

Barton W. Stone

- Born in 1772 in Maryland
- Raised Episcopal, attended Baptist and Methodist churches
- Ended up as a Presbyterian minister
- 10-31-1811 - Married Celia Bowen at the Bowen House in Moss Wright Park
- 1812 – moved to Sumner County so they could live near his wife’s mother for two years
- Struggled with several aspects of Christianity:
 - Why did he not have a dramatic conversion experience?
 - Was his call to preach genuine?
 - Is the Trinity a true doctrine?
 - Is predestination accurate?
- Was a significant part of the Cane Ridge Revival which led to emotional responses to preaching
- Unity was important – “Let Christian unity be our polar star”
- Called themselves Christians, congregations were called Christian Churches or Churches of Christ

Cane Ridge Revival

Religious mood in late 1700’s

- Cold, formalistic, ritualistic, stale worship
- A faith that was not their own
- Attendance out of expectation instead of desire

Red River Revival – Logan County, Kentucky – Summer, 1799

- James McGready was the preacher in that area, a Presbyterian minister
- Logan County was called “The Devil’s Den” because of the character of the people that lived there
- The meeting was a sacramental meeting for taking the Lord’s Supper
- One account states that people were “stricken” – falling to the floor and shouting out
- Following this, people came in wagons by the thousands
- Barton W. Stone was at this revival and wanted to produce similar results at Cane Ridge

Cane Ridge Revival – Cane Ridge, Kentucky – August, 1800

- Crowd estimates of 10,000 to 30,000
- Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian ministers preached
- People experienced what Stone called “religious exercises”
 - Falling to the ground in a faint like they were dead
 - Jerking back and forth and barking
 - Bodily agitations, dancing
 - Laughter – deep, hearty laughter
- Stone felt all of this was evidence of the Holy Spirit but not that it was required of all Christians
- He also felt that if there was a response to preachers of various denominations, then the differences between those denominations must not be as important
- Therefore, unity became one of his primary goals
- He began questioning Calvinism and accepting free will

Springfield Presbytery

- Stone and other ministers began to be questioned:
 - Their involvement in the revival
 - Their openness in accepting other Christians
 - Doubts about Calvinism
- They broke away from the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky and formed the Springfield Presbytery in 1803
- The Presbytery grew and added more congregations
- In 1804, the Presbytery decided that they were contributing to division instead of unity and dissolved
- Their last act was writing "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery"
 - Christians should follow the Bible alone
 - Each congregation should be autonomous
 - There should be no formal hierarchy of the church
 - Cooperation and freedom should prevail
 - Christians should dispute less and look forward to Christ's second coming

Other Items

- Stone and his followers called themselves Christians and their congregations were called Churches of Christ or Christian Churches
- They practiced believer's baptism but did not make it a test of fellowship so that other Christians would not be excluded
- He did not affirm the Trinity
- He published a paper, "The Christian Messenger" from 1826 to 1844 urging Christian tolerance and unity