

Restoration Movement – Setting and Beginnings

We've looked at:

- Historical background
- Political background
- Religious background

Scripture only:

- Erasmus in the 1400's
- Luther and the reformation in the 1500's (sola scriptura)
- Puritans and early colonies

The setting for the restoration movement:

- No dominant religious group in America
- Seeking religious freedom just as they were seeking political freedom
 - Freedom from clergy and structure
 - Freedom from tradition
 - Freedom to begin new churches
- People reading the Bible for themselves and forming their own opinions and interpretations
- Divisions within denominations because of differences in interpretation
- Multiple religious groups
- Power and influence of preachers and the press to view scripture their way
- Less unification and more division
- Search for authority
- Conflict between churches

Independently, several "back to the Bible" movements began

- Within multiple denominations
- In multiple locations
- A more thorough reformation was viewed by many as a restoration
- The goal of most of these movements – unity – John 17

Pockets of Early Restoration

- Restoration was not used in the early parts of the movement
- Christian Connection was the most popular early term, although they tried just using the word Christian
- Four areas of restoration:
 - James O'Kelly – North Carolina and Virginia
 - Abner Jones and Elias Smith – New England
 - Barton W. Stone – Kentucky and Tennessee (western states at the time)
 - Thomas and Alexander Campbell – Pennsylvania
- James O'Kelly – North Carolina and Virginia
 - 1784 – the Methodist church in America organized in Baltimore
 - Men were appointed as superintendents of the church with one calling himself bishop

- O'Kelly and others disagreed with this feeling that congregations should be self-governing
- In 1793 they broke away and started calling themselves Republican Methodists
- In 1794 they started calling themselves Christians and using the Bible as their only creed
- Six Cardinal Principles:
 - Jesus is the only head of the church
 - Christian should be the only name used
 - The Bible is the only creed
 - Christian character is the only test of church fellowship and membership
 - Everyone has the privilege of private judgment and liberty of conscience
 - All followers should be united in Christ so that the world might believe
- They had to struggle to keep the principles from becoming a creed since they didn't want creeds
- Kelly is credited with starting the Christian Church in the South
- Abner Jones and Elias Smith – New England
 - Jones was a Baptist preacher and physician in Vermont
 - Smith was a Baptist preacher in New Hampshire
 - Smith started one of the first Christian papers in America – Herald of Gospel Liberty
 - Smith also used hymns to further his teachings
 - They combined in 1807 forming the Christian Church in the North
- Barton W. Stone – Kentucky and Tennessee
 - Born in 1772 in Maryland
 - Raised Episcopal, attended Baptist and Methodist churches
 - Ended up as a Presbyterian minister
 - 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
- Thomas and Alexander Campbell – Pennsylvania
 - Thomas is the father, Alexander is the son
 - Family background of Catholicism and Anglicanism in Ireland
 - Thomas Campbell
 - Born 1763 in County Down, Ireland
 - He was a Presbyterian minister in Ireland (Old Light, Anti-Burgher, Seceder)
 - Seceder churches chose their own ministers, Anti-Seceder ministers were chosen by higher church authorities
 - Burgesses were Scottish public officials who were given the authority to determine whether a congregation would be Seceder or Anti-Seceder
 - New Light congregations believed that scripture should be used to shed new light onto the Westminster Confession (Presbyterian doctrinal statement)
 - He tried to unite some of these factions in Ireland but Scottish church leaders would not let him
 - Came to America in 1807 for health reasons and was assigned to preach in Pennsylvania

- Got into trouble with the Presbyterian church for serving communion to different kinds of Presbyterians and for preaching to churches that asked him to preach without permission
 - Started an inter-denominational Bible study that became known as the Christian Association that eventually became the Brush Run Church
 - 1809 – wrote the *Declaration and Address* outlining the beliefs of the Association and stressing unity
- Alexander Campbell
 - Born 1788 in Ireland
 - In 1808 boarded a ship to join his father in America but ended up wrecking in Scotland
 - He spent a year studying at University of Glasgow
 - Became friends with several people seeking unity and return to New Testament practices – autonomous leadership by elders, weekly Lord’s Supper, Love Feasts with foot washing and the holy kiss, believer’s baptism by immersion, opposition to ministerial titles, separation of church and state
 - Separated from the Seceder Presbyterians
 - Joined his father in Pennsylvania in October, 1809 and realized they had been thinking the same thoughts
 - 1812 – the birth of his first daughter was a challenge on whether to baptize her or not
- Called themselves Christians
- Churches called themselves by a community name, Church of Christ, Christian Church or Disciples of Christ