

OUR ROOTS

A Concise History of Churches of Christ

Lesson Three: The Stone and Campbell Movements Unite

Alexander Campbell first visited Kentucky in 1823 and the following year he met Barton Stone in the living room of Stone's Georgetown home. Both men thought very highly of each other and had an enormous amount of respect for each other and what they were doing.

COMPARING THE MEN AND THEIR MOVEMENTS

1. Differences
 - a. Educational and economic
 - b. Restoring people vs. restoring doctrine
2. Commonalities
 - c. Committed to the Scriptures
 - d. Committed to ending shameful divisions among followers of Christ
 - e. Restoring the unified church was the goal.

EARLY MOVES TOWARD UNION AND DIFFICULTIES

As early as the 1820s, members of the two bodies began asking why they weren't one.

1. Baptism
 - a. Stone
 - b. Campbell
2. The name
 - a. Stone
 - b. Campbell
3. The Doctrine of the Trinity
 - a. Stone
 - b. Campbell
4. The Doctrine of Predestination
 - a. Stone
 - b. Campbell
5. Evangelism
 - a. Stone
 - b. Campbell

6. The Lord's Supper

7. Clergy and laity

In light of the above, what still holds true for us today? Are we more Stoneite or Campbellite? Are you surprised by the difference in ideology of each man?

THE UNION TAKES SHAPE

While these were not minor differences, thousands in each movement were convinced that the things they held in common far outweighed their differences.

John T. Johnson

Raccoon John Smith

"Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any kind of lights. But let us come to the Bible and the Bible alone, as the only book in creation that can give us all the Light we need."

FURTHER ROADBLOCKS TO UNION

In 1832, membership in these churches numbered around 25,000 mainly in Ohio and Kentucky. By 1861, members numbered almost 200,000 in twenty nine states and two territories. By some estimates they were the fourth largest religious group in the country.

Walter Scott

REAL UNITY

What are your thoughts on this statement?

"Christian unity may not always mean a physical merger of congregations or movements. But when Christians are convinced of the importance of unity and are willing to put up with each other's peculiarities in the knowledge that all are committed to knowing and doing God's will expressed in scripture, this kind of unity may be the best and fullest kind there is."

Do you see this at work today anywhere?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How important is it for local congregations to agree internally on most doctrinal issues?
2. Should basic doctrinal agreement with the leaders and other members of a congregation be a requirement for membership?