editorial "Bear With Me" (*One Body*, Spring 2006).

"The failure to 'forbear one another in love' is the major reason why churches and entire church fellowships have divided."

"Forbearance is an ordinance but it has not been our inheritance."

"J. B. Phillips' translation of 'forbearance' reads 'making allowances for one another because you love one another.' We all make allowances for those we love."

"Forbearing with others means we will bite our tongue and bide our time. This is the kind of 'silence' that has God's authority and blessing."

I quoted several brethren on forbearance, among them Carl Ketcherside, who said, "If fellowship in Christ was conditioned upon perfect agreement, there we be no place for forbearance, and the instruction to 'forbear one another in love' would be useless. Forbearance is never exercised toward those who see everything as you do."

"Are we as a people known for being forbearing or overbearing? Paul wrote, 'Let your forbearing spirit be known to all.' Matthew Arnold called forbearance 'sweet reasonableness.' The NEB translates it 'magnanimity.' Church splits will never happen where magnanimous members manifest a forbearing spirit and sweet reasonableness!"

Finally, a loss of vision and mission. Jesus' great prayer for unity had a greater purpose than unity itself. He prayed that believers might be one "that the world may believe." The unity our brethren experienced at Lexington and Georgetown in 1831 and 1832 led to a great harvest of souls coming into the kingdom. Then came the tragic Civil War, the divisive ACMS "loyalty resolutions," the bitterness of Reconstruction, the Sand Creek manifesto, and finally, the sad division recognized in the 1906 census. Lost in it all was the vision and mission of Jesus – "that the world may believe." Dean Mills said, "When world evangelism once more becomes the primary goal of the brotherhood, the prayer of Jesus will again be taken seriously." Chris DeWalt adds, "It really seems simple. Take the message of salvation to every person on earth. They deserve the chance to hear it at least one time before they die. Is that so hard? Can we

not come together and get the job done?" At the 2003 North American Christian Convention Rick Atchley spoke to 8,500 members of Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and said, "I can imagine a day soon when our preachers are filling each others pulpits and speaking at each others conventions. I can imagine a day soon when our churches are partnering together to send mission teams into the world, to do local outreaches in our city, to feed the hungry, to help the wounded in every major city in America. I can imagine the vision of our restoration forefathers being restored and

the prayer of Jesus being fulfilled. For a hundred years we have served God apart ... only God knows what we can do the next hundred years serving Him together."

Praise God, that day is already here and I will say more about it in Part II of this presentation, *"Restoring Family Ties: What's Really Happening in 2006? (How Churches of Christ and Christian Churches are Serving God Together in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century)*.

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