



One Heart

Special Issue: The Christian Church Controversy

Should We Unite with the Christian Church?

by Marion R. Fox, director

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David wrote: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) The miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given with the express purpose of bringing about unity (Eph. 4:1-16). What is the basis of the unity that God desires we have with others? The unity is based upon "the faith" (Eph. 4:13 — the New Testament). We cannot be united on doctrinal error. We cannot be united on human opinions. We can be united on the truth found in the Word of God.

When one interprets the Scriptures, there are three possible ways they can be interpreted. First, one can interpret them correctly, drawing the conclusions that God intended for us to draw. Second, one can interpret them incorrectly, interpreting the Scriptures incorrectly, but teaching from the passage something that is taught elsewhere. Third, one can interpret them incorrectly, interpreting the Scriptures incorrectly and teaching something that is not taught elsewhere. If this fatal error is believed and put into practice, it will lead to sin. Fatal error is doctrinal error that leads to sin in some manner.

We commend anyone for teaching the truth. Many in the Christian Church teach a number of truths. We have no problem with their doctrines that are truth. We tolerate anyone who teaches non-fatal errors. We oppose the errors, but do not make non-fatal errors a test of fellowship. We cannot fellowship anyone who teaches fatal

doctrinal errors. The Christian Church teaches a number of fatal doctrinal errors.

The most fundamental fatal error committed by those in the Christian Church is in their hermeneutics (method of interpreting of the Bible). Historically, there have been two different approaches to the interpretation of the Scriptures. First, there has been the view that we can only do what is either implicitly or explicitly permitted and/or commanded in the Scriptures. Second, there has been the view that we can do anything that is not explicitly forbidden in the Scriptures. The first view was taken by Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and the second by Martin Luther (1483-1546). I certainly do not agree with everything Zwingli taught, but his hermeneutic was sound in this matter. The Christian Church uses the same hermeneutics used by Luther and sound brethren use the same hermeneutics used by Zwingli.

LAWS OF EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

These principles are basic to an understanding of the Scriptures. These principles demonstrate that Zwingli was correct in his hermeneutics. Let us outline how we will study these principles: First, the principles will be outlined from common sense. Second, the principles will be applied to the Scriptures. Third, it will be shown that those inspired by the Holy Spirit used these

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principles in their interpretation of the Scriptures.

These Principles Illustrated From Common Sense

When one enters a restaurant and requests of the waiter: "Bring me a soft-drink," he could expect to receive anything classified as a soft drink (Coke, Pepsi, etc.). When one enters a restaurant and requests of the waiter: "Bring me a Coke," he would not expect to receive a Pepsi to drink. He specified a Coke in order to eliminate the possibility of receiving another drink.

Types of Commandments/Statements

The first type of statements we will consider is generic commandments/statements. Let us illustrate general (generic) commandments/statements from the Scriptures.

For our first illustration, we will use the apostolic commission. The command for the apostles to go (Mk. 16:15-16) was a general commandment. They could have walked, ridden an animal, ridden a ship, or in any other manner. Jesus left the question of how to go up to their discretion.

The commandment to the apostles to teach (Mt. 28:19-20) was a general commandment. They were not told how to teach. The printed page, oral preaching, and house to house (door knocking etc.) would have been lawful.

The second type of commandments/statements is specific commandments. Let us illustrate specific statements from the Scriptures. The commandment to the apostles to preach the gospel was specific about what to preach (Mk. 16:15-16). The commandment to confess Jesus as the Christ is specific (Mt. 10:32-33). We are told to confess before men (mankind). We are told what to confess (Jesus as Lord — Rom. 10:9-10).

The Law of Exclusion

The "law of exclusion" was used by those inspired by the Holy Spirit. This law excludes all other actions. The law of exclusion comes to bear when two conditions are present. The first condition that must be present is that a specific statement is made. A specific statement includes both specific commandments and promises. The second condition that must be present in order to bring the law of exclusion to bear in any instance is that the Scriptures must be silent concerning any exceptions to the statement. It must be noted that specific statements do sometimes have exceptions in the Bible. Only the exceptions specifically stated in the Scriptures can be allowed.

The law of exclusion was recognized by men of inspiration. The apostles and elders called men false teachers (ones who subvert), because they commanded something that the apostles had not commanded (Acts 15:24). Paul said not to go beyond the things that were written (1 Cor. 4:6). They went beyond what was written in binding circumcision upon the Gentile converts. These passages demonstrate that silence can be prohibitive. Failure to mention the tribe of Judah as a priestly tribe excluded them from being priests (Heb. 7:12-14). No passage specifically stated that

the tribe of Judah could not be priests. The silence of the Scriptures plus a specific statement that the tribe of Levi was to be the priests was sufficient to exclude Judah from being priests. This is merely the application of induction to the study of the Scriptures.

The silence of the Scriptures concerning angels ruling means that they were not given these rights (Heb. 1:13). No passage had explicitly said that angels could not reign. The writer of Hebrews excludes the angels from this promise based upon (1) the absence of a promise (silence of the Scriptures) and (2) a specific promise made to Jesus (Heb. 1:7-8, cf. Ps. 14:6-ff.).

Examples of the Law of Exclusion in Action

As our first example, we note that the Lord commanded Christians to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19). This is a specific kind of music as contrasted with instrumental music. The general commandment would be to make music. It must be noted that the Scriptures: (1) do not give a command to use any other type of music, (2) do not state that the early church used other types of music, and (3) offers only a general command when it is considered how we are to sing. But it is not general as to the type of music. Note the general nature of the command to sing: (1) We may use an eight-note scale, (2) we may use a five-note scale, and (3) we may use songbooks, etc.

As our second example, we note that Abraham was given an exclusive promise (for his descendants-Gen. 17:8). Ishmael was excluded from this promise (Gen. 17:20-21). Esau was excluded from this promise (Gen. 28:13). All else were excluded because of the silence of the Scriptures.

The Law of Inclusion

The law of inclusion comes to bear when a general statement is made. No specific statement can be inclusive. Inclusive statements include every scriptural means of fulfilling the statements. The instructions to teach other humans (2 Tim. 2:2) which would include all disciples (including women) is an inclusive instruction. Since women are neither permitted to teach men (in an authoritative manner) nor to usurp man's authority (1 Tim. 2:10-14), it is limited in this respect. The women are not permitted to speak (public speaking) in a worship assembly (1 Cor. 14:33b-34). Women are obligated to obey 2 Tim. 2:2 in every lawful manner.

Examples of the Law of Inclusion

The first example we shall set forth is from the apostolic commission. The command to the apostles to go (Mt. 28:19) was a general command. By way of illustration, they could have gone by ship. They could have walked. They could have gone in any other manner available to them. In fact, they were allowed to go in any manner not prohibited by the Scriptures. The Apostles would have been prohibited from stowing away on a ship because that would entail stealing the fare (Eph. 4:28).

The second example we shall set forth is found in the command to provide for widows and orphans (Jas. 1:27). The word

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LESSONS FROM RESTORATION HISTORY

by Frank R. Williams

Reasons for the Split

The one universal church of which Jesus said, "I will build," in Matthew 16:18 has no earthy organization larger than or smaller than local autonomous churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). No one person or group of people has authority to speak for the one universal body of Christ. Each local congregation is autonomous and each makes her own decisions in faith and practice. These decisions determine whether the "candlestick" will remain or if Christ will remove it (Rev. 2:5). If the faith and practice of a local church are not in harmony with the word of God, then Christ will remove the candlestick. Jesus said to the church in Ephesus, "... repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5). At the point Christ removes the candlestick, that congregation is no longer of the churches of Christ. Only the church in Ephesus could make the decision to repent or to continue in her disobedience.

In the early part of the 1800's, as people came back to the Bible for authority and obeyed the gospel, churches of Christ sprang up in America just as they did in the time of the apostles. These churches were not without their failures. They were learning to understand the teaching of Christ, and at times it was one step forward and two steps back. At other times, it was two steps forward and only one step back. They were making their way into the fullness of Christ. Their faith and practice grew more and more in harmony with the teaching of Christ, but like the churches of Christ of the first century and like the churches of Christ today, perfection was never reached. Therefore, just as we can read of the failures of the churches of Christ upon the pages of the New Testament, so can we read of the failures of the churches of Christ in America in the early 1800's. Yet, they had a deep sense of unity and the following words were often heard among the churches: "In faith, unity; in opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." They understood that unity could only be a reality if they had a common faith and practice in worship, in work, and in manner of living. They also understood that there had to be room for opinion, but these opinions were not to be allowed to change the nature and character of the church. Charity would hold them together when opinions clashed; unity was more important than anyone's opinion.

It was a great ideal. It was in harmony with the teaching of Christ (Rom. 14-15), but alas opinion and faith became confused and led to two very different views of authority. Dabney Phillips summed up the two views among churches of Christ as they neared the year 1850: "One view was that the organization, worship, and work of the church was revealed in the New Testa-

ment ... The opposing view maintained that the scriptures presented a loose framework for activities, and that no specific pattern was required in the worship, organization and work of the church" (*Restoration Principles and Personalities*, p. 153). The "opposing view" brought among churches of Christ what is commonly called the missionary society. Those who supported it viewed the churches as unable to preach the gospel to the world; therefore, the missionary society was needed. W. K. Pendleton answered the charge that the missionary society was without scriptural authority with these words: "We concede this without a moment's hesitation. There is none; but what do you make of it?" From where was Pendleton coming? He continued concerning the person asking for scriptural authority, "Does he say that it (the missionary society, frw) is not positively and expressly commanded; then we demand by what canon of interpretation does he make mere silence prohibitory?" The reader needs to notice that "the missionary society" was smaller than the church universal and larger than the local church; therefore, the New Testament knows nothing of it. The churches of Christ begin to move apart as the missionary society changed the nature and character of the churches of Christ.

It was near the same time that some brethren, those taking "the opposing view," started introducing musical instruments into the worship of some churches of Christ. In order to change the churches of Christ, these agents of change had to first change the brethren's view of Bible authority. Thus, they begin confusing faith and opinion.

It was not the missionary society, nor was it the introduction of the musical instruments in worship that was the reason for the split among the churches of Christ. No, the real reason was as it always is, a matter of hermeneutics: how we interrupt the Bible. Righteous Abel, whose blood still speaks, worshipped according to the word of God while Cain worshipped in God's silence. Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not" in God's silence (Lev. 10:1-2), and their brethren in 1850's were determined to live in God's silence as well. They departed from the churches of Christ and became a denomination known as "The Disciples of Christ." This denomination, the Disciples of Christ, would divide between the years of 1920-1968 and another denomination would be formed: "The Christian Church."

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Should We Fellowship All Who Continue In Sin?

by Scott Elliott

In a recent article in the *Christian Chronicle* ("Ministers Exchange Bibles at Convention", August 2006), Jeff Walling made clear his views on the Christian church. Walling believes we should openly fellowship those in the Christian church. When presented with the fact that these brethren are in error his reply was "Do we have any other kind?" This is an interesting position that Walling takes. The purpose of this article is to examine the position that Walling has advocated and consider the implications.

It is true that everyone has sinned (Rom. 3:23), but once one becomes a Christian they are no longer slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6). When a person is baptized they rise from the watery grave with their sins forgiven (Acts 2:38). The Christian is no longer to "continue in sin that grace may abound" (Rom 6:1-2). From the moment one becomes a Christian they are expected to "walk in the light as He (Jesus) is in the light" (1 John 1:7). If one walks in the dark, but says they have fellowship with Jesus they "lie and do not practice the truth" (1 John 1:6). God knows that it is hard to live an absolutely perfect life and from time to time Christians will make mistakes and sin, but God expects each one of us to repent of that sin. If we do not repent, then we must face the consequences (Rev. 2:5, 16, 22). It is true that everyone has erred, but the Bible teaches that a Christian should not continue in sin and if they do sin then they must repent.

In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul writes on the subject of erring Christians. He tells the brethren at Corinth "I wrote unto you not to

keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:11). Paul goes on to state in verse 13 "Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person." It is obvious from these statements that Paul does not want us to continue to fellowship brethren who have returned to a life of sin.

It is important to consider the implications of this doctrine. It is obvious that those who advocate this doctrine are willing to fellowship those in the Christian church, but how far are they willing to go with their fellowship and where will one draw the line. Would it be OK to fellowship a homosexual preacher in the church of Christ — after all he is just an erring brother and that is all we have? What about a doctor who runs an abortion clinic, a child molester, a drunkard, etc.? We could go on and on listing sins that brethren commit and each time we could use Walling's doctrine of all we have is erring brethren.

There are several reasons why this doctrine should be rejected. First, it is not Biblical. Second, it has serious implications that must be considered. Third, it ignores the problem of sin. Unity is a beautiful thing, and I don't know of one person who would not like to see the world united on the issue of religion, but we cannot take shortcuts to get there. The Bible and sin cannot be ignored just for the sake of unity. This will only cause more problems and delay the unity that we all seek.

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visit means to look out for their needs and is a general command. It follows that they can be cared for in any manner not specifically prohibited in the Scriptures.

The Necessity of the Laws of Inclusion and Exclusion

The nature of God requires that these laws be true. God is completely perfect in that God operates according to the law of parsimony. A Being who operates according to parsimony only does what is necessary to be done and does everything He does in the most efficient manner. God wrote the Scriptures in the most efficient manner that it was possible for them to be written.

The law of exclusion would reduce the amount of writing necessary to prohibit something. It would require a considerable amount of writing to prohibit every possibility explicitly. The law of inclusion would reduce the amount of writing necessary to give a positive instruction. It would require a considerable amount of writing to include every possibility explicitly.

If these laws were not true, the Scriptures would not be understandable. Note the following reasons for this claim: First, if God intended the Scriptures to be a pattern for all time He would need to use the law of exclusion for the Scriptures to be

understandable. Second, if God must specifically list every possibility that He wishes to prohibit, He would list things that are unknown to mankind. If God wanted only grape juice on the Lord's Supper, He would have to list Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, etc. as things not to be drunk in the Lord's Supper, if the law of exclusion were not true. Ancient man would not have understood the references to Coca Cola or Pepsi Cola. The Scriptures would not have been understandable to them.

Concluding Remarks

Many people are guided more by emotions than by reasoning. Emotions must be subservient to reason. Emotions lead us where we want to go, not where we ought to go (Pro. 14:12, 16:25, and Jer. 10:23). Let us all be more reasonable in our handling of the Word of God (Isa. 1:18, Rom. 12:1-3, and 1 Pet. 2:1-2).

The Christian Church has introduced at least two fatal doctrinal errors as a result of their unsound hermeneutics. First, they use instrumental music in their worship. Second, some allow women to be teachers of men and to usurp man's authority.

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Biblical Silence & the Christian Church

by Frank Williams

The subject of Biblical silence is at the heart of the denominational teaching of the Christian Church. Biblical silence deals with how God authorizes; thus, Biblical authority! There are two words that need our attention as they relate to the subject of authority. These two words are: 1) explicit and 2) implicit.

It is understood that one may get lost in the full meaning of these two words. Therefore, let us cut to the heart of the word "explicit;" it means: plainly expressed having no disguised meaning (*Funk & Wagnall's*, p. 878). An example of an explicit statement is: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark. 16:16). This statement of Jesus is plainly expressed having no disguised meaning and is definite and unreserved. "Implicit" means: fairly understood, though not specifically stated (*ibid*, page 1235). The implicit is found in most explicit statements; such as: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (1 John 2:3). This statement fairly understood, though not explicitly stated, implies that all those who do not keep the commandments of God, do not know him. The reader may not have heard much about these two words, but God has used both explicit and implicit statements to authorize and to forbid certain actions as seen in the above examples. Therefore, the Bible authorizes both by the explicit statement and by the implicit of those statements.

During the years of division (1840-1906) when members of the churches of Christ departed and formed the "Disciples of Christ" church, it was heard, "To ask for divine authority for everything in religion would mean that we couldn't have church buildings, blackboards, lights in the buildings" (*Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. 2*, p. 51). It is always right, and one should not be afraid, to ask, "Where is the Bible authority for these items?" First, Luke informs us, "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). Thus, a meeting place is implied in the words, "the disciples came together" — a church building. Second, blackboards were unknown in the first century, but a blackboard simply aids in teaching/preaching and teaching/preaching is commanded, "Preach the word," (2 Tim. 4:2); thus, blackboards and many other things are implied in the command to teach/preach. Third, lights in the building serve as an aid in reading the scripture at night. Paul wrote, "when this epistle is read among, cause that it be read also in the church of Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. 4:16); thus, if the reading took place at night, lights are implied. Notice the words of Luke, the historian, "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they had gathered together" (Acts 20:8). There is both a building — "the upper chamber" — and lights — "many lights." Some are ever learning but never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 3:7). If you think the churches of Christ have outgrown such folly, think again. In the October 2006 issue of *The Christian*

Chronicle these words are found, "I believe we are off track by our excessive use of the manmade doctrine called 'silence of Scriptures.' If we take this doctrine seriously, items such as Sunday schools, church buildings, hymnals, women's fellowship and a host of other acceptable forms of congregational life would find no 'New Testament authority.'" Folly still lives among us!

Implication authorizes, but "silence" does not. We must not confuse the two. One of the more clear cases of silence is that of Nadab and Abihu, when they "offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1). When Moses used the word "strange," he is identified that which God had not commanded — God's silence. Thus, the "strange fire" was in the area of "silence" — where God had not spoken. A second very powerful example of silence prohibiting is that of Jesus and the priesthood. The Hebrew writer makes the point that Jesus came from the tribe of Judah, "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:12-16). For Jesus to serve as priest, it was necessary that "a change also of the law" be made. When the writer makes the point, "Moses spake nothing," he is addressing the area of silence; silence did not and does not authorize. Silence in regard to the tribe of Judah meant that Jesus could not serve as priest so long as the old law was in force.

Let us now consider the Christian Church. Friends, it must be understood that the Christian Church of today did not come out of the churches of Christ. No, the Christian Church came out of the Disciples of Christ Church, and it did so between the years of 1920 — 1968. The Christian Church, like her mother church, The Disciples of Christ, tries to establish authority for the use of musical instruments in worship of God in the "silence" of the scriptures. It is asked, "Where does the New Testament forbid the use of musical instruments in worship of God?" Replace the words "musical instruments in worship of God" and ask, "Where does the Old Testament forbid one (Jesus) of the tribe of Judah serving in the priesthood?" A second question, "Where has God forbidden the use of cornbread and buttermilk in the Lord's Supper?" God forbids all these in the same manner — in his silence! God has said nothing about the use of musical instruments in worship; therefore, he has not authorized it. The Christian Church and her mother church, The Disciples of Christ, are determined to operate in area of silence — without authority!

The churches of Christ must not yield to the pressure of operating in the "silence" of God. This is one of the major points that identifies the disposition of the churches of Christ and does not identify the disposition of the Christian Church and her fellow denominational churches.

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The Term “Church of Christ”

by Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

[This was written in review of a book that claimed the term “church of Christ” only came into use after the split with the Disciples of Christ.—editor] . . .

Before Alexander Campbell immigrated to America, at the end of the eighteenth century (between 1700 and 1800), Barton W. Stone converted the members of his Presbyterian congregation, baptized them, called them Christians, removed the sign “Cane Ridge Presbyterian Church” on the old frame meetinghouse and replaced it with “Cane Ridge Church of Christ.” In the cemetery in the church grounds, on the tombstone of the Rogers, its charter members, is engraved “united with the Cane Ridge Church of Christ in 1804.” Later, a congregation was formed by the Campbells on Brush Run (Creek) and the Campbells named it Brush Run Church of Christ. Several years later the congregation moved into nearby Bethany (Virginia) and on the cornerstone of the new modest brick meetinghouse, where Alexander Campbell preached until the day of his death, was engraved Bethany Church of Christ, which designation is there until this day unless it has been removed since my own last visit to the premises here mentioned a few years ago.

In [Campbell’s] *Memoirs* it is recorded that Campbell addressed some friends in the presence of preacher Luce with the stipulation to Luce that their baptism must be performed “upon a simple confession of faith in Christ” and according to “the precise pattern of the New Testament,” and furthermore in addressing them he read the passage of Acts 2:38 which plainly stipulates the remission of sins as the design of baptism, to all of which Luce assented and consented, and Campbell remarked that the occasion of the baptism of the Campbell family and others with them was “no Baptist Church meeting” and he further commented that the persecuted Brush Run church was neither Paedobaptist nor Baptist. All but the ill informed know that it was called the Brush Run Church of Christ and when moved into Bethany on the cornerstone of the modest brick meetinghouse was engraved: Bethany Church of Christ. In reference to all of these developments Campbell declared that they had “no idea of uniting with the Baptists,” and that in personal impressions he had unfortunately formed a very unfavorable opinion of the Baptist preachers as then introduced to his acquaintance, and though that was still his opinion of the Baptist ministry he wrote words of commendation for the people who were called Baptists.

In the *Memoirs* Campbell comments that he was taught from the *Record* itself to describe a Church of Christ. In the same context and connection the procedure was recorded in the handwriting of Thomas Campbell for the dismissal of several members of the Brush Run church, including Alexander Campbell and his family, to institute a church of Christ of Wellsburg, with its member-

ship listed, in accord with a previous statement by Alexander Campbell of his view of the position that should be occupied by a Church of Christ. In 1831, incident to a meeting at Georgetown and Lexington there was a transfer of property to a new congregation formed under the title of the Church of Christ.

On the monument erected at the (Raccoon) John Smith grave, Lexington, Kentucky, in 1868, beside the statue of the early statesman, Henry Clay, these words were engraved: In Memory of John Smith, An Elder In The Church Of Christ — and the life story of John Smith reveals the use of this designation of the church through his whole preaching career, from his own conversion under the teaching of Alexander Campbell in 1830’s until the date of his death in the year 1868. This evidence is in my possession in the form of hand camera photos produced on the scene. In court room parlance these are Exhibits of events occurring within a quarter to a half century from 1800 — before the Christian Church was conceived and christened. References are made to “the church of Christ” in the process of John Smith’s gradual abandonment of denominationalism, in the repudiation of which “the principles of the constitution of the church of Christ” were described in his discussions between 1825 and 1830, before his own conversion through the teaching and preaching of Alexander Campbell, and mention was made that those who were baptized so constituted themselves, stating that in the renouncement of sectarianism they assumed the position of a church of Christ. It is further recorded that in December 1834 a church of Christ was formed by John Smith in Stockton Valley (Ky.), his “raccoon” home territory, and mention was made of the New Testament existence of the church of Christ during the ten years between Pentecost and Antioch before the calling of the name Christian upon the Gentile disciples at Antioch.

In *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN* mention is made of the Church of Christ in Centerville (Ind.) in 1844, as its original designation, and of the interest in its history being accentuated by Franklin’s residence there as a member of it. Mention was also made of the planting of the Church Of Christ in Anderson (Ind.) in the year 1851, and further mention was made that in certain instances the attempted appropriation of the designation “Christian Church” resulted in confusion and hindrance to the Restoration cause.

I am weary of hearing the remark that we were not called the “Church of Christ” until we “went out” from the “Christian Church” — which again is the reverse of the truth and opposite the facts. . . . “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have no doubt continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 John 2:19)

{ *The Present Truth*, Foy E. Wallace Jr. Publications, p. xiii-xvi }

Why Not Try To Unite With Everyone?

by Benjamin J. Williams

I think it is a terrible injustice that some are advocating open fellowship with the Christian Church while not offering the same to other groups. Why not try to unite with everyone?

Of course, the reason the Christian Church is singled out is basically twofold: (1) there is a loose historical connection between the two groups, and (2) it is commonly held that we have much more “theology” in common with the Christian Church than with other groups. One proponent of broader fellowship with the Christian Church described the matter earlier this year by saying that the Christian Church and the churches of Christ were like twins separated at birth that merely needed to get reacquainted. However, I would ask, “Wouldn’t this logic have similar application in other areas?”

Both Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell, for example, left the Presbyterian Church. Why not unite with the Presbyterians? Years before, people led by Martin Luther left the Catholic Church. Why not consider broader fellowship with the Catholic Church? A few thousand years before that, there was a serious split between Isaac and Ishmael. Why are we not trying to put that back together? Why not offer the hand of fellowship to our Muslim neighbors and try to resolve our disagreements? Where are the unity forums with Muslim clerics? Perhaps I shouldn’t suggest such nonsense lest somebody think that’s a great idea!

As to theological similarities, there are various denominations that oppose Calvinism. Mormons practice baptism. Many denominations take conservative stands on social issues. Why aren’t we talking with all the denominations?

In reality, I am in full support of creating unity and fellowship with all of the people I have named, but how? It is easy to quote Campbell and other pioneer preachers calling for unity and the end of division. It is easier still to quote our Lord’s call for His disciples to be one. The serious question is, “How can such a thing be done?”

It must be done through faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). However, many are beginning this effort without faith. They have stopped believing that the church can grow through simple Bible teaching. They have stopped believing that Christ can make us one without us compromising the principles and values that Christ taught. They have lost faith in His vision for His church.

Faith is based on the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Any venture that does not have the same starting place will fail, for God will not be in it. If we are to unite all mankind under the blood and banner of Christ we must turn to the Bible as the foundation for our effort. No alternative will suffice.

We can never be one without first recognizing that there is one body—the church. It is our duty to recognize that the body is not ours to command. Only Christ, the head, may determine how that body may conduct itself. Only Christ may add members

to that body. If we treat others as members of the one body, knowing that Christ has never added them through their baptism into Him, then we do more to harm the body than to unite it.

We can never be one in Christ without recognizing that there is one Spirit. One Spirit gave us one Word that we are able to understand and believe. Unity will not be reached through blind tolerance of contradictory interpretations of the Word, as if Holy Writ was authored by many different spirits. One Spirit gave one Word to teach one church to live one way of life in the image of the one Savior.

We can never be one without one hope. Christ is that hope. Though the denominations are made up of wholesome, likeable people, when they fail to adhere to the Word of Christ they forsake Christ as their hope. There is only one infallibly safe path to the hope offered by Christ, and that is through His Word.

We can never be one in Christ if we do not recognize the lordship of Christ. We can never be one in Christ until we all submit to His rule and cast out all doctrines and practices not authorized in the perfect law of liberty.

We can never be one in Christ until we all hold to one faith. However, those advocating unity today ask us too often to forsake our faith to achieve unity. Faith is the path to true unity, not an obstacle to it.

We can never be one in Christ until we all practice one baptism. However, those we are being asked to unite with today do not strongly teach or faithfully practice the one baptism. They often are found to have accepted as members those who have not been baptized or those baptized with sectarian baptism based upon “faith only” salvation. If you don’t believe me, I will put you in contact with converts out of the Christian Church who will testify to the fact.

We can never be one in Christ until we worship one God and Father of all. God has called us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. We will not be one until we do so. We must be just as free from innovations of men as we are from the traditions of men in our worship. Just as the Samaritan woman was told that the Jewish temple would not be part of New Testament worship, the instruments and other rituals of Hebrew worship must not be practiced either (John 4).

These steps to unity were given to the divided Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus as their road map (Eph. 4:4-6). We should be trying to extend the fellowship of Christ to all those that would accept His Gospel in its entirety and practice the one faith in sincerity. Instead of trying to fellowship the lost world, we should be trying to save them through Christ so that we all may be one.

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David Lipscomb — *Instruments of Music in the Service of God*

It seems there cannot be a doubt but that the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attractive accompaniment is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord. It destroys the difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. A Christian loyal and true to the Lord Jesus Christ cannot do this, nor in any way countenance the setting aside the order of God by adding to or taking from his appointments, even in the smallest matters, as washing of hands, while forbearance and love should be exercised in showing them the error of the way. When the church determines to introduce a service not required by God, he who believes it wrong is compelled to refuse in any way to countenance or affiliate with the wrong. To do so is to commit a double sin. It is to sin against God and their own consciences and to encourage by example others to violate their consciences and the law of God; it is to lower the standard of regard for right. It is generally insisted that the peace of the congregation should not be disturbed by as small a matter as the use of instruments. The test of a congregation of Christ is: It recognizes God as the only Lawgiver. It serves God alone. When it consciously changes the smallest appointment of God, it dethrones God as the only Lawmaker and ceases to be a church of God. The test of personal discipleship to God is: That in all matters in which God has given order we will do what God commands, adding nothing thereto, taking nothing therefrom. To add as simple and harmless a thing as the washing the hands as religious service before eating destroys discipleship to Christ. (Matt. 15: 5-15).

“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5: 19.) “He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.” (Luke 16: 10, R. V.) Our fidelity to God is tested as easily in little things as in great ones; rather, nothing is little where God’s authority is at stake. Witness the sin of our first parents. Paul kept a good conscience in all things; so God honored him and chose him to be the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Sometimes when a part of a church insists on and adopts the wrong, had I not better yield than to create division in the church? A church that requires disobedience to God to maintain peace in it is already an apostate church; it has rejected God as its only Ruler. While forbearance and love should be exercised in seeking to show them the right and persuading them to do it, it is sinful to so affiliate with them as to encourage and build up a church that is going wrong. It is a greater sin for those who know it is wrong who yield to and go with those in the wrong than for

those who think it right, because those who know it wrong sin against light and knowledge. The greater sinners in every congregation that departs from God’s order in these things are those who know the wrongs, yet remain with and build up the congregations that practice the wrongs. “That servant, which knew his lord’s will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worth of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” (Luke 12: 47, 48, R. V.) There can be no doubt that those who cling to the church and build it up, knowing that it is maintaining practices contrary to the word of God, are worse sinners before God than those who introduce them believing they are right.

Often our lifelong friends and associates are in the church, our children and grandchildren are there, our brothers and sisters. Shall I leave them or remain with them? To leave them is to bear our testimony to them for the truth and to warn them there is danger and ruin in departing from the law of God; to go with them is to affiliate with and build up the wrong and to encourage them in the way that leads to ruin; to depart from the order of God to go with them is to love friends, father, mother, brothers, and sisters more than God. “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10: 37.) “If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” These mean that a man must be willing to separate from and give up all to be true to Christ. True love to these friends and ourselves demands the same course. There is no real kindness in going with them in wrong courses and encouraging them in setting aside the law of God; it only helps them forward to ruin. Love is the fulfilling of the law. True love to every creature in the universe is perfected and manifested in doing the will of God. That is love to God, and love to God is love, the only true love, to every being in the universe of God; and be sure God is not pleased when his children violate his law to preserve standing in and harmony with a church setting aside his order.

Then my faith is that it is the duty of those who believe a church sets aside the order of God to strive to correct that wrong, to be patient and forbearing in it; and if they fail in this, to withdraw and at once go actively to work to form a true church and observe the true service of God. If they quit work because some have gone wrong, they will die and the cause of truth will perish in their midst. Go to work to maintain the truth of God and to induce others to accept it, and God will bless you. “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed; to love the Lord thy God, to obey his voice, and to cleave unto him: for he is thy life.” (Deut. 30: 19, 20, R. V.) D.L.

Should We Unite With The Christian Church (Part 2)?

By Marion R. Fox, director

In my last article I set forth a serious hermeneutical error committed by the Christian Church. I will set forth other fatal doctrinal errors committed by the Christian Church in this article. Again, by fatal error I mean: "An error that leads to sin in some manner."

THE SECOND FATAL ERROR

Background Information

After the Lord's church split in the late 19th and early 20th centuries there were two distinct churches. The first was the church of Christ and the second was the Disciples of Christ Church. Many Disciples of Christ churches still called themselves "churches of Christ."

Later, the Disciples of Christ Church split into two distinct churches. The first was the Disciples of Christ Church and the second was the Christian Church. The Disciples of Christ Church has continually become more liberal until they have come to fellowship almost any religious group that claims to be Christian in nature.

The Second Fatal Error Relates to Baptism

The Disciples of Christ Church accepts any "form" of baptism (immersion, sprinkling, and/or pouring). The Disciples of Christ Church accepts baptism for any purpose (Baptist baptism, Methodist baptism, Roman Catholic baptism, etc.). They accept Pedobaptism (baptism of infants and/or baptism of those under the age of accountability).

The problem here is not in some of our brethren wanting to unite with the Disciples of Christ Church (although some are liberal enough to fellowship the Disciples of Christ Church), but it is in the fact that the Christian Church accepts (without any question) members of the Disciples of Christ Church as members of the Christian Church. Our brethren are going to accept any member of the Christian Church without any repentance or any question of their baptisms.

Allow me to illustrate the problem with a man named "John Doe." John was sprinkled into the Methodist Church as a baby. John has been accepted in full fellowship (without being immersed for remission of sins) by the Disciples of Christ Church. Later, John wants to join the Christian Church and is accepted (without being immersed for remission of sins) as a member of the Christian Church. Our brethren are perfectly willing to accept John as a Christian and will fellowship him. It is evident that John has not changed his views about sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, and baptism not being for remission of sins (otherwise he would have been baptized for remission of sins).

Later John is appointed as an elder in the church and will now oppose any preacher preaching the necessity of baptism. John will teach infant baptism, sprinkling for baptism, and deny that baptism is for remission of sins and our liberal brethren who have joined with the Christian Church cannot consistently oppose him.

Long before we reach the stage of the last paragraph the church will cease preaching that baptism is essential for salvation, preaching that baptism is by immersion, and opposing infant baptism. In fact, many congregations of the Lord's church (if the Lord has not removed their candlestick [Rev. 2:5]) do not allow their preachers to preach on the necessity of baptism. They have been practicing "shaking denominational people into the church." By this I mean: "Shaking their hands and accepting them as members with nothing more than an handshake."

No, we shall see (and are already seeing) congregations of the church teaching that baptism can be done by sprinkling, infants may be baptized, and that baptism is not for remission of sins.

OTHER FATAL ERRORS

There are several other fatal doctrinal errors and practices of the Christian Church. First, the Christian Church will fellowship those who allow women to teach men in Bible classes. Remember that the Christian Church accepts into full fellowship any member of the Disciples of Christ Church (including those who advocate that woman may be preachers, elders, and leaders of men by leading prayer, singing, etc. in mixed groups in the church). Second, the Christian Church has a denominational organization (missionary society). Many of our more liberal brethren have already accepted the false claim that the Lord's church is a denomination. Third, the Christian Church generally teaches the false doctrine of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

There are several other fatal errors that are taught/practiced by the Christian Church, but we do not have time to elaborate on them in this brief treatise. I do not plan to ever accept one whose baptism is less than what the Lord required. I will do like Paul in Acts 19:1-12 and teach them that they need to be scripturally baptized.

I have not dealt with the question of whether or not the Christian Church baptism is scriptural. These matters are serious and need to be studied by the Lord's church.

Marion R. Fox, Director, OKCSBS
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School News & Outlook

"Thank you for sending me your newsletter, One Heart. It is all very good but I especially like 'Piecemeal Obedience?' by Marion Fox. I would appreciate if you will continue to send them to me as they become available. . . ." Reader from Red Oak, OK

We are very thankful to all of those that have subscribed to One Heart. Many readers have responded favorably like the one above, and some have even sent financial support to continue the work of the journal and the school. The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies exists based on the love of our brethren for the Lord and for the lost. To all those that have such love and that have made this effort a success, you have our deepest thanks.

This semester has been blessed with a number of new students representing a handful of different congregations along with many of our returning students. Of the new students, we have at least two that are taking courses with the intent of preaching and teaching the gospel at their congregations. We

have always opened our classes to anyone regardless of whether or not they intended to be a preacher. We have titled our school a School of Biblical Studies to emphasize the purpose for the school's existence, namely to educate anyone who wishes to know more about the Bible. However, it is still a joy to be able to teach men that intend to take what they have learned and preach.

In addition, we have several other students this time around with other goals in mind. We have at least two deacons enrolled who study in order to better themselves and the works that they do for their respective congregations. We also have several ladies enrolled this semester.

On the whole, we have been very pleased with the turn out and the participation of the students. For example, we have more students than last year who have enrolled in every class period both on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

The Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies is a tuition free, flexible, four-year night school designed to meet the needs of every Bible student. Whether you are interested in preaching the gospel, being a elder or deacon, or just learning more about the Bible, we have the courses you need to accomplish your goals. Our night schedule allows you to continue your normal daily routine with minimal interference. Our staff is qualified and experienced, offering many years of combined preaching experience from which the student may learn.

OKCSBS is hosted at the Barnes church of Christ and is a work overseen by that congregation's elders, Marion Fox and Frank Williams. The school is also supported by sister congregations and individuals who share an interest in the truth.

If you are interested in becoming a student or helping out in this great work, please contact us with the information below. For more details and a full curriculum, visit our website!

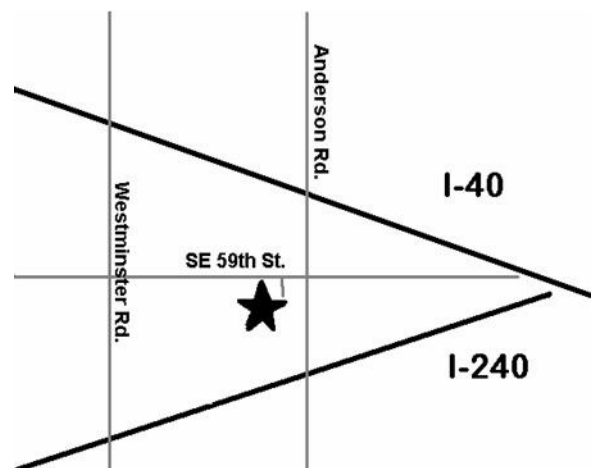
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- Marion R. Fox, director
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- Benjamin J. Williams





Course Schedule for Fall '06

- First Quarter: August 22 & 24 — October 10 & 12
- Second Quarter: October 17 & 19 — December 12 & 14 (No Classes, Nov. 21 & 23)

First Year Courses: Required prerequisites for second year courses except by special arrangement

1st Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night	2nd Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	Fundamentals of the Faith Course #102 Marion Fox	New Testament Church Course #112 Frank Williams	1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	Fundamentals of the Faith Course #102 Marion Fox	New Testament Church Course #112 Frank Williams
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	General Biblical Introduction Course #122 Benjamin Williams	Hermeneutics Course #132 Marion Fox	2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	Applied English Grammar Course #142 Benjamin Williams	Logic & the Bible Course #152 Marion Fox

Upper Division Courses

1st Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night	2nd Quarter	Tuesday Night	Thursday Night
1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Saul—Solomon Course #302 Benjamin Williams		1st Hour 6:15-7:00 PM	OT Survey: Saul—Solomon Course #302 Benjamin Williams	
2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	I, II Timothy & Titus Course #304 Marion Fox		2nd Hour 7:30-9:00 PM	I, II Timothy & Titus Course #304 Marion Fox	

SCHEDULE NOTES:

- A meal will be offered on Tuesday nights from 7:00-7:30 PM.
- A short snack break will be held on Thursday nights from 7:00-7:30 PM.

Oklahoma City School of Biblical Studies

FALL SEMESTER

Second Quarter:

Oct. 17 & 19 - Dec. 12 & 14
(No Classes, Nov. 21 & 23)

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