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THE POST-TERMINATION RHETORIC OF THE
AMERICAN RESTORATION MOVEMENT

by

Jonathan Franklin Woodall

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Communication

The University of Memphis

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my family. I am thankful for my parents, Rick and Joyce Woodall, who have raised me among Restoration churches and have always been supportive. I am grateful to my mom who continues to be a trusted voice in my life. I am thankful for my wife, Hayley Woodall, who has always been smarter, wiser, and better than I am in every way. She inspires me to be a better man and is a wonderful life companion. I am also thankful for my children, Brynn and Aidric, who remind me everyday that academics are simply a part of the larger picture, and life is full when you are loved by awesome kids.

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I dedicate this study to those who seek Christian unity as a substantive force for good in our world of divisions. I pray that we might one day find a lasting unity.

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation provides a rhetorical analysis of the post-termination rhetoric produced in the book *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* shortly after the termination of the American Restoration Movement in 1866. The termination event consisted of two happenings in the same year, the death of the movement's rhetorical leader Alexander Campbell and the end of the Civil War. While several rhetorical studies focus on Alexander Campbell, this work focuses on the management of his influence after he died as the Movement faced new rhetorical problems in the reconstruction postwar period. The *Living Pulpit* claimed to celebrate the Movement's unity, but I uncover four distinct religious ideologies within the book.

While each emerging leader rooted his ideology in Campbell's constructs, each leader created new visions and competing strategies that eventually gave rise to sub-movements. First, W.K. Pendleton envisioned a celebration of Campbell's work through associations in which the Movement would add to society through good works like education and humanitarian efforts. Second, Benjamin Franklin sought to arouse dissent regarding the current state of Christianity, thus creating a new inception period of the church as a militant army of strict biblical adherents seeking to correct the evil of all denominations. Third, Tolbert Fanning sought to perfect a Movement running after innovations and recognition through his apocalyptic vision of religious moral power overcoming the evil powers of the world. Last, Isaac Errett moved the Restoration's efforts towards a future that was better than any notion of the past including the patterns

and practices of the New Testament church. His progressive ideology allowed the Movement freedom to seek innovations and practice invention in a changing postwar American culture.

These competing ideologies splintered Campbell's American Restoration Movement, and I argue that once a rhetorical leader dies his strategies can become inceptions for new trajectories. These new trajectories move a people in particular directions that the rhetor would not travel, and are ideologies that the rhetor would not champion. Therefore, this work contributes to rhetorical study by displaying the effect of termination on the formed ideology of a social movement and how new leaders have new opportunities once the original rhetoric is effectively and persuasively co-opted.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rhetoric, wrote Kenneth Burke, “deals with the possibilities of classification in its partisan aspects; it considers the ways in which individuals are at odds with one another, or become identified with groups more or less at odds with one another.”¹ Thus, a rhetorical study will explore language that continually births new realities in the identification of groups. Often, social movements exist to better the human condition through some sort of unifying activity that brings change. In contrast, most social movements never fully reach their goals, and language fails to fully bring the desired changes. This is true of the well-known American Civil Rights Movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr. This is also true of a lesser-known religious movement called the American Restoration Movement under the leadership of Alexander Campbell. Therefore, we must consider an important factor in social movements; that there are times when movements are more susceptible to failure. Consequently, what happens to a movement when the rhetorical leader dies and the movement faces the ongoing chaos it wants to change?

Leland Griffin asserted that during a period of termination other dissenting leaders might reconstitute the movement and produce contradictions in its ideology.² Moreover, Griffin continued that centering on a moment in time, like a termination event,

1. Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 22.

2. Leland Griffin, “The Rhetoric of Historical Movements,” in *Reading on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, ed. Charles E. Morris III and Stephen H. Browne (Strata: State College, PA., 2001), 9.

and “piercing it from many angles” could produce an insightful rhetorical case study. He added,

From the identification of a number of rhetorical patterns, we may discover the various configurations of public discussion, whether rhetorical patterns repeat themselves when like moments occur in the intervals of time, whether a consistent set of forms may be said to exist. We may learn something more about orators—even about the great orators—whom we may come to see from a new perspective, since they rarely speak except within the framework of the movement; and we may come to a more acute appreciation of the significance of the historically insignificant speaker, the minor orator who, we may find, is often the true fountainhead of the moving flood of ideas and words. By seeing numbers of men in an act and atmosphere of discourse, we may indeed produce fresh transcripts of particular moments of the past.³

While a persuasive leader might introduce the language, it is the emerging leaders who come after who carry it forward, thus fulfilling the vision and leading to the always upcoming paradise—a moment when all is right in the world, and the struggle has ceased. Therefore, in a moment of termination, what is ultimately at stake is the movement’s ideology. By examining rhetorical texts during this crucial moment, I located competing ideographs, or patterns, within the movement and discovered new leaders as they sought to organize their audience and convince them to support the ongoing efforts. As a case study in ideology and rhetorical discourse, this work will examine the post-termination rhetoric of the American Restoration Movement.

Alexander Campbell’s death in 1866 marked the rhetorical termination event of the Movement. While Campbell’s death was unexpected, it left his strategies open for discussion and reconstitution by other leaders. At the same point, the devastating effects of Civil War affected much of the Movement’s membership. At the close of Civil War, sectionalism was a growing concern for the Movement as many other Christian

3. Ibid.

denominations and other social movements succumbed to sectional rhetorical leadership and splintered. Therefore, the convergence of Campbell's death and the end of the Civil War provided new opportunities for those who participated in the Restoration Movement's post-termination rhetoric.⁴ This termination event would produce a post-termination rhetorical discourse in which emerging leaders reformed the key themes of the Movement to fit the needs of smaller sub-groups, reconstituting the struggle to establish a new ideology to rally the people.

This chapter will continue with a review of relevant literature. Second, I will explain Alexander Campbell's widely accepted ideology. Third, I will describe the Movement's 1866 termination event. Fourth, I will present a unique piece of post-termination rhetoric, an anthology entitled *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*. Fifth, I will establish a method through which we can find meaning within the post-termination rhetoric. Last, I will discuss the emergence of new leaders whose competing ideologies led to new strategies. The chapter concludes with a preview of the coming chapters and some final observations.

Review of Related Literature

My review of the scholarly literature has yet to reveal any attempts to analyze post-termination rhetoric of a social movement. Therefore, this is also true of post-termination rhetoric in the Restoration Movement taking place in the wake of the Civil War and the crisis of Alexander Campbell's death in 1866. However, much has been written on the effects of Civil War and the influence of Alexander Campbell that serves as a solid foundation upon which this study develops.

4. Ronald Reid, *Three Centuries of American Rhetorical Discourse* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 26-29.

Historians debate the effects of Civil War on the Movement

Restoration historians still debate the effect of the post-bellum period and the issues that splintered the Movement. Church historian Doug Foster⁵ recently re-examined the Civil War period in a book written with Gary Holloway. Foster titled the eighth chapter, “The Great Divide of the Civil War” and argued that both the issue of slavery and the Missionary Society’s decision to support the Union were clear indicators that the Movement divided.⁶ However, Foster and Holloway conclude that the war did not divide Restoration Churches⁷ as it had the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians.

The second of Earl West’s four volumes on the Movement entitled *The Search for the Ancient Order* covers the years of Civil War. A wonderful storyteller who provides quality details in his writing, West wrote,

Wise observers have pointed out that the condition of a nation politically reflects itself in the condition of the church. Certainly the condition of the country in those first years following the close of the Civil War was reflected in the Church. Probably the restoration movement knew no greater days of conflict than it was now to see. The controversies over instrumental music and the missionary society now began to rage, picking up momentum with the passing of years. Many brethren attempted to walk cautiously, fanning the flames as little as possible.⁸

West’s heart for the Restoration Movement might have swayed his opinion of the impact that the war had on it. In fact, West once again took up the cause of this “Ancient Order”

5. Doug Foster is one of four editors of the *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* representing the Church of Christ. Scholars view this work as the most exhaustive, yet concise look at the Movement. Douglas Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004).

6. Douglas Foster and Gary Holloway, “The Great Divide of the Civil War,” in *Renewing God’s People: A Concise History of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2001), 85-92.

7. Contemporary church groups associated with the American Restoration Movement are the Churches of Christ, Christian Church, and the Disciples of Christ.

8. Earl I. West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 2 (Indianapolis: Religious book Service, 1950), 3.

by discussing some of the trials it had to overcome between 1844 and 1865.⁹ However, West's focus on individual stories prevented him from seeing the larger challenges and shifts in discourse through these years.

A different view from West, Bill Humble's dissertation¹⁰ on the missionary society conflict in 1863 addressed how the socio-economical aspects of a national divide affected the Movement. Humble wrote, "The Civil War had so shattered the sense of brotherhood between Northern and Southern Christians that they could never again be called 'one people' in any meaningful sense."¹¹ Humble does not blame the entirety of the split on the Civil War, but at least he understood the great impact it had on the movement.

Seizing upon the knowledge of a sectional split in the Civil War, David E. Harrell, Jr. pointedly wrote about the destruction of the Movement during the years of Civil War. He argued that the split in the movement occurred as different social classes emerged right after the war. Instead of the Restoration Movement's being an association of the frontier, it was a major influence in all parts of the country; in so doing, it had to appeal to multiple classes.

Writing from a more progressive perspective prompted by his personal embarrassment that a unity movement split into several different sects, Leroy Garrett called the Movement back to its founding principles. He argued, "Restorationists or

9. Earl I. West, *The Trials of the Ancient Order, 1844-1865*. (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing, 1993).

10. Bill Humble, "The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement, (1823-1875)," (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1964).

11. Bill Humble, *The Story of Restoration* (Henderson TN: Hester Publications, 1969), 49.

primitivists who find in Scripture a fixed pattern of the church are tempted to impose their interpretation of ‘the true church’ upon others. This is a good description of legalism, which has divided the church into *hundreds* of warring sects.”¹² Looking at the Civil War, Garrett noticed local schism and widespread conflict, but he was not convinced by Harrell’s arguments of a major split during the war years. Garrett wrote that general unity existed after the war as it had before, but his desire to promote unity seemed stronger than his definition of it.

Henry Webb wrote, “A war-inspired prosperity now launched the victors into a period of unprecedented expansion.... New inventions and technologies transformed the lifestyle of the Northern half of the nation.”¹³ As the North experienced the spoils of victory, the South experienced the devastation of defeat. A portion of the defeat was the freeing of plantation slaves and the demolition of their agricultural heritage. Webb concisely stated, “The widening difference in the Southern and Northern economies exacerbated opportunities for the development of dissent.”¹⁴ For Webb, larger national delineation showed that the Movement, following the nation, was no longer one unit, but two distinct associations of North and South. While movement historians focus on the impact of Civil War, rhetorical scholars have sought to understand the impact of Alexander Campbell’s voice as a religious leader and speaker.

12. Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 349.

13. Henry E. Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2003), 197.

14. Ibid.

The Rhetoric of Alexander Campbell

Carisse Berryhill finds Campbell indebted to his professor George Campbell for his rhetorical foundation.¹⁵ Alexander Campbell's understanding of natural thought processes was consistent with George Campbell's understanding. Peter Verkruyse, agreeing with Berryhill and other scholars, wrote that Campbell's use of rhetoric was "directly influenced by the faculty psychologies of Bacon and Descartes, the associationist psychologies of Locke and Hartley, and the common sense realism of Buffier and Reid."¹⁶ Therefore, to study Alexander Campbell's rhetoric is to "witness the fusion of these influences and disciplines."¹⁷ Campbell displayed both a high regard for reason in his rhetoric and a high regard for the democratically constructed common sense of the common people, which formed the foundation for his leadership in using the Bible to unify a Christian society. Campbell would use both reason and conscience to unify the movement under his leadership.

More recently, Tim Viner claimed that Campbell was,

...a rhetorical innovator, separating and combining elements from different modes of thought. His approach to the scriptures, his hermeneutic, did not conform to a single method. Evaluating Campbell on the basis of his stated positions at given moments can overlook the underlying dynamics that determined the flow of his discourse. Attention given to Campbell shows that his grounding in logic and

15. Carisse Berryhill, *Sense, expression, and purpose: Alexander Campbell's natural philosophy of rhetoric*. (PhD. diss., Florida State University. 1982).

16. *Ibid.*, 28.

17. The following summation depends heavily upon Verkruyse's writing on the rhetorical influences upon Alexander Campbell. Peter Verkruyse, *The rhetoric of restoration: Alexander Campbell and the rhetoric of affect* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1995); Peter Verkruyse, *Prophet, Pastor, and Patriarch: The Rhetorical Leadership of Alexander Campbell* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005).

rhetoric, and his commitment to unity was part of the appeal of his popular leadership.¹⁸

Viner added that any evaluation of Campbell's leadership and influence on the philosophical and rhetorical voices in the Restoration Movement must address this complexity of thought and method.

While Viner showed Campbell's ability to adapt within posed rhetorical problems without sacrificing his biblical principles, Verkruyse wrote that Campbell went through significant shifts in his rhetorical leadership as the movement came together through unification and then matured. If we accept Verkruyse's observation that Campbell was first a prophet, then a pastor, and last a patriarch then we must also observe that the overarching aim of his life and teaching was to create a common fellowship among Christians in which they could unite. However, this union depended a great deal on the *ethos* of the man and not the position of Campbell as a national religious reformer. As prophet, Campbell raised dissent concerning the divisions and called the people to seek unity through the Bible. As pastor, Campbell developed avenues to address competing strategies among the congregations to preserve unity. As patriarch, Campbell became the embodiment and keeper of unity, and so at his death the embodiment of Restorationist unity was gone.

While several authors comment on the impact of the Civil War, particularly the issue of slavery, upon the Restoration Movement, no one considers how the end of the war and the death of Campbell dispelled the intense identification with Christian unity that defined the movement. In contrast, I contend that 1866 marked a termination event

18. Tim Viner, "The Logic of the Heart: Alexander Campbell's Rhetoric and Hermeneutics on Christian Identity, Slavery, and Church Organization," (PhD. diss., University of Memphis, 2009), 331.

in the Movement and the lasting effect of war and of Campbell's death can be observed in the language of the post-termination discourse. To properly understand the impact of the termination event, we must understand Alexander Campbell's ideology that produced much of the success of the American Restoration Movement.

Alexander Campbell's Rhetorical Ideology In The American Restoration Movement

The American Restoration Movement started as a grass roots Christian socio-religious anti-movement, seeking to arouse public dissent against the existing denominational structures. At its inception, the Movement sought to dissolve denominational divisions and seek a practice of Christianity through which all believers could unify as evidence of the Christian gospel. However, at the very beginning there were several small rebellions calling for the same reforms in different parts of the country. James O'Kelley and Rice Haggard led a small rebellious movement in the Southeast focused upon congregational independence from larger councils and synods. In the Northeast, Abner Jones and Elias Smith led a similar type of resistance. In Kentucky, a desire to reform the Presbyterian Church directed by the preaching of James McGready, led Barton W. Stone to lead a revival in 1801 at Cane Ridge, KY, where over 30,000 people participated. These three smaller movements unified at Cane Ridge as Stone renounced the synod of Kentucky to form the Springfield Presbytery. Just three years later Stone would dissolve that association by writing his *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*.¹⁹ However, it was not until the emergence of Alexander

19. B. W. Stone, "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery." *Herald of Gospel Liberty* 1 (1808): 2-3.

Campbell, an extraordinary rhetorical leader, that the Movement became a real agent to effect change in the larger religious landscape.²⁰

In April of 1831,²¹ Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone brought their Movements together with the help of a preacher named “Raccoon” John Smith²² who served as a representative of Campbell. This alliance was a great victory for the Restoration Movement because it was proof of a practical unity among the different groups and proof of the leader’s desire to increase the number of people identified with the Movement. While Stone’s movement and Campbell’s movement had their fundamental differences, their shared desire to seek the Christian church of the New Testament and the union of all Christian groups served both groups eschatological goals.

Alexander Campbell believed and taught that if Christians sought after the New Testament ideal of the Christian religion and, additionally, the New Testament practices within the church, then the Christians of America could unite.²³ Griffin wrote regarding the strategies of social movements that a movement,

Is to strive, to the utmost, to actualize the “perfecting myth” of the movement: to achieve the incarnation, or embodiment, in the actualities of the material world (the “realities of a social texture”), of the movement’s guiding vision of Order—

20. For more on Campbell’s debating style and rise to leadership, see Bill Humble, *Campbell and Controversy* (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1952).

21. Peter Verkruyse, *Prophet, Pastor, and Patriarch*, 20.

22. Bill Humble, *The Story of Restoration*, 33.

23. “It seems obvious that Campbell in his *Christian Baptist* days premised his thrust for Christian unity on as dogmatic a sectarianism as those he opposed. While rejecting all known religious establishments (which, as he noted, caused fellow Christians to confuse his position with that of Deists) in favor of ‘the religion of the Bible, and that alone’ he dogmatically held that ‘the religion of the Bible’ made salvation solely ‘consequent on a believing immersion into the name of the Lord Jesus.’” In Sidney Mead, “The Theology of the Republic and the Orthodox Mind,” *American Academy of Religion Journal* 44 (1976): 112.

its dream (conscious or unconscious) of “heaven,” paradise, the “good society,” Utopia.”²⁴

For Campbell, the following perfecting myth motivated the new religious movement:

A restoration of the ancient order of things is all that is necessary to the happiness and usefulness of Christians.... To bring the societies of Christians up to the New Testament is just to bring the disciples individually and collectively, to walk in the faith, and in the commandments of the Lord and Saviour... Celebrated as the era for reformation is, we doubt not but that the era of restoration will far transcend it in importance and fame, through the long and blissful Millennium, as the New Testament transcends in simplicity, beauty, excellency, and majesty, the dogmas and notions of the creed of Westminster and the canons of the Assembly’s Digest. Just in so far as the ancient order of things, or the religion of the New Testament, is restored, just so far as the Millennium commenced, and so far have its blessings been enjoyed.²⁵

This unity would prefigure the reign of Jesus promised in the New Testament. Campbell believed that the second coming of Jesus depended upon the unity of Christians, and his strategies moved Christians in the direction of this utopian reign of Christ in the world.²⁶

His motivation led him to discontinue his journal *Christian Baptist* in which Campbell employed a more militant voice against the established denominations and start a new journal, the *Millennial Harbinger*. With this change the Restoration Movement entered into the second phase of inception in which Campbell could persuade potential converts

24. Leland M Griffin, “A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Movements,” in *Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke*, eds. Charles E. Morris III and Stephen H. Browne, (State College, PA: Strata, 1969), 468.

25. Alexander Campbell, “The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things, No I—Restoration-not Reformation,” *Christian Baptist*, (February 7, 1825), 128.

26. “To be sure, from the early years of his movement until almost the end of his life, this vulnerable patriarch of the Disciples of Christ eagerly anticipated a millennium of earthy bliss when justice would triumph, tyranny would be abolished, and the Christian faith would hold sway over the world.” In Richard T. Hughes, “From Primitive Church to Civil Religion: The Millennial Odyssey of Alexander Campbell,” *American Academy of Religion Journal* 44 (1976): 87; See Also Anthony Dunnavant, “Evangelization and Eschatology: Lost Link in the Disciples Tradition,” *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 28 (1993): 43-54.

to the cause using a widely distributed periodical to promote the goal of the Movement and gain adherents to his articulation of the perfecting myth.

Campbell's influence was far reaching, especially through the circulation of his perfecting ideology within his journal. However, Campbell's ideology not only contained a perfecting myth, but a democratic view of religion with very little structure. In fact, there was no official leadership position outside the context of the local congregation; hence, Campbell's leadership stood as a contradiction to the very ideology he promoted. So great was Campbell's influence, opponents of the movement called its members "Campbellites." Nathan Hatch, a respected religious historian, identified Campbell as a central figure in the reforming of the American church along republican lines.²⁷

Therefore, within this period of maturation in the Movement we see a potential tension in the "anti-leadership" orientation. The Movement had essentially elected a president, not by an official vote, but by popular vote, voicing their approval of him through subscriptions to his journals and adherence to his ideology. Because of the way Campbell persuaded people to join the cause of unity through sermons, articles, debates, and involvement in American society, he became the unsanctioned rhetorical leader of the Movement. If the Restoration Movement ever had a capital, it was Bethany, West Virginia, and living in the Movement's Whitehouse was Alexander Campbell.

Alexander Campbell was optimistic and awakened enthusiasm as he met the rhetorical requirements for leaders of social movements.²⁸ Through his preaching tours,

27. Nathan Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *The Journal of American History*, 67 (1980), 457.

28. Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for

religious debates, and edited periodicals, Campbell attracted, maintained, and molded followers, organizing them into an efficient and knowledgeable unit. The Restoration Movement gained national attention, attracting members from the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and other religious groups. From 1831 to the middle 1850s, Campbell's message of unity as a way to reach a Christian utopia was both powerfully persuasive and extremely popular. The Restoration Movement matured into a national reform movement, and historians estimate that there were over 200,000 members covering seventeen states.²⁹ Under the leadership of Campbell, the Movement also defended its ideology from outside resistance, negotiating the existing ideographic tensions and solidifying the Movement as a force to change American Christianity. Pertaining to the lack of organizational structures in social movements, Herbert Simons wrote

Shorn of the controls that characterize formal organizations, yet required to perform the same internal functions, harassed from without, yet obligated to adapt to the external system, the leader of a social movement must constantly balance inherently conflicting demands on his position and on the movement he represents.³⁰

Under the rhetorical leadership of Alexander Campbell, a key ideology³¹ of Christian unity compelled people to identify with the movement and long for an un-dogmatized, anti-clergy Christian church in which all Christians were a part of one fellowship under

Social Movements," In *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, ed. by Charles E. Morris and Stephen H. Browne (Strata, State College, PA: 2001), 34-45; See also Ronald Reid, *Three Centuries of American Rhetorical Discourse* Prospect Heights, 27.

29. Bill Humble, *The Story of Restoration*, 36.

30. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies," 36.

31. For more on "ideology" and its rhetorical functions, see Michael McGee, "Not Men, but Measures': The Origins and Import of an Ideological Principle," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978): 141-154; and Michael McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 1-18.

the authority of Jesus Christ alone. This rhetorical vision was the consummation of the Movement, the ultimate *telos* of the process that unified and matured the movement.³² Tensions would arise, and Campbell would assert his ideology in the face of such issues. Christian unity was the goal, and when issues sought to forfeit unity for the sake of a new cause or to serve the partisan attitude of the Movement, Campbell would attack, reframe, and call the Movement back to unity. However, the Civil War was an issue that Campbell could not circumvent, and so growing tension challenged the great rhetorical leader. This leads us to the termination event.

The Termination Event

The years leading to Civil War challenged Campbell's strong religious ideology as many men from the Restoration Movement gave into their strong sectionalism and joined their respective side for war. At the heart of the sectional favoritism during the war, the issue of slavery gave rise to a deeper crisis for the Movement's ideology. How could a leader of the Movement be an abolitionist and adhere to the straightforward approach to Scriptural interpretation perpetuated by Campbell himself? Mark Noll wrote regarding this,

In this effort, those who like James Henley Thornwell defended the legitimacy of slavery in the Bible had the easiest task. The procedure, which by 1860 had been repeated countless times, was uncomplicated. First, open the Scriptures and read, at say Leviticus 25:45, or, even better 1 Corinthians 7:20-21. Second, decide for yourself what these passages mean. Don't wait for a bishop or a king or a president or a meddling Yankee to tell you what the passage means, but decide for yourself. Third, if anyone tries to convince you that you are not interpreting such passages in the natural, commonsensical, ordinary meaning of the words, look

32. Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 91-111, in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, eds. John L. Lucaites, Celeste M. Condit and Sally Caudill (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), 441-463. He writes regarding *telos*, "The critique of domination has an emancipatory purpose—a *telos* toward which it aims in the process of demystifying the conditions of domination." (441).

hard at what such a one believes with respect to other biblical doctrines. If you find in what he or she says about such doctrines the least hint of unorthodoxy, as inevitably you will, then you may rest assured that you are being asked to give up not only the plain meaning of scripture, but also the entire trust in the Bible that made the country into such a great Christian Civilization.³³

As early as 1841, Campbell conceded that the Bible was “not sufficient to govern the church” as the sole authority of the Movement, mourning the fact that several congregations lacked co-operation and that lack of structure allowed some to take advantage of congregations. He opened the article by asserting,

The experience of every day, added to the great principles propounded in both Testaments, especially in the New, and to the positive precepts and examples of the Lord and his Apostles, more and more impress all of us who feel our responsibilities, who have some influence in the church of Jesus Christ, and to whose hearts the peace, purity, and happiness of Christ’s kingdom are paramount, all-absorbing, and transcending concerns – that our organization and discipline are greatly defective, and essentially inadequate to the present condition and wants of society.³⁴

Campbell went on to argue that no book has ever governed a community. While it became apparent through the maturation of the Movement that it needed leaders to guide the people, there was no process for selecting such leaders within the Movement beyond the congregational level. Thus, while Campbell arose a prominent leader in the Movement, there was no identified way to pass the leadership on to younger, qualified leaders.

Additionally, the Civil War added to the growing crisis by devastating the pious dream of the Movement; it was clear from the missionary society resolution passed in 1863 by Northern representatives and the responses to it in the South that sectionalism

33. Mark Noll, *The Civil War as Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 50.

34. Alexander Campbell, “The Nature of Christian Organization” *Millennial Harbinger* 1 (1841): 533.

triumphed over unity, not only in the country, not only in Christianity, but even inside the Movement. Many preachers, who pleaded for pacifism, including Campbell, watched their sons go to war. Bill Humble observed that the sectional divide of the movement during the Civil War was literally straight through the middle of it,

The outbreak of the Civil War was an agonizing test of whether the United States could endure as one nation. It was also a test of whether the Restoration Movement could endure as one people...for in 1860 they had about 1200 churches in the North and 800 in the South.³⁵

All of this tension came to a moment of crisis in 1863 when the American Christian Missionary Society passed a resolution in the absence of the Southern representatives, culminating in the statement that they were,

Resolved, that we unqualifiedly declare our allegiance to [the United States] government, and repudiate as false and slanderous any statement to the contrary. That we tender our sympathies to our brave and noble soldiers in the field who are defending us from the attempts of armed traitors to overthrow our government...³⁶

Thus, the national issues resulting in Civil War contested the key ideology of unity and threatened the utopian vision of Campbell. This American Christian Missionary Society decision to support the North was an easy one to make since many of the attendees viewed the Confederacy as the enemy of the nation's prized democratic unity. Humble summarized the resolution in this way: "The Civil War had so shattered the sense of brotherhood between Northern and Southern Christians that they could never again be called 'one people' in any meaningful sense."³⁷

35. Humble, *The Story of Restoration*, 45.

36. Proceedings of the American Christian Missionary Society, (1863).

37. Humble, *The Story of Restoration*, 49.

The Movement still maintained a loosely unified fellowship through Campbell's rhetorical negotiations of abolitionists and unrelenting desire to fight for Christian unity, but leaders of the movement had already begun to question its relevancy. The movement faced a fatal blow at the close of the Civil War in 1866. This year contained the termination event affecting the future of all attempts to rethink, renew, and recast the Restoration Movement. Respected Missouri preacher and editor Moses E. Lard asked the question in his journal, *Lard's Quarterly*, "Can we divide?"³⁸ Leaders had never before asked such questions, but the talk of dividing along sectional lines spread throughout the movement. Alexander Campbell, the last remaining founder and the commanding rhetorical leader of the Restoration Movement, died in Bethany, West Virginia, in 1866 leaving the movement without a centralized leader for the first time since its inception. In a movement that lacked a strong leadership structure, Campbell was their champion, their executive officer; furthermore, their president, and his strategies laid still. With a termination upon the Movement, there must be an appropriate response to the desolation. In the wake of this termination, one book attempted to celebrate Campbell's work and display the ongoing unity of the Movement in the wake of the Civil War.

**A Unique Piece of Post-Termination Rhetoric:
*The Living Pulpit***

William Thomas Moore edited a major work of post-termination rhetoric that celebrated the *esprit de corps* achieved in the Movement by collecting sermons from various preachers and placing them together in the same work. Moore, who graduated as the valedictorian from Campbell's Bethany College in 1855, was a powerful Restoration

38. Harrell, *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 223.

leader, an author of several books, and an editor of both domestic and foreign journals.³⁹ In 1868, he published the *Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*⁴⁰ containing a collection of twenty-eight sermons from distinguished leaders throughout the Movement. It is the only collection of Restoration sermons from the period immediately after Campbell's death in the wake of Civil War.⁴¹ Additionally, it is the singular effort, in that period, to celebrate the achievement of the Movement holistically.

Moore produced this book as a work of epideictic rhetoric, which commemorated the success of the Movement while focusing the membership on the present unity and the contributions of the Movement to the larger Christian community. The publisher's preface states:

There is one remarkable fact, which the Publishers believe is worthy of attention. In this work are sermons from the pens of twenty-eight preachers, scattered here and there over the United States, who wrote without consultation, and without knowing what subjects would be treated by others, or what others would say; and yet there has been no conflict of opinion—no contradictions or differences of views—showing that the great body of the ministry *is a unit* on the vital and material questions which distinguish the church organization of the Disciples of Christ⁴² (emphasis mine).

The publishers continued to discuss how hard it was to select from such a “host of talented men engaged in the great cause to which they dedicate their lives.”⁴³ They commented on how “eloquent, learned, and powerful” the preachers in the Movement

39. Lee, *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 544.

40. W.T. Moore, ed., *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*. (Cincinnati: R.W. Carroll & Co., 1868).

41. In an email correspondence with Douglas Foster, a well-established historian of the Restoration Movement, he agreed that this volume is the only book published during this crucial period, (March 15, 2005).

42. W.T. Moore, *The Living Pulpit*, viii.

43. *Ibid.*, vii.

had become. Several volumes were planned, books that would show the whole Christian discourse of “faith, conduct, and the salvation of man.” All of these celebrated items and people mentioned in the preface point back to the work and dedication of Alexander Campbell. Moreover, the preface looked toward the future by hoping to collect more sermons for additional volumes, thus showing the continued efforts of the Movement.

Moore wrote in the introduction to the book that the Restoration Movement, under the direction of Thomas and then Alexander Campbell, sought to finish the work of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley as the last great reformation. Grounded in Campbell’s ideology, the Movement primarily believed the “all-sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as a rule for faith and practice.”⁴⁴ Moore went on to note eight key themes of the Movement tied to the teaching of Campbell; the most notable were beliefs about authentic Christian baptism, observance of weekly Lord’s Supper, and the organization of the Church. Moore then boasted about the Disciples, a term used to designate members of the Restoration Movement, because they “have grown to be one of the most powerful and influential religious people of modern times.”⁴⁵ In the United States, he estimated that there were over 500,000 members at the publication of the book in 1868.

Ultimately, Moore admitted the shifting state in which the Movement found itself.

He wrote,

The historical value of these discourses is as great as any other. The Disciples are just now passing through a transition state, and it will be interesting, in after years, to look over the great speeches of some of the representative men of this period.⁴⁶

44. Ibid., 15.

45. Ibid., 19-20.

46. Ibid., 31.

Because of this “historical value,” the *Living Pulpit* was a highly prized book and preserved a “rich legacy” of the Movement within this snapshot of history.

My interest is in the nature and function of the published sermons within the *Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*. While a case could be made that the book is simply one of commemoration in which the success of the Movement was remembered and honored, I argue that while the Restoration Movement of Campbell terminated at his death, new rhetorical leaders emerged using competing ideographs found within the work of Campbell to seek new inceptions leading to splintering. What we need to establish now is how we are going to “pierce” this post-termination discourse “from many angles” and follow the newly established, competing ideologies that splintered the Movement.

Statement of Method

Close textual analysis

Close textual analysis is an appropriate analytical method because it “seeks to study the relationship between the inner workings of public discourse and its historical context in order to discover what makes a particular text, *or in this case collection of texts*, function persuasively.”⁴⁷ *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* supposedly upholds the religious ideology of the Restoration Movement by being both a symbol of unity and an argument for the continued pursuit of unity. Yet a close reading of selected texts compares the messages and arguments contained within, or intrinsic evidences, to the larger context outside of the texts, or extrinsic evidences, uncovering arguments that point to a widening diversity of ideas within the movement instead of a constant unity of beliefs, values, and practices.

47. C. Burghardt, ed., *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism* (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), 545. Italics added.

Additionally, close reading evaluates a rhetorical discourse as it arises out of a particular situation, by whether or not the discourse supplies a fitting response to the situation. For Michael Leff,⁴⁸ the interplay between the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions of the text allows a scholar to focus on the rhetorical action within the artifact, or in this case a set of artifacts. The situation that these leaders found themselves in was a time of division and tension, yet the core belief of the movement from the beginning was unity and a continued appeal to common sense. The leader of the late 1860s has a much different rhetorical task than Campbell, and much of their discourse depended heavily on their audience and their own visions of the future of the Movement. A close reading of selected texts within the *Living Pulpit* uncovered ideologies of a splintering social movement.

As a supplement for extrinsic material, four journals will serve as primary sources for additional writings of the respected second-generation leaders: *Millennial Harbinger*, *Gospel Advocate*, *American Christian Review*, and *The Christian Standard*. The *Millennial Harbinger* was Campbell's journal during the most successful years of the Movement, and the other three continue to circulate among Restoration churches. Journals, and their editors, are necessary to developing an understanding of Restoration thought due to their highly influential status in the movement and their wide distribution among their targeted contingency.⁴⁹

48. Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G. P. Mohrmann," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 377-389; Michael Leff, "Things Made by Words: Reflections on Textual Criticism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992): 223-231.

49. Some historians argue that before the rise of the Christian Colleges, the journal editors became the voice of a particular group in the larger movement. Displaced by the lack of a national council or synod, these papers became the unofficial structure of the movement. See Bill Humble, "The Influence of the Editors," *The Story of Restoration* (Henderson, TN: Hester), 51-56.

Rhetoric of historical movements

Building upon Kenneth Burke, Leland Griffin claimed that, “all movements are essentially political, concerned with governance and dominion...It also assumes that all movements are essentially moral—strivings for salvations, perfection, the ‘good.’”⁵⁰ Thus, a movement goes through a series of moves like an unfolding drama, and at each of these moments, the “persuasive power of language” can be studied to reveal certain trajectories. A successful movement will quell counter-movements, overcome crisis moments and produce unification around a transformative and transcendent ideology.

Ideology, in Michael McGee’s view, is an assumed moral act as people come together to expose a falsehood in society. Since perfection, or “true consciousness,”⁵¹ is theoretically available to humanity, it is our duty to pursue the true. McGee argued, “I will suggest that ideology in practice is a political language, preserved through rhetorical documents, with the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior.”⁵² Thus, ideology is produced by a series of refrains, which McGee calls “ideographs.” These ideographs condition humans, making them more susceptible to conformity within the movement. However, ideographs also hinder “pure thought”⁵³ because they bind the thoughts of the adherents to the movement, which they represent.

50. Leland Griffin, “A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Motives,” 456.

51. Michael McGee, “The ‘Ideograph’: A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 1-18, in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, eds. John L. Lucraites, Celeste M. Condit and Sally Caudill, 426, New York: Guilford, 1999), 426.

52. Michael McGee, “The ‘Ideograph’: A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology,” in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, 427.

53. Michael McGee, “The ‘Ideograph’: A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology,” in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, 430.

Therefore, we can speak of rhetoric as a way of controlling the movement, a system of persuasion that is effective in motivating adherents to accept the ideology.

Griffin applied Burke's dramatic theory to the study of historical movements.⁵⁴ Griffin showed how order produces guilt, which leads to the inception of a new struggle, perhaps a struggle against the established order. As seen above, a group of religious leaders who were embarrassed by the divisions of Christianity into multiple denominations birthed the Restoration Movement. When they wrote that all denominations should be dissolved and should sink back into Christianity at large in the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, they conceived a Movement. The ideology perpetuated by the Movement was the unity of all Christian denominations into one large group. When Alexander Campbell identified with the cause and started *the Millennial Harbinger*, the Movement entered into the second phase of inception by now having a unified voice and receiving public notice. As Griffin wrote: "Its first strategy is to promote decision, to convert the estranged, to turn toward the movement increasing numbers of the alienated, the undecided..."⁵⁵ Secondly, the movement would try to get people to take action and identify with the movement, while knowing the language of the movement. In this, we see the importance of Campbell's periodical in building a language.

Consequently, with Campbell's death we must consider the importance of post-termination rhetoric that emerging leaders produce. Additionally, we must also understand the opposing inceptions of new sub-movements that are never quite the equivalent as the larger, more unified, movement, but continue the legacy of the larger

54. Leland Griffin, "A Dramatic Theory of the Rhetoric of Motives," 456-478.

55. *Ibid.*, 464.

movement in their own strategized way. Each rhetorical leader received the legacy of Campbell's strategies and each rhetorical leader rearticulated the ideology of the Movement creating new outgrowths. This study attends to the rhetorical leaders during the post-termination period of Campbell's death shortly after the end of the Civil War and examines the post-termination rhetorical discourse that gave rise to the splintering of the American Restoration Movement into distinct groups with distinct contributions to the larger contemporary Christian community.

Competing Ideographs Become Sub-Movement Ideologies Under New Leadership

Within the anthology *Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* four leaders distinguished themselves from the other men represented in the book: Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning, Isaac Errett, and W. K. Pendleton. These leaders emerged based on the following criteria. First, leaders must have had a deep personal connection with Alexander Campbell. Second, the leader's sermon must address the ongoing Movement in *The Living Pulpit* displaying a desire on the part of each leader to present his ideology to the Movement that both acknowledged the goals accomplished while seeking to continue the effort towards a consummation event of some sort. Third, the leaders must have demonstrated that they were asserting leadership by gathering a following and showing evidence of adherence to particular strategies; and other leaders must have recognized the leader as such.

After Campbell's death, Campbell's son-in-law W.K. Pendleton edited *The Millennial Harbinger*. Three other publications set themselves apart from the others due to their wide distribution and influential editors. The *Gospel Advocate* developed in Tennessee and after a break during the war reconvened printing in 1866. This journal

provided articles reflecting the thoughts of Southern leaders like the journal's co-editor Tolbert Fanning. The *Christian Standard* supplied the voices of Northern leaders under the editorial guidance of Isaac Errett. This publication sought the ongoing progression of the Movement and connected to a large readership of Northern supporters. The *American Christian Review* was a journal that Benjamin Franklin printed out on the Northern frontier of Indiana and Illinois in which he argued from a literal, more rurally rooted perspective.

The leader must have been able to react to both kindness and resistance in response to his strategies. I am interested in how the post-War leaders confined their rhetorical efforts, through the sermons printed in the *Living Pulpit* and their publications to particular audiences within the larger, just terminated Movement; meeting the immediate needs of the membership while forfeiting larger ideological concerns that characterized Campbell's Movement.

This study will show that out of the termination event, distinct rhetorical strands emerged, grounded in Campbell's own strategies, or ideographs, but handled by post-War leaders creating different visions around which sub-movements could identify. Each chapter of this study will trace a particular leader and the rhetorical strand produced by him.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter two of the work will explore the work of Campbell's closest friend and colleague at Bethany College. W.K. Pendleton served as president of Bethany College and editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* in the years just preceding Campbell's death, thus literally continuing the work of Campbell through the years just after the termination

event. Moreover, Pendleton was Campbell's son-in-law. Through his sermon entitled, "The Ministry of the Holy Spirit," Pendleton displayed his intellect and desire for Christians to develop, but never fully provides a strategy for that development. In 1870, a mere four years after Campbell's death, Pendleton seemingly betrayed his inherited leadership by ceasing to publish the *Millennial Harbinger*. This decision by Pendleton sealed the outcome of Campbell's strategies as Pendleton silenced a longtime encouragement to the Movement. With growing competition from other periodicals like the ones mentioned above, Pendleton had no choice but to part ways with the founding periodical of the Movement that, for the most part, negotiated existing tensions and held the movement together in its pages. Also important to this work were the contributions of Pendleton as a close associate of Campbell. If the Restoration Movement were to carry on the strategies of Campbell, then Pendleton would be an important voice moving forward. Perhaps it was disappointing to Campbell's Movement that Pendleton chose to place his efforts in the realm of education and missionary societies, but these efforts, even in Campbell's view, were important supplements to the churches of the Movement. Pendleton emerged as the "association" strand of the post-termination Restoration efforts, and continued to perpetuate an ideograph of Campbell's larger ideology of unity. It was through associations that the larger Christian community would produce unity, yet Pendleton sacrificed his work among the churches for work among the associational institutions.

In chapter three, this study will examine Benjamin Franklin's opposition to Campbell's ideology of the Restoration Movement and Franklin's strategies to launch a new movement grounded in the life of the frontier and fueled by opposition of anything

that could be viewed as sophistication. Through his sermon, “The Church—Its Identity,” Franklin’s voice of dissent served his desire to set the movement’s churches, searching for a strong ideology in the wake of termination, back on the right path. Through this sermon, Franklin separated them from other more organized and more recognized denominations and showed why this small group of churches was special in the larger Christian landscape. Franklin’s rhetorical message was one of religious discontent that recast Campbell’s younger, more militant, ideograph in the *Christian Baptist* at the time of the inception of the Movement. Franklin did not discuss a movement or achievements of a restoration effort; his concern was to create a direct ancestry that moved from the biblical church to the churches with which he fellowshiped. Because this sermon, and most of his articles in his periodical entitled the *American Christian Review*, argued for a new movement rededicated to the premise of truth and religious simplicity, Franklin became a militant voice that seemingly wanted to establish clear order in the chaos of the movement. Franklin was the leader of the “militant” strand of the post-termination Restoration rhetoric, replacing the ideology of unity with an ideograph of dissent found in Campbell’s work.

Chapter four will explore Tolbert Fanning’s leadership in the South, characterized by a distrust of all institutions except for the church. Interesting to this study is Fanning’s absolute pacifism during the Civil War and his use of a more militant strategy in debates with Northern leaders of the Movement. Through his sermon “The Mission of the Church of Christ,” Fanning affirmed that the church would triumph over all historical circumstances and he asserted that the church stands against all governments and denominations. Fanning argued that the Kingdom of God never intended on blessing the

cultural powers of America, but must overpower them. Therefore, the Restoration Movement was not trying to work out the reign of Christ in America, but simply trying to survive it until the day that God broke into history to overpower and reign supreme. This ideological framework was not in agreement with Campbell. Fanning would write articles in which he debated with a deceased Campbell over issues, acting as an agent of purification for the movement from any problem that might present itself, including some of Campbell's own teachings. Fanning emerged as the voice of the "purification" strand of the post-termination Restoration effort, taking a literal approach to the "perfecting myth" within the Movement and placing it over the appeal for unity among broader Christianity.

Chapter five will explore the work of Isaac Errett as a Northern leader who celebrated the contributions of Campbell's Restoration Movement and sought to continue building upon the solid work done before the Civil War. Through his editorial work in *The Christian Standard* and his sermon entitled "The Law of Progressive Development," Errett displays his eschatological belief that the best of the Christian life and the world has yet to arrive. His efforts to keep the strategies of the pre-war movement relevant by visioning forward and seeing better days ahead show his loyalty to Campbell's ideology. What we can glean from Errett's ideology was a continuance of progressive thinking that sought relevancy in a rapidly changing culture in the post-war North. Errett sought inventive ways to progress further and closer to the reign of Christ recasting Campbell's progressive ideograph, often experienced in his later years, and using that voice to argue for cooperation and more organization among all Christian groups and denominations. Errett was the voice of the "progressive" strand in the post-termination Restoration effort.

Chapter six will conclude the study, providing an overview of the findings and some implications those findings have for the ongoing sub-movements. The study will also consider its limitations and look at ways this work might promote further research. Ultimately, the work will contribute to the understanding of a rhetorical legacy and how a social movement treats the legacy once the leader has died. Considering the entirety of a rhetorical leader's legacy, contained within it are tensions where the leader sought negotiation and compromise that the movement's new leaders must understand. These new leaders have a new rhetorical task to recast, renew, or ignore the development of the once influential voice. Thus, newly emerging leaders could use the voice of Alexander Campbell to guide the movement into a new ideology never dreamed of by the original leader. This is a rhetorical phenomenon deserving of our attention, affecting social movements of all forms. Therefore, while this work is a case study of a particular movement, its findings should be transferable to other movements as they navigate the rhetorical problems presented to them during a termination event as they seek to produce post-termination rhetoric.

Conclusion

In review, we uncovered the available literature related to the Civil War and the leadership of Alexander Campbell as we approached the termination event in the Restoration Movement. Then, we established Alexander Campbell's ideology that brought such great success to the Movement between 1831 and the early 1850s. After that, we determined that 1866 served as the Movement's termination event. Subsequently, we presented a unique piece of post-termination rhetorical discourse entitled *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* and established a method through

which we can find meaning within the post-termination discourse. Finally, we discussed the emergence of new leaders who used competing ideologies in the Movement to create new strategies and broke down of the proceeding chapters in this study. Therefore, a study of the post-termination discourse following the death of Campbell and the end of the Civil War will show that it is hard to speak of a holistic Restoration Movement with any real clarity after this point. The Movement had an emerging “association” ideology through the establishment of colleges and universities, fueled by the leadership of W.K. Pendleton; a “militant” ideology focused on the frontier and rural areas, fueled by Benjamin Franklin; a “purification” contingency in the South, fueled by Tolbert Fanning; and a “progressive” contingency in the North, fueled by the leadership of Isaac Errett. Each ideology can be traced back to Alexander Campbell’s own ideographs throughout his decades of leadership. However, Campbell’s own development as a leader has been removed from the collective memory of the Movement due to the handling of Campbell’s voice by various leaders, and the establishments of sub-movements that only associate themselves with a piece of Campbell’s strategies to attain unity. It is more than this. Verkruyse closed his work on Campbell by writing,

What Ernest Bormann once wrote seems to apply in this case: “A viable rhetoric must also accommodate the community to the changes that accompany its unfolding history.” As Campbell led his movement through periods of emergence, growth, and maturity, he possessed, above all else, what every rhetor needs in some measure: a keen sense of what the ancients called *kairos*, the “timeliness” of having the word appropriate for the moment.⁵⁶

While each sub-movement celebrated a part of Campbell’s voice, the harsh reality of termination forced the members of the Movement to establish new rhetorical goals and strategies. Thus, the Restoration Movement consisted of different groups, producing

56. Verkruyse, *Pastor, Priest, and Patriarch*, 155.

differing ideologies. There was a group of “progressive” members mostly in the North who would eventually become known as the Christian Church. There was a group of “perfecting” members mostly in the South who would eventually be known as the Church of Christ. Sprinkled throughout the rural areas was another group of “militant” members who kept their fellowships very small and did not cooperate with other congregations and they emerged as the Non-Institutional Church of Christ or “Anti” Churches. Throughout each of the sub-movements was an ongoing debate of the contributions of education to the church; a group of “association” members continued to rally behind the notion that an organized and educated church membership would create a more moderate and unified Christian landscape. Until the sub-movements created at the time of Campbell’s death and end of the Civil War reclaim a sense of shared ideology, churches that appeal to the Restoration ideologies will be perpetually stuck in stasis or more than that—will serve as an example of social movement tragedy. As Griffin put it, “Man’s movements, in time, come to an end. And they come to an end in tragedy—for tragedy involves defeat, the failure of our ends, the ultimate death of the good.”⁵⁷ Ultimately, the Restoration Movement must concede defeat, or at least admit the stasis in which the larger Movement has stood from the death of Campbell to the present day.

57. Leland Griffin, “A Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Motives,” 472.

CHAPTER 2

AN ASSOCIATION MOVEMENT IN THE WORK OF W. K. PENDLETON

If any person were set to take Campbell's place as the Movement's rhetorical and ideological leader, then it was William K. Pendleton. Pendleton's personal connection with Campbell was incomparable to any leader across the entire movement. Pendleton served alongside Campbell for many years and served as president of Bethany College and as the editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* in the years just preceding Campbell's death. Pendleton was Campbell's son-in-law and so he knew the strategies and goals of Campbell and they were intimate friends.¹

Pendleton understood Campbell's philosophy of rhetoric and knew that one of Campbell's strategies for Christian unity was the use of education to increase decorum and harmony among the Christian denominations. Campbell believed that the division in Christianity into denominations was due to a lack of understanding among reasonable men regarding the instruction and character of the New Testament church. Thus, the Movement depended upon two types of rhetorical interactions: first, preachers who would convert people from erroneous ways of thinking; and second, teachers who could deepen the understanding of its members to strengthen the unity within the Movement.

While Pendleton possessed a wonderful academic mind, he was not the rhetorical leader for the Movement that Campbell was. Pendleton's focus in the post-termination period of the Restoration effort was primarily on education, but he also viewed avenues in which the churches of the Movement could associate with each other to produce positive public services like schools and humanitarian efforts to be within the scope of

1. Frederick D. Power, *Life of W.K. Pendleton* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1902), 240.

the Movement's ideology. As we will discover in the coming exploration of Pendleton's work, his decision to devote his efforts to Bethany College and to missionary societies while dissolving the *Millennial Harbinger* was not simply a decision that ended the most unifying periodical of the Restoration Movement, but a decision that ultimately dissolved his rhetorical inheritance among churches. Faced with the rhetorical problems of Campbell's death and post-war sectionalism, Pendleton maintained the associational pursuits of Campbell. His efforts at Bethany College and in the larger landscape of mission efforts and education in West Virginia celebrated and commemorated the legacy of Campbell and the contributions the Restoration Movement made to Christian association. However, his strategies in the pulpit and through the once popular periodical never won an audience.

Could this have been the fate of Campbell had he lived longer after the war? There was evidence that Campbell's influence was under attack, but what history argues is that the *Millennial Harbinger* died shortly after the death of Campbell. While there can be debate over the fairness of this conclusion, the death of the Movement's most solidifying periodical was a failure of Pendleton's strategies. Therefore, the purpose of displaying Pendleton's work in this study is to argue that a very close friend and colleague of Campbell thought it proper to preserve the associational success of Campbell and build upon it while letting the ecclesiastical work die during the post-termination period.

W.T. Moore includes one of Pendleton's sermons in the *Living Pulpit*; this provides foundational proof of his accepted leadership given that Moore only included twenty-eight men in the volume. The chapter will first introduce the reader to W.K.

Pendleton focusing on his relationship with Campbell and his work in associations, or para-church organizations. Then I will take a brief, but important look at the differences between an ecclesiastical sermon and an academic lecture, setting up my study of the “sermon” included in Moore’s *Living Pulpit*. After exploring rhetorical themes in the “sermon” of Pendleton, I will expand the scope of this study to look at a larger discussion of associations among other church leaders. Last, this chapter will look at Pendleton’s cessation of the *Millennial Harbinger* and draw some conclusions about the lasting rhetorical effects of Pendleton’s work in the post-termination period.

Background:
W.K. Pendleton’s Unity through Association

William Kimbrough Pendleton was born to Unity Yancey Kimbrough and Colonel Edmund Pendleton in 1817. He was well educated, earning a law degree from the University of Virginia. During his study, influenced by his father and older brother, W.K. Pendleton began to read the *Millennial Harbinger* and other writings of Alexander Campbell. Campbell became an important influence in Pendleton’s life, especially after he married Campbell’s daughter, Lavina, and moved to Bethany, WV to take a position as an instructor at the college.

This was a major shift in Pendleton’s life direction since his studies pointed him in a direction for a career in politics. He was a member of the Whig party, and in 1840, he was a delegate to the Young Men's National Ratification Convention held in Baltimore, MD. At the convention Pendleton met both Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, two political giants in the post Civil War era, but traded a life of blooming politics to go to Bethany, WV and work with Campbell. Understanding the abilities of Pendleton, Campbell wanted him to be associated with the college and to help him in his work.

While Pendleton chose Bethany and the work at the college, he still had a desire to find his place in the political world.²

When Bethany College held its first classes in 1841, Pendleton was a teacher. By 1845, he was elected vice-president of the school to assist Campbell due to Campbell's constant absence from the campus. In addition, during January 1846 he served as the co-editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* while Campbell traveled. In 1847 Campbell would travel to England to promote the publication while Pendleton was left to edit the *Harbinger* himself. This was the period of busyness and tragedy for Pendleton.

It was in 1846 that Pendleton's wife, Campbell's daughter, died, leaving Pendleton a widower with children. In 1848 he again married a daughter of Campbell. Her name was Clarinda and their marriage lasted only two short years when she died in 1850. Pendleton's life was going in two different directions; domestically, his life fell apart with the death of two wives and the weight of family stress, but professionally he was working harder and harder, being appointed to high positions and gaining respect for his work in academics and in the Restoration Movement. In 1849, he assisted in the formulation of the American Christian Missionary Society and attended the first convention in Campbell's place because Campbell was sick. Pendleton continued to be a major leader among the efforts to send missionaries through the society.

In 1855, he married his third wife, not a daughter of Campbell, but Catherine Huntington King of Warren, Ohio. He also ran for congress but was defeated. However, his involvement in politics never went away and after the Civil War he served on the Constitution Committee for the new state of West Virginia. He also served as the

2. From Earl I. West, *The Search For The Ancient Order* Vol. I (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 1974), 89-95. accessed July 13, 2010, <http://www.therestorationmovement.com/pendleton,wk.htm>.

Superintendent of Public Schools while holding the position of President of Bethany College after the death of Campbell.

While Pendleton was a strong leader in both education and politics, Pendleton's adventures in these areas do not transfer into the realm of rhetorical leadership within the Restoration Movement. There is little doubt raised over Pendleton's abilities and influence, but one could raise questions about his abilities to lead and influence people within a Movement that desperately needed leadership. As we will uncover, Pendleton's long-term work with Bethany College and short-term work with the American Christian Missionary Society were viewed by some strong leaders within the movement as unnecessary institutions and undermined the work of the local church, seeking to perhaps replace of the local church. With a frail Alexander Campbell unable to do all that he once did, in January 1865, the editorial responsibilities of the *Millennial Harbinger* fell to W. K. Pendleton and his co-editor, C. L. Loos. Since its inception, the *Millennial Harbinger* had been associated with Campbell, and now his close companion and son-in-law, W.K. Pendleton was the main force behind the publication. For Pendleton, there was tremendous pressure to continue Campbell's legacy and the unrelenting work of producing a journal that represented the views of the Movement.

To write that the "torch had been passed" is not simply cliché in this moment, but was so real we could almost touch it. Pendleton followed Campbell in almost every way. He was the President of Bethany College, and there had only been one previous President of that school. He was the editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* and there had only been one other editor of that publication. He also served as President of missionary society, which was a major interest of Campbell. On a more personal note, Pendleton's daughter,

Campbellina, was not only Campbell's granddaughter; Pendleton named her after Campbell obviously. Campbell's interests were deeply rooted in Pendleton, and this can be seen in an address to the American Christian Missionary Society in which Pendleton, like Campbell, argued against congregational autonomy and in favor of more unity within the movement.

Campbell had shifted his thinking regarding this issue over time from supporting a pure congregational autonomy to supporting more efforts for congregations to work together. Thus, the foundation and support of missionary societies became a topic of intense debate within the movement, but for Campbell and Pendleton they were necessary. Pendleton said:

We want more unity. Congregationalism does not express the unity of the Church. Congregationalism does not fully comprehend the full idea of the Church, and cannot in its isolated action accomplish the full mission of the Church. Congregationalism does not reveal to the heart the grand and glorious nature and power of the church universal. It must go forth from its isolation into the wide fellowship of national reunion; it must come out from the synagogue and go up to the temple; it must leave the cantons and join the procession that is majestically sweeping by for the city of the King. Congregationalism all over the land is like the sweet, fresh fountains that spring forth from the rock and crevice, a spot the earth with verdure and beauty, but the fountains well up and flow over and murmur for the sea.³

If unity was the goal of the movement, and congregationalism was the antithesis to the accomplishment of unity, then perhaps a teaching that explores the entirety of the Movement's work entitled, "The Ministry of the Holy Spirit" might give the Movement some answers they were actively seeking regarding the building of unity in the church. Published in *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, this teaching by Pendleton will provide a foundational lens through which we can explore his efforts as a rhetorical

3. Power, *The Life of W.K. Pendleton*, 254-55.

leader, seeking to follow Alexander Campbell and extend upon his contribution to para-church associations.

The Difference in Genre Between a Lecture and a Sermon

Campbell did not only pass down his professional and family estates to Pendleton, but Pendleton also received a rhetorical paradigm from Campbell. Carisse Berryhill, who has studied the rhetoric of Campbell in great depth, wrote that Campbell made a very important distinction between preaching and teaching, a distinction based upon George Campbell's insight into the Greek terms for each. He exposed a distinction that John, a biblical author and apostle of Jesus, made between his Gospel and his Epistles. In the Gospel of John, the author claims to write an account so that the readers might believe in Jesus. In Campbell's view, this was preaching. In the Epistles of John, the author claimed to write to the churches so that their joy might be completed.⁴ This deepening of spiritual insight was what Campbell called teaching. Thus, Alexander Campbell viewed preaching as reserved for that time when the audience consisted of unbelievers and the task was to present the story of Jesus in such a way as to persuade them to believe. Teaching, on the other hand, existed to bring believers into a deeper understanding of the Bible, especially the ideas and notions that were of utmost importance to the Gospel story in the text of the New Testament.

Building upon this distinction through homiletical theory, we come to a basic understanding regarding the oratorical event and even the writing of a sermon. In general, a sermon is interplay between an explanation of biblical material, an encounter with the God of the Bible, and an experience in which the listeners connect the God of the Bible to

4. Carisse M. Berryhill, "Alexander Campbell's Natural Rhetoric of Evangelism," *Restoration Quarterly* 30 (1988): 121.

their world and context. Thus, we can separate preaching from teaching or sermons from lectures. Notable to the Restoration Movement are two very distinct preaching traditions; the emotional experience of God as practiced by Barton W. Stone and the rational appeal to reason as practiced by Alexander Campbell.⁵ When the two leaders merged to create the larger Movement, there was a tension between the validity of emotional response and the exclusive appeal to reason. Thus, many leaders in the movement would lean heavily upon biblical texts and rational appeals while also telling narratives and sharing thoughts that moved the audience to action as well.

Pendleton was a teacher by trade, and a very well established one given his work at Bethany College and his repetitively added responsibilities at that institution. He was a lecturer and the purpose of his lectures was to make students think, ponder, and open their minds to the ideas he presented in class. A lecture is an exposition of an idea or text usually given in an educational context to students. While these two terms, sermon and lecture, are similar in some ways, there is also an important distinction.

Pendleton's task as a teacher was strikingly different from his task as a preacher. Emerging during this period was a monumental tension in how the Restoration Movement would use preaching and train preachers. In some churches, there was a deep desire to have "farmer preachers"⁶ who spoke from their life experience and worked alongside the congregants within the community. There were other churches in the movement, however, that sought ministers who are more educated and believed that they

5. For more on these two distinct traditions, please consult Michael Casey, *Saddle Bags, City Streets and Cyberspace* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1995), chs. 1 and 2.

6. *Ibid.*, 43.

should be “professional”⁷ preachers. For the first group, usually rural congregations, the focus of preaching would be on evangelism and for the second group, usually affluent urban congregations, the focus would be upon common principles of faith and life. Therefore, if we choose to live in this tension that the Movement itself provided, then the task of preaching was not explaining a biblical text, but taking the audience’s experiences and seeking biblical principles that develop meaning and purpose within the Movement’s congregations; and sometimes rebuke to be applied within the given context.

Pendleton represented the intellectual side of this tension, as did Campbell. By the time of Pendleton’s leadership, Bethany College was not only a school that taught Bible and theology, but also was a school that trained “professional” ministers. If Pendleton were to lead the whole Movement and not just the intellectual side of it, then he would need to negotiate the tension, as his father-in-law successfully did for decades. It would be a challenge for Pendleton, through his ecclesiastical work in sermons and articles, to appeal to a broad audience: one which would not appreciate his deeply academic approach to the text of Scripture and an audience who would never possess the skills necessary to excel in his classes. This experiential component, or “farmer preacher” style, was exactly what Pendleton was missing in his selected work from *The Living Pulpit*. If the Holy Spirit had a ministry within Restoration Movement churches, then that ministry was not explained through the experience of contemporary church, but simply through the ideas found within the text of the Gospel of John 16:7-11 and surrounding textual material.

7. Ibid.

Analysis:
W. K. Pendleton’s “The Ministry of the Holy Spirit”

The discussion above starts this analysis of Pendleton’s work from the *Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* by placing it within the genre of lecture instead of sermon. This will be helpful in two ways as we move forward. First, Pendleton’s rhetorical task in this lecture was to bring to the common audience a proper education, whom he assumes to be members of the Restoration Movement who have some basis of education about biblical teachings but need prompted to pursue deeper unity through deeper study of the Bible. Second, Pendleton’s failure as a rhetorical leader was found in his call to action, or lack thereof in this instance. Instead of providing clear strategies and goals, he asked his audiences to think about philosophical concepts of Christianity, and become better educated. Therefore, his rhetorical task was not to move or persuade people, but to enlighten them, and while the college context justified that objective as a proper response, the larger church audience perceived the objective as condescending and arrogant.

After a lengthy introduction to the matter at hand, Pendleton proceeded to outline his three-fold approach of exploring the Holy Spirit. First, Pendleton explored the nature of the Holy Spirit. Second, he revealed to whom the Holy Spirit was sent. Last, he addressed the work of the Holy Spirit. Naturally arranged in a style similar to one of Campbell’s Restoration Movement presentation, Pendleton chose to move from a biblical description of the Holy Spirit to its practicality within the church. Using John 16:7-11 as a central text, Pendleton climbed all around the New Testament in search of material for this exploration. The topic of the Holy Spirit was obscure for his Christian audience since there was a strong emphasis on Jesus’ teachings and liturgical patterns extracted and followed by the church. There was little emphasis on the supernatural manifestation of

the Holy Spirit in the life of the Restoration Movement. As Pendleton began to divulge the Holy Spirit in his own style, his audience would have begun to notice his fitness for academia.

First, Pendleton claimed that the Holy Spirit was a “distinct manifestation of God”⁸ and supported his claim by five proofs found in the New Testament. First, the New Testament calls the Holy Spirit by its own distinct nomenclature.⁹ Second, the Holy Spirit contained both an intellectual will and a determining will in that the Spirit was described as wise, knowledgeable, and understanding while also having the ability to distribute spiritual gifts to the church. Third, the Spirit had power to act just as Jesus did and there are particular happenings in the New Testament that bear the Spirit’s name specifically. Fourth, turning to the passage in John 16, Pendleton stated that the Spirit is a person who can “come” and be “sent” and can “guide” people into truth. Last, the Holy Spirit is the promised manifestation of God and is the minister of a new period of the reign of God.

Before moving to his next question, “To whom is he sent?”¹⁰ Pendleton explored the differences between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He wrote that before the fall, a reference to God expelling Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3, humans enjoyed the full manifestation of God. He turned to John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to set the scene:

8. W.K. Pendleton, “The Ministry of the Holy Spirit,” in *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, ed. W. T. Moore (Cincinnati: W.R. Carroll and Co., 1868), 308.

9. Examples include “the Paraclete,” and “the Holy Spirit.” Pendleton goes on to point out that baptism is to be done in the name of *three* distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. See *The Living Pulpit*, 309.

10. *Ibid.*, 311.

Gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Their balmy spoils.¹¹

Nevertheless, as sin entered the picture, the relationship that God and humans enjoyed in the Garden must be repaired. Pendleton then asserted that God “must glorify humanity in his own person before he can sanctify it with his Holy Spirit.”¹² Therefore, once Jesus was done with his work, this opened up a new era for the Holy Spirit to work. Returning to the passage in John 16, Pendleton restates the words of Christ that promise when Jesus goes away, then the Holy Spirit will come. Finally, Pendleton claimed that the Holy Spirit was sent to the disciples of Jesus Christ from the passage in John 16. He stated clearly, “It is the baptized, penitent believer, then, to whom the Holy Spirit is sent....”¹³

Finally, Pendleton arrived at a discussion of the work of the Spirit, which is of greatest interest to this work because it was within the practical application of the Spirit that a Movement in chaos might find new ideology from him. However, instead of a clear ideology that the reader desired, especially given that the *Living Pulpit* was a work dedicated to the unity of the movement going forward after the death of Campbell, Pendleton suggested a twofold work of the Spirit deeply rooted in the continuing education of believers. The work of the Spirit is simply to turn the heart of believers toward Jesus, leading them to reproduce the life of Jesus within their own lives and the second work is to affect the world through these disciples.

11. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book iv (1667), 156-159.

12. W.K. Pendleton, *The Living Pulpit*, 312.

13. *Ibid.*, 314.

Pendleton's "grand themes" of the Holy Spirit continued to keep the reader wrapped up in the conceptual with no particular interest in the Restoration effort. First, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin by forcing a decision in the hearts of humans about Christ, prompting persons to accept the story of Christ's suffering and sacrifice. Thus, the audience would hear in this assertion that the Holy Spirit is dependent upon preaching in the evangelistic sense mentioned previously. Second, the Holy Spirit displays what righteousness, or right living, looks like to the rest of the world through the character of Christ's disciples. Again the audience would hear that the Holy Spirit is the agent that produces a type of moral lifestyle. Third, the Holy Spirit convinces the world of coming judgment, but also displays the victory of Jesus. Pendleton's audience would hear that the Holy Spirit's main function in the world outside of Restoration churches is convicting it of its evil. Pendleton summarized the work of the Spirit as "the three great themes of sin, righteousness, and judgment: 'Sin,' says the Savior, 'because they believe not on me; righteousness, because I go to the Father; and judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.'"¹⁴

What was so noble about this presentation from W.K. Pendleton was also what was so unpleasant about it. As a lecture on the Holy Spirit, it was enlightening, promoted thought, and pushed toward continued study of the subject. It increased a desire to be knowledgeable and used a strong spirit of decorum to invite the readers into the discussion. As a sermon, it failed to direct the audience, to provide insight on the life of faith, or even to define the role of the Holy Spirit as a leader of a religious movement so that they can take action. Therefore, we need to break down this incredible lecture to understand what Pendleton failed to do as a church leader, but also we can view exactly

14. Ibid., 324.

what he accomplished when viewed through the continuum of Campbell's teaching and practice of building lasting associations.

A teaching, not preaching event

Pendleton concluded that his audience for *The Living Pulpit* did not call for a preaching moment, but a teaching moment in Campbell's construction because Pendleton assumed that those who read the book would be looking to glean two things from it. First, believers were asking questions seeking the basis for unity within Christian denominations, which in Campbell and Pendleton's construction summoned more teaching. Second, believers were hungry to know more about the Bible and to gain arguments for a more solid faith. For Campbell, the basis of unity among the churches in the movement was a better understanding of what he referred to as "Gospel facts." Facts, in Campbell's view, were established truths in the Gospel story, either by a narrative account or eyewitnesses within the text that enlightened the believer's understanding or even created an argument that solidified one's trust in the story of Jesus.¹⁵ Therefore, study of the "Gospel facts" was the "true ground" of the unity of Christianity; all Christians were encouraged to study the New Testament, especially the first four books known as the Gospels, in which the evidence for Jesus appears. So, Pendleton's choice of John 16 as a text is completely in order with George Campbell's teaching of rhetoric and Alexander Campbell's application of that rhetorical construct, both as it pertains to the audience to whom he wrote and the subject that he addressed.

Pendleton sought to deepen the believers' understanding of the Holy Spirit by bringing evidences to the audience and if this was the goal of his presentation, then Pendleton did accomplish his personal strategy. First, the Holy Spirit must be connected

15. Berryhill, "Alexander Campbell's Natural Rhetoric of Evangelism," 122.

to God the Father and Jesus the Son in such a way that shows its validity as a third part of the triune God. Second, the Holy Spirit must be distinct from the Father and Son in its work in the world so to set it apart, if only in the way of function, from the very distinct functions of the other two. Third, the Holy Spirit must interact with Jesus because the passage under consideration comes from the Gospel of John, and in that Gospel story, the Holy Spirit can only serve as a supporting character to the true main character of Jesus. Moreover, Jesus is an observable “fact” in the text, complete with eyewitnesses and the ability to be observed, but the Holy Spirit is supernatural in that there is no observably physical side to this particular manifestation of God. We need to understand why this might present a problem to the Movement and how Pendleton handled this issue.

Using the Holy Spirit to promote thought

To claim that the Holy Spirit was a problem for the Movement underestimates the debates that the entirety of Christianity experienced on the subject. The Pentecostal Movement, yet to be fully realized at the time of Pendleton’s work here, served to correct, in some ways overcorrect, the rest of Christianity’s treatment and even avoidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet, if Pendleton was going to address such a concept as the ministry of the Holy Spirit, then there must have been a place in the text in which some person trustworthy enough to bear witness to its action and service in the world could be uncovered. Therefore, Pendleton settled on John 16, in which Jesus was telling his disciples of the coming Holy Spirit and what they were to expect from it. In this presentation, Jesus is the authoritative source that spoke on behalf of the Spirit and therefore leads his disciples to put their confidence in the Spirit’s work.

What, at first glance, was an overbearing introduction to the text in John now becomes a reminder to the readers of the *Living Pulpit* of the relationship between the disciples and Jesus. These men were eyewitnesses to the “fact” that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and they bore authoritative testimony to the things that happened in the life of Jesus. The opening of the lecture served to remind the audience why they believe in Jesus, and placed Jesus as a credible source of divine information and prophecy about what will happen in the future. Pendleton admitted that Jesus was a “sense-presence,” meaning that he was visible, limited to time and space, but the needs of a spiritual kingdom must have a “spirit-presence” who would not be limited by such things as time and space.¹⁶ The burden of this assertion was, however, to prove that such a “spirit-presence” actually existed, for the audience could not easily observe or measure this notion.

Jumping to the episode of Pentecost in the book of Acts,¹⁷ Pendleton argued that when the Spirit came upon the disciples of Jesus, there were measurable differences and observable happenings. First, the eyewitness account claimed that the Holy Spirit descended upon them as tongues of fire, which they saw and possibly felt. Second, there was a change in the behavior of the disciples in that they were talking in multiple languages and the crowd that gathered asked if they were drunk. When asked to defend themselves, the disciples simply pointed out what the crowd had both seen and heard. Consequently, to his audience, Pendleton could assert that the presence of the Holy Spirit was a reality because the people could both measure and observe its presence among them.

16. *The Living Pulpit*, 306.

17. For more on the story of Pentecost, look at Acts chapters 1-2.

Now turning to the three points made by Pendleton in his lecture, we already know what was argued, but I want to address exactly how Pendleton established the distinction of the Holy Spirit. Pendleton turned to the original language of the text, Greek, and established that the same words used to distinguish the Father and Son are used to set the Holy Spirit apart from the other two. Once Pendleton established this from the original language, he then collected other passages from around the New Testament that verified this third unique “person” as the Spirit. This was a direct parallel to the way Campbell would approach the text, defining terms through the biblical language and then observing what other passages have to add, which became a standard rhetorical practice among teachers and preachers in the Restoration Movement. Therefore, the audience of the *Living Pulpit* possessed a predisposition allowing them to appreciate what Pendleton did going beyond the testimony of Jesus, which was the foundation of the argument, to the context of language and other biblical material. This broadening of multiple historical facts pertaining to the Holy Spirit made a distinct position for the Holy Spirit acceptable to the audience.

In the section labeled “To whom Was He Sent?” Pendleton reached back to the creation story and showed the work of God from the time of the biblical creation narrative up to the time of Christ. Pendleton summarized the culmination of this work, “He may now enter the long-closed temple of the human heart, now reconciled to the Father, through the death of the Son, and take up his abode there to dwell with it forever.”¹⁸ Pendleton assessed that the audience would naturally ask how they could know, that is measure and observe, that the Spirit is actually present in the heart of a

18. *The Living Pulpit*, 314.

contemporary believer. Pendleton claimed that it was through baptism, an observable moment, that the unobservable comes to move into the heart.

Pendleton's selection of the Holy Spirit as a topic really had little to do with leading his audience to some rhetorical goal, and more to do with making the audience think, together, about the Bible. This became clear when Pendleton reduced the work of the Spirit to the things that Jesus spoke directly in the text; namely, producing righteousness in the believer and producing guilt in the heart of a sinful world. The Spirit resided in the heart of humans after the completion of Jesus's work, but the work of the Spirit was to turn the whole world, whether sinful or faithful, towards Jesus. In the sinful, the Spirit produced guilt that led them to Jesus as a way out of their sins. Campbell thought that when faced with the condition of sin humans would naturally turn to gain information on how to go about correcting their moral errors. This opened them up to hear the "gospel facts," and the Spirit helped persuade them of these truths using the Bible and the preacher who presented the facts by connecting the audience's desire to be pure with God's desire to cleanse them.

In the faithful, the Spirit would increase understanding leading to increased unity among Christians. At the end of the lecture, Pendleton stated "And now, how simple, and yet how comprehensive, is the ministry of the Spirit."¹⁹ This statement provides a great summation of this lecture, because while Pendleton provided his audience with ample information, there was still much more to think about concerning the Holy Spirit's work among Christians. For example, if the Spirit moves us into more righteousness, then what behaviors are righteous? How will we know when we have attained the correct level of righteousness based upon the Spirit's leading? If we are to be like Christ, then in

19. Ibid., 323

what ways are we to be like him? What does a Movement led by the Holy Spirit look like? What are the measurable and observable aspects of it? Pendleton closed by reminding his audience of the “wide breadth of this plea”²⁰ and three great themes, but no particulars.

Choosing education over the common man

While Pendleton fell in line with Campbell’s rhetorical construct, this presentation still leaves the audience of the post-termination Restoration effort wanting more and needing more. If there was a call to action in this presentation, it was a call to study, which seems appropriate coming from a President of Bethany College. In regards to Campbell, I again turn to Berryhill who claimed that his emergence as a leader in the movement was heavily dependent upon his acceptance by “frontier American audiences.” As his influence increased, it would do so because those who were familiar with his work would influence those who knew little about him. Campbell had the ability to speak to people within all strata of society and his plain and simple factual reading of the Bible could be re-taught by people of little education who followed his example, what he called “a common-sense readings of the Bible.”²¹

Pendleton, in my estimation, chose deep theological education over the common intellect of the American audience. While he prompted more study in his exploration of the Holy Spirit in *The Living Pulpit*, he explored the text in such a way that not only showed his mastery of biblical languages, competence in biblical texts and ideas, and the inclusion of famous works of literature, but also communicated superior knowledge and unreachable scholarship to selected portions of his *Living Pulpit* audience. Many of the

20. Ibid., 324.

21. Berryhill, “Alexander Campbell’s Natural Rhetoric of Evangelism,” 123.

people who would read this lecture did not have the benefits of education that Campbell and Pendleton enjoyed, and while the debate over education was ongoing at the time of publishing, there was little doubt that Pendleton saw his task as bringing a proper education to the commoner.

One of the last articles Pendleton wrote in the *Millennial Harbinger* was simply entitled, “Education.”²² He started the article by asserting that there was a growing neglect of education among parents, not because of an intentional disdain of education, but because people were not aware of the factors that compose a proper education. He claimed that the “common schools”²³ do a poor job of actually educating children due to unqualified teachers who work in the schools and the dull courses that do not fully engage the mind of the students. To understand Pendleton’s passion for these schools, however, listen to his words describing the importance of the “common school.” He wrote, “But few things in the whole course of education require more art and genius to do them well, than does the proper and efficient instruction of childhood.”²⁴

22. W.K. Pendleton, “Education.” *Millennial Harbinger* 39 (1868): 230-234.

23. The “common school” is the equivalent of an elementary school. See Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Republic and the School: Horace Mann on the Education of Free Men* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1957); and *American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1876* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980). Horace Mann’s commitment to common emerged from the idea that political stability and social harmony depended heavily on universal education. As a side note, this thinking is much in line with Campbell’s idea that mutual understanding through education of the Bible would produce Christian unity. Mann’s message to the working classes was the promise that “education . . . is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance wheel of the social machinery” (Cremin, *The Republic and the School*, 65). To all he proclaimed that Providence had decreed that education was the “*absolute right* of every human being that comes into the world” (Cremin, *The Republic and the School*, 87).

24. Pendleton, “Education,” 231.

A solution proposed by Pendleton was an ongoing process of education that served the student “until the mind is developed into maturity of habit and energy.”²⁵ One of the major problems in doing this, especially for the people of the frontier, was their desire to use the boys for manual labor on the farms. Pendleton asserts

The country is much better supplied with Seminaries for girls, than for boys; and it is a noticeable fact, growing, too, daily more and more conspicuous, that we are becoming much more concerned about the education of daughters, than of our sons. Many a man will strain every nerve to send his daughter off to a “Boarding School,” who will keep his son in stolid ignorance on the farm, in the shop, behind the counter, or in some other place where he can get money out of him.²⁶

Pendleton was not arguing that daughters should not be educated; on the contrary, he was arguing that parents were not giving their sons equal opportunity to go to college and excel in the “fields” of literature, science, and art. This type of education, Pendleton concluded, would open doors of opportunity and employment. Opening these doors was an interest of the State, the church, and the fields that would employ them.

Pendleton was the recipient of this type of education, as was Campbell before him, and they, together, had enjoyed a life of literature, science, and art. Yet we also need to note that Bethany, WV was also a rural town, and Pendleton warned parents against sending their boys off to the large cities for education because those cities were not only more expensive places in which to live, but were places of “moral contamination, which experience proves but few never escape.”²⁷ Consequently, while Pendleton was passionate about education, especially continuing past the “common school,” he also represented a particular educational philosophy that was not agreed upon by religious

25. Ibid., 232.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

leaders and became a point of contention, especially regarding what role colleges should have in educating and preparing preachers for service to churches within the Movement.

Outside of the Academy, in the Church

Earlier in 1865, Benjamin Franklin, an influential Restoration Movement leader from the frontier, wrote an article in his paper, *The American Christian Review*, which took up the issue of “theological schools” that were arising around the country to supply preachers to the growing movement. Where Franklin was against such schools, Pendleton was, of course, an avid supporter of these schools, and his stance was completely sensible given that he was the President of Bethany College and believed wholeheartedly in the continuance of education as demonstrated above. Pendleton published Franklin’s article in the *Millennial Harbinger*²⁸ and then responded to it in a way that displayed the issue of the academy, and educated preachers, within the larger Restoration effort.

For Franklin, the academy setting did not make preachers. Those who wanted to learn the skills necessary to become preachers in the Movement needed to have field experience in churches and accountability under the direction of an older, wiser minister. He went on to add that a younger preacher should “read the Bible and history, write and study five hours every morning; preaching from one or two discourses each day, and they will soon make preachers, and preachers too, worth something when they are made.”²⁹ His strongest words were his concluding words in which he called those produced by the

28. W.K. Pendleton, “Do We Need a Theological School?” *Millennial Harbinger* 36 (1865): 364-372.

29. *Ibid.*, 367.

academy “drones” who “can never be paid enough nor do little enough work.” Then he forcefully added,

If you want men to rule you with a rod of iron, and to teach you that you know nothing and are nobody; that you should have no voice to these matters, or anything to do with them except to furnish the money, then go for theological schools, and they will soon furnish the men you want.³⁰

Franklin placed his trust in the experiential education, and he was unwavering in his support of developing proficiency from real church work.

Pendleton’s response to Franklin questioned the practicality of such an education as described by him in his writing. The distinction Franklin made between “educating” and “making a preacher” was, in the words of Pendleton, “cunning” at best. Pendleton held that the theological schools would supply deprived churches with the leadership they wanted and needed to continue meeting the needs of the growing Movement. He even agreed with Franklin that the school is not a substitute for experience in the “field,” but quickly added that a younger preacher who follows an older preacher around is not truly in the “field” either. Thus, whether a student studied in a traditional classroom setting or a more unorthodox classroom setting, a student was always in need of a classroom setting in which to learn skills for the “field.” Pendleton’s desire was to furnish “the churches and the world with an adequate and competent ministry”³¹ to which both men would agree, but the method through which this was done was and would become a continued debate in the post-termination period.

In 1869, Pendleton wrote in the *Millennial Harbinger* that congregations had a supply-demand problem because the need for preachers was too great and the lack of

30. Ibid., 368.

31. Ibid., 372.

associations among congregations was not supplying churches with educated and prepared preachers. He urged churches to support at least one young man in his ongoing preparation for ministry; and if one church could not, then they should unite with one or two other churches to make sure this need was increasingly better served. Additionally, while preachers could serve to grow the churches, the churches could then be about the business of teaching and training their members. For Pendleton, this was the way it should work, but was not happening because of the lack of education within the churches as a collective unit.

The response to Franklin revealed another aspect of Pendleton's thinking that powerfully connected the Holy Spirit lecture in the *Living Pulpit* with his larger work in education. He wrote, "The great agent of the Spirit in the spread of the gospel, is the Preacher."³² He wondered if church leaders had made a mistake by depending too much on the Bible alone to convert people, instead of producing preachers who could tell the "story of the Cross" and persuade "the people to faith and obedience."³³ The preacher, in Pendleton's high view, was the incarnation of the written word and was a mighty tool of the Spirit along with the written biblical text.

Therefore, whether debating the subject on practical grounds, theological grounds, or educational grounds, Pendleton was prepared to show that a college education was the right and acceptable way of training preachers. He extended this ideal to other professions as well, but this move towards educated clergy represented a radical shift away from the innate skepticism of the clergy and organizational structures that produced hierarchy in other Christian denominations. For Pendleton, however, the skepticism was

32. W.K. Pendleton, "The Want of Preachers," *Millennial Harbinger* 40 (1869): 541.

33. *Ibid.*, 542.

not as pressing as the ongoing need for well-prepared ministers and he was unwaveringly devoted to this goal. As he stated at the end of his discussion on preachers, “This he [God] has laid upon us, and woe to us, if we neglect it.”³⁴

The tension that arose in this debate over educated preachers was one of many tensions that Campbell could negotiate while standing as an example of the very thing in question. Campbell and other leaders of the Restoration Movement maintained a strict view of egalitarianism among the congregations. Thus, the leaders of the congregation, the preachers, the deacons, and the elders, were to be subject to the approval of the church membership. The leaders were to teach and encourage the membership. This was church by democracy, which made sense given the American roots of the movement and the period of the Movement’s coalition shortly after the uniting of the states under the people’s authority instead of a monarchy’s authority. As we have noted earlier, Campbell himself was a modification of the rule, his influence was so great that it went beyond what seemed appropriate in this egalitarian movement. In a group of equals, Campbell was king. Franklin was very much worried that this strongly held belief of congregational autonomy would be in deep jeopardy if theological schools began educating ministers.

However, also strong in the Movement, especially as it pertained to Campbell was an emphasis on general education. At this time, many religious schools arose all over the country. This was especially true in the frontier where Franklin did most of his ministry. Bethany College was among the leading schools representing the Restoration effort and the leader of that school, as noted above, was Pendleton; and to his credit or demise, he dedicated himself to it. Birthed in a Movement that sought biblical patterns to govern

34. Ibid., 545.

thought and practice, Franklin could go to the biblical text and boast about Jesus picking “ordinary and unskilled men”³⁵ to carry the message, and Pendleton could argue that Paul, another disciple, was highly educated and was a driving force in the early church. For the Restoration Movement, as education became more necessary for other professions outside the church, Pendleton saw that it was needed for ministers as well. Campbell’s Restoration Movement consisted of “ordinary and unskilled” people, but it also consisted of highly educated members as well. Ironically, Campbell and Pendleton were highly educated men, and their influence was indebted to their education.

These tensions between Franklin and Pendleton never truly escalated into a full public debate on the issue, but Pendleton set his devotion on Bethany College as a product of the Restoration Movement, and not on the efforts to recast or revive the larger Movement. While his dedication to training and developing ministers and missionaries fell in step with Campbell’s thinking, Pendleton’s seemingly elitist views and practices alienated some segments of the Movement and even some of his own students at Bethany College.³⁶ Consequently, Pendleton moved more and more toward leadership within the realm of education, and farther and farther away from the leadership exercised by Campbell in the Movement and the churches. As Pendleton preserved the work of Campbell in arenas of association like Bethany College and the American Christian Missionary Society, his decision to discontinue the *Millennial Harbinger* showed the part of Campbell’s work that Pendleton needed to conclude.

35. See Acts 4:13 “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” (NIV)

36. For more on this developing debate see Ron Clark, “Pendleton, Franklin, Sommer, and Ketcherside: Mutual Edification in Our Roots to Build Up the Body,” *Restoration Quarterly* 51 (2009): 151-168.

The Death of the Millennial Harbinger

In 1870, a mere four years after Campbell's death, Pendleton decided to cease the publication of the *Millennial Harbinger*. This decision by Pendleton was a major ending point for Campbell's rhetorical leadership. For forty-one years the journal had been published, but Pendleton's work as an editor and church leader could not match that of his father-in-law, and with the growing work load in the arena of para-church associations and with growing competition from other periodicals, he had no choice but to part ways with the staple periodical of the Movement. The discontinuance notice published in the *Millennial Harbinger* read:

We consent to its termination with feelings of sadness. It seems like the breaking up of a long communion, the parting of friends, with whom we have walked about the courts of Zion in sweet counsel for many years, --the sundering of chords of loving fellowship, that shall be renewed on earth no more forever.³⁷

This sounds more like a death than a discontinuance of a periodical, and if Campbell could experience a second death, then this would be it—the death of his editorial pen and a separation from his most beloved audience. More than that, though, is the sense that at the discontinuance of the paper, there is a real “parting of friends” that will not “be renewed on earth.” This paper was vital to the ongoing efforts of the Restoration Movement for the past forty-one years, and this discontinuance was another clear indicator that Campbell's death was a termination of the Movement. Pendleton uses strong termination language as he mourns his inability to keep the Movement going.

Doubtless there are many things, which I might have done better, and also some which it were better that I had not done at all. But regrets are in vain, and time and opportunity too precious to be wasted in fruitless repining. My comfort is in the consciousness that in all things I have intended the best for the interests of the

37. W.K. Pendleton, “The Harbinger to be Discontinued,” *Millennial Harbinger* 41 (1870): 658.

Church. To this, I can, without any reservation, turn with assurance, even where success has been the poorest.

Pendleton quickly moved from feeling regret to knowing that time and opportunity lay ahead of him. Yet, a reader should wonder about the arenas in which Pendleton spends his time and sees great opportunity. When speaking about the church, Pendleton admits that he acted “in the best interest of the church.” I can only speculate about the arenas in which Pendleton sees opportunities that are in the best interest of the church, but I will assume arenas in which churches work together through association. For example, colleges and missionary societies would be on the top of the list.

If the *Millennial Harbinger* was a place where the Restoration Movement found ideology, and the editorial pen of Campbell and of Pendleton united their audience by focusing it on the mission of the movement, then at the cessation of publication, the audience dissolves never to return. In so doing, the audience must seek unity elsewhere in other associations and the audience cannot assemble into a movement, especially one that sought direction from the *Millennial Harbinger*. Any attempt to rejuvenate an audience to hear a new focus, to collect a new audience even made from a remnant of the old *Millennial Harbinger*, will not be the same, perhaps not even the same movement.

In an article called “The Last,” Pendleton provided the readers of the *Millennial Harbinger* with a good-bye letter of sorts, and took comfort in his efforts as an editor because he had “intended the best for the interest of the church.”³⁸ He wrote about the high calling of a “religious teacher,” which was a label that should have communicated to his audience who Pendleton thought he truly was, and then moved on to thank those who had been subscribers for many years. He went on to talk about the future work that he

38. W.K. Pendleton, “The Last,” *Millennial Harbinger* 41(1870): 717-718.

and his group of Bethany representatives would likely have more time to accomplish now that the journal was not pressing them. Only briefly does he mention the past to say that he wanted to recount it, but “preferred to make a quiet bow, and leave the past to such as like to live in it.”³⁹

What was notable about this whole article was that Pendleton never mentioned Alexander Campbell. There was no word of thanks, not even recognition of his years of service to the readership of the *Millennial Harbinger*. Perhaps, Pendleton felt that this decision was his doing, and Campbell would have never have done this. Perhaps Pendleton wanted to distance his leadership from that of Campbell’s leadership. It could be, however, that the rhetorical power of the periodical ran its course with its dwindling audience, and so Pendleton moved on to other arenas in which he was more confident of his rhetorical leadership might have a renewed hearing with a new audience among those who seek association for the greater good.

After the death of someone, there comes a time when a family must clean out the person’s belonging because the belongings are no longer needed, useful, or taking up too much room in the house. This is a sobering moment because the removal of items so dear to the deceased is a hard process that displays the finality of death. I do not begin to understand all of the reasons why Pendleton dissolved the *Millennial Harbinger*, but in doing so, the scattered remnants of the Restoration Movement family shared in the sobering reality of death; both of Campbell as the rhetorical leader, and a people united through the *Millennial Harbinger*.

39. Ibid., 717.

Conclusion

W.K Pendleton was a great student of Alexander Campbell and knew how to properly use the rhetorical constructs he received from his teacher. To this end, he worked in the same capacities of Campbell, proving himself an academic leader at Bethany College and influencing young men who would later become leaders within American society and within the church. However, Pendleton preserved the associational success of Campbell and let the ecclesiastical work to other leaders. The main implication for the ongoing Restoration efforts was that Bethany, WV no longer served as the keystone of the Movement, but as a keystone of educational debate and church association.

Pendleton celebrated the contribution of the Restoration Movement to education and mission work by continuing his work in these arenas. These associations showed that the Movement had been successful in uniting churches and supporters to work together to help develop the larger society, both academically and spiritually. Mission efforts sought to develop people through instruction of a moral code and creating an allegiance to the teachings of Jesus. Education developed the mind and created a better, more dignified, society through the teaching of skills and the advancement of abilities.

As the deliberation about associations continued through out the years after Campbell's death, the core of debate was a disagreement of whether organizations like colleges and missionary societies added resources to churches or removed resources from churches. What arose out of this debate were two very clear polarizations: those who wanted the congregations to be secessionist not participating in para-church opportunities,

and those who wanted congregations to form associations for connecting the church with other important areas of society.

As the sub-movements within the larger Restoration Movement established themselves, they created associations within the smaller subgroups. Some of the more structured sub-groups created works like missionary societies, colleges, regional leadership meetings, and disaster relief efforts. Some of the more democratic sub-groups condemned the mission societies and leadership meetings, but created colleges for the specific purpose of producing preachers for their churches. In all sub-groups, the appeal of Pendleton's argument for education had some effect, yet in the coming years the divided Movement would continue to debate over the issue of church associations would continue to challenge any para-church effort. The sub-groups could not agree on the direction of the larger movement, but they could agree that education was pivotal to the ongoing efforts of their group. This debate is still active among the sub-groups of Campbell's Movement.

There is a rich tradition of associations thanks to Campbell's love of unifying churches, and Pendleton's work through associations was a beautiful tribute to Campbell's legacy. Yet, Pendleton's work was at best a footnote to the ongoing efforts to rebirth the Restoration Movement in the wake of termination. With no recommendation of which periodical readers should subscribe to next after the death of the *Millennial Harbinger*, the revival of the Movement was open to new pens, of other men, in other places.

Three editors emerged with their three journals from three different parts of the Movement, and each with its own diverse strategies. Chapters three, four, and five of the

dissertation will define three separate strands of rhetorical leadership in the Movement by considering the following. First, using the sermon text printed in *The Living Pulpit* as a case study by which a reader can properly view the leadership of the individual, a close reading of the sermons identify a set of major rhetorical themes for each leader creating a new ideology. Second, we can determine what portions of Campbell's rhetoric most influenced the editors of these periodicals and where the leader would take issue with Campbell's strategies as each leader tried to invoke a portion of Campbell's voice in favor of their new ideology. Last, by exploring journal articles that substantiate the claims of the sermons in the *Living Pulpit*, we can extract a particular rhetorical strand that added to the dissention of the post-termination period. This leads to a discussion of the 1906 split of the Restoration Movement and how the lack of organization and leadership in the wake of Campbell's death and the Civil War put things in motion long before the Movement realized them at the national level.

If a major roadblock existed to the association rhetoric of Pendleton, then we need to look no further than the preaching of Benjamin Franklin. He was diametrically opposed to both missionary societies and formal education for preachers. His democratic approach to the Movement and unrelenting attack of anything that did not appear in the text of the New Testament stood against the building of associations and the celebration of associations. I turn to Franklin's work in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

A MILITANT MOVEMENT IN THE WORK OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Benjamin Franklin considered himself a misfit in American culture. A product of the frontier, Franklin lived in poverty most of his life. In the wake of the Civil War, he lived in the North where postwar prosperity produced an emphasis on economic development, sophisticated lifestyle, and formal education. Franklin viewed wealth, sophistication and formal education as products of evil. Therefore, when churches started to move toward more associations for the purpose of mission work and formal education, Franklin reacted by leading churches back to what he believed to be the fundamental roots of Christianity.

This self-understanding most likely led him to serve as a powerful militant voice within the years after Campbell's death. Franklin's strong language and dualistic framing of complex issues created an inception of a new sub-movement. Richard Hughes, a historian, wrote about Franklin, "Franklin helped father within Churches of Christ a radically primitivist and sectarian subtradition rooted in economic deprivation and estranged from the world of culture and education."¹ While historians have already pointed to Franklin's militant sub-group, what they overlook is the opportunity that Campbell's death and postwar culture created for this type of rhetorical leadership.

Franklin would use the Bible to warn any person who would listen about the dangers of being part of a religious movement that was not authentic to the New Testament vision. Thus, the function of this militant sub-movement lead by Franklin was to rebirth the "misfit" status of the Restoration efforts, which had become too

1. Hughes, 91.

comfortable with other denominations and the Union post-war culture. Franklin stirred up dissent wanting a new inception, correcting the mistakes of Campbell's Restoration Movement that guided them to the current crisis among the churches.

Henry Webb claimed that at the close of the Civil War, Franklin's paper, *The American Christian Review*, was the most influential and popular paper with the Restoration Movement.² Franklin used a direct, unsophisticated style in his sermons and writing. He would most likely disdain his inclusion in a work based upon rhetoric because to him the teachings of the Bible needed no aid or help; they were simple and understandable to every person. While Franklin enjoyed great influence among a particular sub-group within the larger Movement, he was not highly regarded by other church leaders, especially among the affluent churches.

For Franklin, the authentic church of the New Testament needed to be re-established and his sermon in the *Living Pulpit* entitled, "The Church—Its Identity" provided a way to provoke rebellion and start anew. However, Franklin was not interested in the negotiations or compromises that characterized Campbell's rhetorical leadership of the Movement. Franklin was unable to substantially qualify his arguments or admit that his strategies might be just as flawed as Campbell's strategies. For Franklin, the churches that adhered to Campbell's Restoration Movement had a superior ideology to all other attempts at Christianity grounded in the biblical text. Franklin was intolerant of other Christian groups. The time had come for all churches to assess themselves and seek a new restoration. His insistence that churches refocus in the direction of cleaning

2. Henry Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity*, 198.

up a chaotic Christian culture created a militant faction among members of Campbell's Restoration Movement.

Therefore, the purpose of displaying Franklin's work in this study is to argue that through the strategies adopted by him, a militant group arose that sought to restore the Restoration Movement back to its undefiled foundation. To do this, Franklin employed the strategies of a younger, militant Campbell. The use of Campbell's voice served two purposes. First, Franklin could argue that Campbell himself lost sight of the true goals of the Movement when he employed new and different strategies as the movement matured. Second, Franklin could argue that he was not doing anything innovative or inventive; he was simply going back to the beginning of the Movement and asking his audience to follow him to that place.

The chapter will first introduce the reader to Benjamin Franklin focusing on his interactions with Campbell and his experience as a "misfit" in the post-war era. Emerging from Franklin's frontier life was the "agrarian myth," which asserted that the simple, rural lifestyle connected a human to the divine better than a sophisticated, urban lifestyle. Understanding Franklin as a peculiar frontiersman sets up my analysis of his sermon included in Moore's *Living Pulpit*. After exploring rhetorical themes in the sermon, I will expand the scope of this study to look at the foundations of a militant group of Franklin's followers. Last, this chapter will consider the dangers of Franklin's militant sub-movement and draw some conclusions about the lasting rhetorical effects of Franklin's work in the post-termination period.

Background: Benjamin Franklin as a True Misfit

Born in 1812 in Ohio, Benjamin Franklin was named after his famous great uncle from Philadelphia³ although his biggest influences were frontier preachers. After converting at age twenty-four, he began to engage in active ministry work in eastern Indiana. Franklin found pleasure in presenting the message of religious restoration through journals in addition to preaching. In 1845, Franklin began publishing *The Reformer*, and then in 1850 he entered an agreement with David S. Burnet to edit the *Christian Age*. His most popular work was the *American Christian Review*, which became a weekly paper by 1858. James Wolfgang wrote that “the growing popularity of the *Review* and Franklin’s increased visibility in the Stone-Campbell Movement made him, by some accounts, the most influential preacher and editor among the Disciples of Christ following the death of Alexander Campbell.”⁴ At Franklin’s death in 1878, David Lipscomb wrote, “The cause loses its most able and indefatigable defender since the days of Alexander Campbell.”⁵ This is an interesting comparison to make, considering that Campbell grew out of his “defender” role and became comfortable in a more diplomatic role. Franklin never stopped defending the cause.

Benjamin Franklin was a product of the frontier where the Restoration Movement enjoyed great popularity. A myth had begun to emerge and gain great popularity with frontiersmen, especially preachers, an idea the American culture and literature researcher

3. Biographical Information taken from W.T. Moore, *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 339-340; *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 342-343; and Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 77-84.

4. *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 343.

5. “The Death of Benjamin Franklin,” *Gospel Advocate* (31 October 1878): 677.

Henry Nash Smith calls the “Myth of Nineteenth Century America.”⁶ This myth purported that the American West was destined to be the garden of the world; therefore, the rural lifestyle was superior to an urban lifestyle. Frontier preachers, including Campbell, became dispensers of this thought. For example, in 1830 Campbell wrote, “The country gentleman...has advantages over his equal in the town.”⁷ In establishing Bethany College, Campbell wrote of its rural advantages in the *Millennial Harbinger*

From the rural location of Bethany College, more favorable to health, morals, and study than a village or city location, much may be expected, and we doubt not realized, in the physical, intellectual, and moral improvements of the youth admitted into this institution.⁸

The hero of the agrarian myth was the farmer. The farmer was independent and free of the stress and anxieties that city life created. He was a man of hard work and healthy living taking a great deal of pride in his labor. He was not a rich man, but enjoyed the simple life that the farm offered. After the Civil War, this Northern ideal of smaller independent farms replaced the powerful, pre-war plantations of the South and was a radical change for Southern farmers. The popular attitude adopted by many Disciples⁹ was that the rural environment produced advantages in living a moral lifestyle and that the urban environment led to numerous distractions from the pious life. Campbell, after a tour of American cities in 1843, wrote:

6. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land* (New York: Vintage books Reprinted, 1957), 153.

7. Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger*, 1 (June 1830): 280.

8. Alexander Campbell, “Bethany College,” *Millennial Harbinger* 5 (1841): 378.

9. A name used to describe persons who place their membership in Restoration Movement churches.

The American Cities, like all other cities, are not favorable to the prevalence of pure religious influences... They [urbanites] are generally neither so intelligent in the scriptures, nor so pious as the people of the country.¹⁰

For Campbell, the agrarian myth was rooted in the settlement and establishment of America. America was, in his view, the land of plenty, a new world given to the political and ecclesiastical institutions to support the rest of the world. Campbell further believed that through the establishment of this new world and new government, the reign of Christ would begin. Thus, Campbell attached the agrarian myth to his ideas of millennial hope.

Franklin read many of Alexander Campbell's early writings in the *Christian Baptist*. The arguments for Christian primitivism contained within Campbell's early publication had a deep influence upon the young Franklin, as did the more contemporary idea of the agrarian myth. Hughes wrote that Franklin "was profoundly loyal to the early Alexander Campbell, and he routinely criticized his opponents on the grounds that they had departed from the teachings of the *Christian Baptist*."¹¹ Nevertheless, for leaders like Franklin, the Civil War destroyed much of the hope placed in the government and the new world as an entity in which Christ could reign. Ottis Castleberry, in his study of Franklin's preaching, observed:

The political fever of the period often overshadowed the cause of Christ, but, to Franklin, civil government was in the final analysis of little consequence. He saw through the deceptive schemes of politicians and urged the church not to be used as a voice for political campaigns.¹²

10. Alexander Campbell, "Notes of an Excursion to the Eastern Cities, No. II," *Millennial Harbinger* 7 (1843), 64.

11. Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 77.

12. Ottis Castleberry, *And they Heard Him Gladly: A Critical Study of Benjamin Franklin's Preaching* (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths: 1963), 22.

For Franklin, the rural environment was a place to escape the structures of government and institutions returning to a more natural and simple life and returning to the superiority of “true” religion. The wilderness, not the city, was the place of the Christian. In fact, the city was a place influenced by Catholicism, which Franklin viewed as a threat to authentic Christianity. The city was the place where Catholicism had its greatest success, and some even asserted that the city was where Satan had his seat. Despite Franklin’s commitment to the rural lifestyle, many Americans were moving toward the cities.

Although Campbell believed the agrarian myth, Franklin’s excessive devotion to it in a time of growing industry and urbanization was unsettling, using the myth to argue against urban refinement and sophistication. The sermon contained in *The Living Pulpit* is evidence of the continued pursuit of the agrarian myth joined together with his devotion to Campbell’s militant voice as witnessed through *The Christian Baptist*. Franklin recited the strategies of Campbell based upon a strict adherence to the words of the Bible without regard for historical context or rhetorical aims behind the text. The more abrasive style found in *The Christian Baptist* permitted Franklin to escape refinement in his presentation, allowing him to attack his opponents vigorously and unyieldingly while also trying to show that all denominations had been defeated by the desire for sophistication and the easier urban life. Franklin proclaimed a message of simplicity based on life on the farm, and modeled his devotion to the simple life through the way he lived asking others to do the same.

Franklin had no formal education and lived a life of poverty, often facing financial problems, especially in connection to his unprofitable but popular periodicals.

His *American Christian Review* was popular among members of the Movement, but he often received money that varied considerably in value due to the unstable economy, if paid at all.¹³ For many years he did well to break even on his publications, and only during the latter part of his life was he able to make any profit. After the Civil War ended, Franklin lived in the North where postwar prosperity produced an emphasis on economic development, sophisticated lifestyle, and formal education: all things he disdained. Watching this attitude permeate the church, he found himself identifying more with southerners with whom there was no active correspondence due to the estrangement of war. For this reason, Franklin could neither fit in to the refined life of the northerners nor could be trusted by many sectionalist southerners, due to his Union citizenship, making him, in the words of Hughes, a true “misfit” in society.¹⁴

Perhaps that was why Franklin started his sermon included in the *Living Pulpit* by suggesting that the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ would be a misfit among the different denominations of Christianity. Franklin, who did not adhere to religious pluralism, or its popularity in the United States, sought to arouse opposition to the growing friendliness among religious groups and re-identify the real Kingdom of God among the plethora of imposters claiming to be the Church of Christ. West explains that Franklin,

Was aware that an influential and capable minority leadership wanted to redesign the restoration movement and make it fit snugly in the pattern of denominationalism. The development of the pastoral office during the previous 15 years, the use of the term “Reverend,” the inclination to accept denominational dogma by admitting that all denominational people were Christians in an acceptable sense, and to accept instrumental music, were growing practices in a

13. *Ibid.*, 28.

14. Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 80.

few places. The brotherhood was moving toward denominationalism, Franklin thought, and a few were trying to write a creed.¹⁵

Franklin did not seem to care about unity, but cared deeply about authenticity.

His sermon “The Church—Its Identity” served as a litmus test for knowing and participating in the authentic Kingdom of God, founded by Jesus Christ and the apostles and abiding by the teachings of the Bible.

For Franklin, the Bible clearly taught that there was only one church, and the many different groups that could be found in the United States only made it harder for a person to know whether he or she was a part of that one true church. Therefore, this sermon established a dualistic language by which those who were a part of the true church could talk about it, and provided a series of tests by which those who were a part of the true church could confidently engage in it. The sermon went beyond creating a language and a test; the sermon invited his audience to consider themselves an army of the Lord that must fight against the perversions of all other Christian groups and must fight the growing apostasy of churches affiliated with Campbell’s Restoration Movement.

Summary:
Benjamin Franklin’s “The Church—Its Identity”

In the way his sermon was structured, Franklin proceeded through a litmus test that each group of believers must answer correctly to consider themselves the “real” or “true” church. The answers must be found in the biblical text; consequently, Franklin led his audience back to the Bible for each answer and constructed a poignant, biblical argument for the Church of Christ fulfilling the role as God’s one and only church.

15. Earl West, *Elder Benjamin Franklin: The Eye of the Storm* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1983), 219.

Aware that some church groups subscribed to an ecumenical sense of unity, he would take no part in that viewpoint:

A failure at any one of these points is fatal to the claims of any body professing to be the body of Christ. It is due to the greater portion of the religious bodies of our day, called “churches,” to state distinctly that they do not claim to be the kingdom of God, or the body of Christ. Excepting a few, the balance only claim to be *branches* of the body, or Church of Christ. Where the church simply claims to be “the Church” but simply a *branch* of the Church, the members are only members of a branch, and the officers are only officers of the branch, and not members or officers of the body of Christ. These branches, and officers in them, are as separate and distinct from the kingdom of Christ and the officers in it, as Great Britain and Russia, and the officers of these respective governments.¹⁶

For Franklin, the real Restoration Movement stood against the world of religious confusion and evil deception.

First, what was the foundation of the church? Franklin used the conversation between Peter and Jesus to show that the true church’s foundation was the confession that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.¹⁷ Jesus would build his church upon this “rock,” which was Peter’s statement concerning Jesus. Therefore, the foundation of the church was a person, namely Jesus Christ, rather than a philosophy or theory. According to Franklin, the Roman Catholic Church could not originate upon Jesus because they claimed a religious ancestry from the apostle Peter, whom they claimed was the “rock” that Jesus pointed to as the foundation of the church. Other denominations failed this test as well. The Episcopalians and Presbyterians used governmental structures as the foundation for their church. The Methodist name came from the idea of method, which Franklin pointed out could be both good and evil. The Baptists received their name from the initiation act

16. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 344.

17. Holy Bible, Matthew 16:18.

of becoming a Christian and not from Jesus Christ. Franklin asserted that the true church would not build itself on these lesser aspects of Christianity.

Second in the series of six tests, where was the church founded? Franklin held that the true church started in Jerusalem, the place where the New Testament book of Acts said it started (1:8).¹⁸ Other groups, namely the ones mentioned above, had foundations in Rome, London, Geneva, and elsewhere rather than Jerusalem. Therefore, the audience could only conclude that these churches were counterfeit and while they resembled the true church in some aspects, they were ultimately imposters.

Third in the series of six tests, when was the church founded? Franklin argued that a church not founded at the right time could not be the true church of the Apostles started in the New Testament. Franklin asserted that the Church of Christ, or the group of Restoration churches, traced its beginning back to the Apostolic age since the Movement's earnest desire was to restore New Testament Christianity, or as some labeled it, primitive Christianity. He wrote, "I care not where the history of a community of people may lead us. If it is not to the time of the Apostles, it does not lead us to the founding of that body, purchased and cleansed by the blood of Christ."¹⁹ Franklin did not define history as "an account of the past," but rather as "the place, people, and practices a person is guided back to by a contemporary group." By using this definition, Franklin did not have to talk about Cane Ridge and the American Restoration Movement, but circumvented those by pointing his audience back to the New Testament. That was the

18. A reader of this work might be wondering how a preacher would get around the history of the Restoration Movement presented in the first chapter. Franklin will address the historical concerns of the movement.

19. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 351.

ultimate goal of Franklin's sub-group: to return to the practices of the New Testament Church, and to do so alone without distractions from the larger Christian community and culture. Franklin argued that the Roman Church was not fully established with its creeds and doctrines until the third century, and so it was born too late and was too young to be considered the true church. He added that all Reformation churches were too young as well, since they were only a few centuries old.

Fourth in the series of six tests, Franklin asserted that Christ and the apostles did not establish most churches and that most churches could actually trace their ancestry back to the thinking of some influential individual. The Quakers traced their beliefs and practices back to George Fox. Martin Luther was the catalyst for the Lutheran Church. The Methodists were not in existence before John Wesley, nor were the Presbyterians before John Calvin. These church groups could not possibly be, what Franklin calls, the true church, since Christ and his apostles founded the true church.

Fifth in the series of six tests, Franklin said that any church group that had a different law from that which the Bible gave was not the true church. The Bible was the only law upheld by every church, but many groups had additional creeds that divided and separated one church group from the other. All other Christian groups disregarded most of these secondary laws, which showed that these secondary creeds and laws were not necessary. In fact, these other laws showed that some groups were not pleased with the direct revelation of God and, therefore, could not be the true church, or Kingdom of God, because the King did not endorse their additional laws.

Last in the series of six tests, he claimed that any church with a foreign name could not be the true Church. Franklin meant that any church whose name could not be

found in the pages of the New Testament text could not be the authentic Church of the Bible. He wrote, “There can be no *new* name of the *old* body or community. There must be a new idea, or something different from the old community to create the necessity for a new name.”²⁰ The “Church of Christ” is a name used in the Bible to describe the church, whereas the biblical text did not use the terms Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist.

Franklin concluded his sermon with an observation regarding “successions” as they pertained to the Popes and Catholicism. He said,

I am thankful that the New Testament knows as little of any of these successions, or any necessity for them, as it does a Romish, Greek, or Episcopal Church. The Church of Christ is not built on a succession of any kind, Romish, Greek, or Episcopal, but on the truth concerning Jesus, that “he is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.”²¹

He added that, while some church groups depended on succession, the Church of Christ depended upon fellowship with God and his son Jesus. At the conclusion of his sermon, Franklin powerfully asserted that, as representatives of the true church, he and other leaders wished to “sweep away” every group and doctrine that stood in the way of the work of the Lord and His Church. Franklin called his audience to oppose those Christian groups not seeking to be the authentic church of the Bible. The audience was to join in a new campaign taking up arms against imposters and defeating them in honor of Jesus. Franklin aroused dissent, pointed out the rhetorical goals, and asked his audience to join him in this new militant movement.

20. Ibid., 352.

21. Ibid., 353.

Analysis: Franklin Raises Dissent

While Franklin would argue that he, in this sermon “The Church—Its Identity,” guided his audience back to the New Testament and called the churches he associated with to rise above the other denominations as the real or authentic Church, I propose that Franklin took his audience to the American frontier. As the nation was growing in its diversity, both in the arrival of immigrants and in the growing plurality of religious institutions, Franklin displayed and confirmed the growing complexities in maintaining an ideology of simple Christianity among the growing diversity of denominations. One could argue that the ideology of an American would be more complex with the growing diversity of the national population, but Franklin’s frontier life did not appreciate this; actually, he forcefully opposed it and sought to persuade his audience to oppose it as well. Franklin spoke pointedly in a simple style abandoning the sophisticated language of the educated urbanite. He unashamedly attacked the divergent sects, not trying to cover his words with empty flattery. The audience was on the frontier listening to a man chew out his neighbor who had hurt his cow or broken a tool he borrowed, but for Franklin the issues at stake were far greater than these mild mistakes.

We uncover in this sermon what Kenneth Burke called a “new orientation.”²² The militant strategies of Franklin wanted the audience to alter their conception of the Christian world with its ludicrous religious pluralism. The question was not to which denomination they should belong, but do they really belong to the church started by Jesus in the Bible? Franklin turned the issue of choice into an issue of authenticity. By demonstrating that each denomination of Christianity failed to show a direct connection

22. Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California: Berkeley, 1984), 80-81.

to the biblical Church or an intention toward returning to the practices of the biblical Church, Franklin actually aimed to show the superiority of Restoration churches to which he belonged and to which he invited his audience to belong. Employing Burke's concept of identification, it was when a person identified with the authentic church that a person participates in the "good life." Interesting to note at this point is that the sermon most likely spoke to an audience of post-termination Restoration Movement participants. Therefore, Franklin was not inviting outsiders to join, but creating a specific vision of the ongoing efforts that members should adopt as their own.

This vision was that the preacher, the authentic church, and the good life converge at a particular point: Frontier America. If Franklin's audience wanted to live this vision of a superior life, then they would abide by his teaching, withdraw from the world of progress and urbanization and pluralism, and join the "true" Movement. Franklin's sub-movement consisted of a group of simple people who simply desired to live the good life, which was a life characterized by obedience to the New Testament though an anti-progressive, agrarian lifestyle. For Franklin, the inception of a simply Christian people began with simplifying the language that they used to communicate their ideology.

Creating a language consistent with the Bible

Franklin was clear at the start of his sermon "The Church—It's Identity" that calling the church of the New Testament a "sect" as some leaders within the Restoration effort and broader Christianity were in the habit of doing, was not an appropriate use of language.²³ Franklin quickly established that the only words appropriate in talking about

23. See Benjamin Franklin's sermon titled "Sectarianism" for a full understanding of his thoughts about sects and denominationalism among Christians. Printed in Castleberry, *And They Heard Him Gladly*, 195-209.

the real, true church of the New Testament were words found in the New Testament and used to describe the church. Franklin was following the very words of Campbell in doing this. Campbell wrote,

We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible the idea which it represents is not there; and always confident that the things taught be God are better taught in the words and under the names which the holy Spirit has chosen and appropriated, than in the words which man's wisdom teaches.²⁴

This notion was frequently found in Franklin's preaching, used to disarm all denominations that did not limit their church nomenclature and leadership offices to the linguistic patterns of the New Testament. Franklin said in a sermon entitled "Church Persecutions" preserved for the ongoing religious community within a collection of his sermons,

It is exclusive for a church to refuse to bear any name except what may be found in scripture. If it would adopt some *human* name, like others, and come on a level with them, the offense would cease largely, and it would be a tolerable body. But for one body of people to exist among us that will wear no unscriptural name, but refer to itself as "the Church," "the body," "the body of Christ," the "Church of God," "the kingdom of God," and refer to individual members as "Christians," "members of his body," "saints," "disciples of Christ," "disciples of the Lord," etc., is offensive to sectarian ears. Such language is exclusive, and not like "our church" and "your church," "our doctrine" and "your doctrine."²⁵

Therefore, in his interpretation, to claim that the church of Christ, of which he was a member, was a sect, denomination, or any other thing that was absent in scripture itself, was a heresy and led to all sorts of "evil" ideas. Establishing a dualistic language through which his audience could test other denominations against the church of the Bible, Franklin argued that his audience should seek the church that was a community,

24. Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System* (Nashville: the Gospel Advocate Company, 1956), 104.

25. Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty-One Sermons*, vol. II, 19th ed. (Indianapolis, IN: K.W. Sommer, 1904).

the kingdom of God, and the body of Christ. Once the “proper” language of the biblical text was restored, Franklin went further, “The Lord has but one church, and we must not mistake something else for that Church. How can we know that we are members of the Church, unless we know what the Church is?”²⁶ Thus, in his sermon “The Church—Its Identity,” Franklin began a series of identifying questions that helped his audience know what the Church was, claiming that if any church group failed to correctly answer any one of these test questions, then they could not be the true Church established in the New Testament. In other words, only the church that could correctly respond to every question was, for Franklin, the church of the Bible.

One of the foundational principles of the early Restoration Movement was that the Bible was the only source needed to understand Church ideology and mission. Early reformers pleaded for a return to the explicit teachings of the Bible. To do this properly, in Franklin’s view, the Movement had to rely on the patterns, commands, and very language of the New Testament. Restoration leaders like Franklin viewed the Bible as the direct and full revelation of God; therefore, a person who understood the Bible’s patterns, commands, and language certainly understood what God commanded and what God desired for the church as well as what God desired for a person’s life of faith. For Campbell, Stone, and other leaders this plea brought about reforms from within their established congregations and organizations; for example, the Springfield Presbytery dissolved because of Stone’s focus on making the New Testament alone the rule of faith among the congregations within that association.

26. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 343.

The Bible is the sole authority

Franklin used the Bible's language as a limit on invention. If any Christian leader or Christian group asked a believer to participate in some work or practice that was not specifically mentioned in the New Testament text, then that leader or group was evil. Consequently, Pendleton's appeal for support of unmentioned associations like universities and mission societies were evil and a true Christian would not support such works. Franklin stood in a long legacy within Campbell's Restoration Movement that asserted the Bible, as the direct commandments of God, was the sole organizational document for the Church.

Where Campbell eventually admitted that no book could properly govern a body of people, Franklin staunchly maintained that the Bible, as God's blueprint for Church operations and structure, must be exclusively trusted to govern the Church. He dedicated a part of his sermon in the *Living Pulpit* to this teaching in which he said, "The Bible contains the constitution and law of the King for his kingdom. This was the only law ever authorized by the great King and Head of the Church, or adopted, approved, and practiced, under in the time of the apostles."²⁷ Franklin argued that when a church group decides to adopt a creed or doctrinal statement, that church undermines the Bible's authority and, therefore, God's authority.

The Bible stood alone and all attempts to alter, add, or take anything away from its pages should be seen as direct rebellion against God; therefore, the Bible was the only authoritative voice in the true Church, and all other groups that have multiple

27. Ibid., 352.

authoritative voices, which Franklin names, were not God’s church. He called them “new settlements not endorsed by the King.”²⁸

Franklin used a return to the biblical text, not only to call for reform within his own congregations, but also as the foundational premise in a larger polemic that separated his churches from the rest of the larger realm of Christianity. This return to the biblical text was the first of two foundational principles that Franklin perpetually focused upon throughout his preaching career. Having studied fifty-one sermons of Franklin collected in two volumes entitled *The Gospel Preacher*,²⁹ Raymond T. Exum³⁰ concluded that Franklin insisted on two major characteristics of the New Testament church that had to be incorporated into the contemporary church. First, Franklin believed Christians must rely on the “absolute, final, and complete authority of the Bible.”³¹

Franklin preached:

The Bible, in its own divine character, and for the purpose the Lord had in giving it, must be restored to the people—not merely in a neatly-printed volume in our mother-tongue, but in its own native power and grandeur. Its divine authority must be asserted, maintained, and defended, not only as true, divine, from God, but it must be enforced, urged, and continually impressed on the hearts and consciences of men. As a people, we must make all men know that we are simply for the Bible, in its own true import, purpose, or intent... To it and to its Divine Author, we have vowed eternal allegiance.³²

28. Ibid., 352.

29. Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty Sermons*, vol. 1, 33rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1947); Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher, A Book of Twenty-One Sermons*, Vol II, 19th ed. (Indianapolis, IN: K.W. Sommer, 1904).

30. Raymond T. Exum, *The Nature of the Church in the Sermons of Benjamin Franklin (1812-1878): A Topical Analysis of His Nondenominational Preaching* (M.A. Guided Research Paper, Harding Graduate School of Religion: Memphis, TN, 1977).

31. Raymond Exum, 18.

32. Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher*, vol. 1, x.

Franklin, ultimately ignoring Campbell's change of mind on this matter, returned to the voice of a young Campbell and asserted this belief in a post-Campbell, post-war time of great turmoil. The Bible stood alone, as the Church's only guide, and those who did not subscribe to such a view were the friends of Satan. Franklin was certain that church creeds and doctrinal statements did nothing but create multiple denominations, and the Bible was the only true unifying ecclesiastical document ever created:

All admit the Bible to be right... All admit that wherever any creed differs from the Bible it is wrong. Then it is infallibly safe to take the Bible and follow it. When men undertake to prove that a human creed is a good one, they argue that it is like the Bible. If a creed like the Bible is a good one, why will not the Bible itself do? If the Bible will not serve the purpose—is insufficient and a failure—a creed like it would be equally insufficient.³³

Therefore, Franklin argued that by creating creeds, the Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and other groups alike were causing great disturbance in the larger community of Christianity. He accused the denominations of going beyond the true authority of the Bible by creating other regulations by which they would mediate fellowship; they also imposed leadership structures upon their members that were not mentioned in Scripture. The use of biblical texts as weapons displays the militant rhetoric of Franklin and allows us to view his efforts as a moment of inception as he sought to provoke his audience to action against a large number of Christians and Christian groups, included some in his own Movement.

Second, Exum suggested that in Franklin's characterization of the New Testament church, "No leadership structure or pattern of church organization may be imposed on any congregation of believers."³⁴ As a man of the frontier and a person who enjoyed the

33. Ibid., "Course to Pursue to be Infallibly Safe," 375.

34. Raymond Exum, 27.

autonomy of rural life, Franklin held individual freedoms sacred. He provided an adamant plea for preserving the rights of church members in this excerpt from his sermon “The Simplicity of the Divine Economy”:

By the time you get this far into the matter, what has become of the rights of the private members? They have no rights by this time, only to fill their places in the pews, have the “word of God dispensed to them, and the bread of life broken to them,” and *they pay the money*. They will never take this latter right from the people—the right to *pay the money*! No matter how good the men, how honest, nor how pure their purposes—their work in any kind of aggregation, or confederation, or congregations, will result in taking away the rights and liberties of the people; oppressing and enslaving them, on the one hand, and building up the clerical aristocracy, who will tax the people and rule them with an iron rod, on the other hand. All history proves this.³⁵

Franklin, by discerning these problems among the different sects of his day, must find a church group, or community to use his words, that met the criteria set up in Scripture. Franklin recalled the history of the denominations, making a radical shift by employing the ideology of the Restoration Movement to show its superiority from all other socio-religious movements. To substantiate the claim of superiority, Franklin commandeered history.

Circumventing Christian history

By commandeering and restricting Christian authority to the language of the biblical text, Franklin circumvented centuries of church development, debate, doctrine, and commentary. In doing so, he did not feel obliged to explain the development of church structures over that time span, nor did he have to defend the structural differences of the “recently resuscitated” Restoration Movement. He circumvented history by directly connecting his contemporary church with the biblical text; therefore, the middle was no longer relevant because evil denominationalism occupied those years.

35. Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher*, vol. II, 494-95.

Franklin directly connected what we might label as the “youngest” movement in Christianity to the apostolic church through a strict adherence to the biblical documents, creating a foundation of both authenticity and authority that his audience should accept. He directly attacked a seemingly correct observation he perceived within his audience that the Church of Christ was not in existence in the middle or dark ages. For some skeptics, however, this did not answer the question of where the church was during the darkest times in religious history when paganism and Catholicism seemed to be the predominant lifestyle choices. Franklin answered,

Nor is it a matter of importance whether [the Church of Christ] can trace a succession back through the dark ages or not; it is here and alive, and as determined as ever to live and maintain its rights. If it was dead, during the dark ages, God has raised it from the dead, and breathed new life into it.³⁶

For Franklin, the Church of Christ was “occupying the most responsible position of any body of people on earth.” In a different sermon in which Franklin set up answers to critics who contend that the New Testament church could not be found among the different sects and denominations of contemporary Christianity, he minimized the importance of the church’s chronological lapse and stressed the importance of its resurgence:

Suppose we cannot, but can find the same thing—the identical same body now; in all respects the same—that is, identifying it, no matter if there is a thousand years out of its history utterly lost. It is not its history we want but its identity.³⁷

Consequently, the Kingdom of God had made a home on earth in the Restoration Movement and all other church-lookalikes were simply imposters to the real thing.

36. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 352.

37. Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher*, vol. II, 469.

Asserting that other institutions hate the true church because they are envious of the high position it has before God, Franklin wrote of the supposed jealousy within other denominations. He said, “That body, which the Lord called ‘my church’ which was ‘everywhere spoken against,’ in the time of Paul, is here, alive standing on the old foundation, with the same head, creed, or law, and the same name; nor does it fail to be ‘everywhere spoken against’ still...”³⁸ Therefore, what is displayed above is an important strategy for the militant sub-movement. By removing historical context, the churches of the Restoration effort were not the beneficiaries of centuries of Christian thought and development, but arose out of the Bible and appeared upon the American frontier to devour all evil denominations as the true representatives of God. Because Franklin’s church was superior, then it had a responsibility to take aggressive action even against evil within its own people.

A sub-movement based on a “myth”

Franklin’s desire to condemn the denominations and sects, thus restoring a simple Christianity, much like the founding fathers of the Movement attempted at the turn of the century, turned into a deconstruction of sophistication and establishment as he attacked each group for its own individual digressions. Also problematic for Franklin was the self-sufficiency of each denomination in that one does not really concern itself with another. Franklin was painfully direct:

These different branch communities are distinct, separate, and independent kingdoms, with different laws, officers, names, foundations, times, and places of origin. They are not built on the same foundation, did not originate at the same time and place, have not the same law and officers, nor the same ecclesiastical organization, and are, to all intents and purposes, independent and distinct communities. If one of them dies, there is no grief or lamentation among the others, in view of the loss, nor an effort to save another branch of the same church

38. Ibid., 356.

from dying. They are all willing it should die. They have not one particle of sympathy for it.³⁹

Therefore, what can be observed within this sermon, underlying a deliberate move back to the Bible, was a polemic against historical progression, institutional development, sophistication of theology, and diversity in general. This antagonism toward progress and associations mirrored the same appreciation of simple agrarian life Franklin heralded, echoing Smith's "Myth of the Nineteenth Century America."

In fact, Franklin was the picture of what Moses Lard would name the "farmer preacher." His was a model of preaching developed among strict Restorationist frontier churches that were more conservative.⁴⁰ Lard describes this preacher:

He was the neighborhood Justice of the Peace; in winter, the county schoolmaster, and always, on big meeting occasions, innkeeper of the church. He was useful, popular, and tenderly loved. As a rule, he was kind hearted, deeply pious, and always hospitable even to a fault. . . From his lips they taught lessons of wisdom which guided them in death. Their hearts grew stout as he philosophized on life's ills; their resolutions petrified as he counseled them to be true to the Master, and as, in his artless but often eloquent style, he pointed them to the time when they should all meet in the Saviour's presence, and neither go out nor part more, they wept as if their hearts would break.⁴¹

Franklin, as the frontier preacher, invited all of Christianity to join him on the frontier, where Christianity existed in the freedom of the city and from the complications and evils that have infiltrated it. He relied heavily upon the agrarian myth to frame his arguments and he invited his audience into agreement that the Christian life was better in the country.

39. Ibid., 343

40. For more on the development of "farmer preachers" see Michael Casey, *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace*, 43-45.

41. Moses Lard, "Pioneer Preaching in the West," *Apostolic Times* 3 (February 1872): 346; quoted in Michael Casey, *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace*, 43; and David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "The Agrarian Myth and the Disciples of Christ in the Nineteenth Century," 184.

Franklin used a powerful silence to condemn the unfolding divisions of Christianity. He did not ask questions like, “How was the Papacy established and what conditions gave rise to the office?” He did not consider the development that followed Luther, Calvin, and others as they decided to reform the Catholic Church leading to new reformed groups. One would think, as one who wants to renew the church in his time, Franklin might have learned much from a study of those who have gone before him, but except for Campbell’s writing in the *Christian Baptist*, all church history was lost to Franklin. Yet, what needs to be highlighted here is that Franklin impressed the same sort of thinking upon his audience, which stood in direct contrast to Isaac Errett’s work which will be explored later.

What was Franklin’s response to issues of Civil War and urbanization and progressive thought? He adamantly demanded that the Movement withdraw to the quiet, simple times of the Bible and forget about the progressing complexities of the world. Sit down on the porch of your log cabin, and as you breath in the fresh air of individual liberties that the country provides, ask yourself if the unfolding development of ecclesiastical history is really worth the time and energy when you can simply go to the original New Testament Church. Spend your time and energy on things that matter, tending the garden so that you can be healthy; because there is only so much time in the day, use it wisely.

Understanding the principles of the frontier, Franklin was clear that it was better for Christians to stay away from the thinking and theological inventions of the Reformation, particularly those of Wesley, Calvin, and Luther. Franklin does not concern himself with appreciating the study, time, and energy it took for those former

church leaders to develop their creeds, unifying their group with a set of beliefs while allowing diversity of interpretation to exist. For Franklin, these theological inventions complicated the words of scripture and communicated only to the complex urbanites.

The Bible, for Franklin, was given to the masses, particularly written for the common man to understand. This common man was the man of the frontier, the simple, hard-working farmer who takes no pleasure in the finer things of life. The patterns, doctrines, and essential elements of the New Testament Church were complete and binding upon the contemporary Church. Therefore, Franklin communicated in a brash, aggressive style that any person, simple or sophisticated, could clearly understand. He did not waste his words and he did not pursue eloquence. His words, most of them, were the exact words the English Bible translation used because Franklin upheld the completeness of the divine revelation in Scripture with strict adherence. Nothing needed added to Scripture.

Franklin, Controversy, and the Militant Movement

By asserting that the churches of the frontier were the only communities connected to the New Testament church, the only continuation of the Kingdom of God in the world, Franklin made the most significant sectarian statement in the post-termination period. This sectarian spirit would permeate congregations in rural areas, especially in the South and the West. Ultimately, many members of Churches of Christ would believe that they were the “only ones going to heaven,” and it seems this exact sentiment was what Franklin argued. However, this recasting of the Movement’s position and brash fondness to its superiority gave Franklin a reputation of a man of controversy, not just among the differing sects, but also among the ongoing Restoration efforts.

To give an example of Franklin's aggressive spirit, we can turn to an incident that involved the editor of *The Living Pulpit*, W.T. Moore. Moore served as the minister of the Central Christian Church in Cincinnati. In 1872, the church built a new building that sat two thousand people and reflected French Gothic style architecture. Franklin warned the Central Church that this undertaking forsook the principles of the *Christian Baptist* and went on to charge that such an edifice would alienate the poor and the Lord himself.⁴² Moore, outraged by Franklin's claims, charged him with maliciousness, writing, "Your last reply is a curious combination of ugly epithets, irrelevant matter, evasion of the real issue, uncharitable insinuations, bad grammar, and worst rhetoric.... It is the dogmatic, vindictive spirit in your articles that makes your attack so unworthy."⁴³

Moore, speaking for a group of church leaders, charged Franklin with the inability to understand and comply with progress. In Moore's view, the world moves and was constantly changing so, while truth remains the same, the communication of that truth would change to reflect the progression of the world. Franklin, representing a militant strand of Restoration rhetoric, sought to wed the methods of communication with the truth as found in his study of the Biblical text alone. Thus, the Restoration Movement suffered a rift, which was not hard to conceive once "militancy" replaced "unity" as a core principle within a particular sub-movement.

As Franklin's dissenting views gathered a following among the Movement's rural devotees, Carl Crabb wrote an article entitled, "Franklinian Stupidity," alleging that many

42. Franklin, "Central Christian Church," *American Christian Review* 15 (20 February 1872): 60.

43. Moore, "The Central Church Once More," *American Christian Review* 15 (16 April 1872): 122.

leaders in Restoration churches “seem to be wholly incapable of appreciating anything that rises above the first, plain, prodding ideas of Mr. Campbell and his co-laborers 40 years ago.”⁴⁴ Franklin became the leading persona of many preachers within the Movement “Who cannot see the difference between this cramped, cribbed, and confined, discipleship and that more liberal theology now advocated by our more advanced scribes.”⁴⁵ Franklin frightened many younger ministers because he would not hesitate to correct those with whom he disagreed.⁴⁶ The other side of that coin was that if Franklin ever did compliment a younger preacher, the younger preacher felt honored because compliments by Franklin were scarce. Franklin would never provide a compliment simply to flatter a preacher, either young or old; there was no room for it in his conception of the church.

Even meeting the elderly Franklin was an experience that several leaders warned younger ministers to avoid. John T. Hawkins, a young preacher who met Franklin in 1874 prepared for the worst because he had previously been told that Franklin was irritable and egotistical. Writing a letter to the *American Christian Review*, Hawkins confessed a report stating that Franklin “had good teeth set in just the right position to chew a young preacher up.”⁴⁷ Yet, the person Hawkins found in meeting Franklin was much different from the monster others advertised him to be.

44. Carl Crabb, “Franklinian Stupidity” *American Christian Review* XV (April 2, 1872): 105.

45. Ibid.

46. Joseph Franklin and J. A. Headington, *The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (St Louis: John Burns, 1879), 354.

47. John T. Hawkins, “Brother Franklin at Ghent” *Apostolic Times* V (April 2, 1874): 6.

He recalled that while some ministers were encouraging him to seek the city jobs by progressing with the times, speaking eloquently, and dressing in the finest clothes, Franklin did not need these things. Hawkins was mesmerized, in many ways, by Franklin's presence and plain speech. The young minister recalled no longer being influenced by the "tinsel and trappings of the big city clergy and thereby win the praise of wicked men and silly women," which he believed would "not put holy thoughts into the hearts of young preachers."⁴⁸ Of course, Franklin published this writing in his journal serving as an exemplar from which other young preachers could learn. What was it that Franklin wanted to teach young ministers? Join the army of God's people and defend the true church from imposters, from outside the Movement and from inside the Movement.

Conclusion

Among church leaders, it seemed that either they agreed with Franklin's style and teachings considering him a hero of the faith, or they disagreed with him and sought to dispose of his teaching and quickly distance themselves from him. Franklin's dualistic approach to the church created a rift in the post-termination period of the Restoration Movement in which one had to choose between Franklin's rhetorical army or remove himself or herself from the "true church." Those who enjoyed the rural way of life found Franklin to be "down to earth," upholding the same frontier values that they likewise enjoyed. For those leaders who worked in the cities, Franklin's constant attacks on their lifestyles and progressiveness garnered their negative response for he had no room for anything but aggressiveness against the urban Christians.

48. *Ibid.*, quoted by Earl West, *Elder Benjamin Franklin*, 242.

This rift was present in the agrarian myth, that religion on the frontier was more uncontaminated than religion in the city. As the cities became the major centers of influence in postwar America, Franklin's message of withdrawal from the cities and superiority over the denominations did not leave room for the spirit of compromise and brotherhood, which Campbell seemed always to possess. As the northern states moved in the direction of progress, industry, and pluralism, Franklin was moving in the opposite direction, the direction of retreat, agriculture, and sectarianism.

The Restoration Movement with Campbell as its rhetorical leader enjoyed success, as we have seen, because it could use the spirit of the times to communicate the timeless truth of God. However, Franklin failed to understand the adaptation that Campbell mastered and, therefore, failed to succeed at connecting the Movement to the spirit of the contemporary times. Ultimately, Franklin provided a segment of the Movement with a sectarian and aggressive rhetoric that would continue to create dissention. This discord would not only be toward religious groups now viewed as inferior to the Movement, but would also be directed at the sophisticated urbanites who were viewed as denigrating the Movement.

This militant sub-group of the frontier would eventually evolve into what the larger movement now knows as the non-institutional Church of Christ or "anti" Church of Christ. While historians do not see this group emerging fully until the 1960s when several disagreements gave rise to a group of churches that identified themselves separately from the larger Churches of Christ, Franklin established the ideology of this group at the close of the Civil War. What historians do reveal is that this ideological framework appears throughout pivotal points in history, especially after times of war in

which the country experienced postwar prosperity.⁴⁹ The items that characterize this sub-group are numerous and scattered, but a unifying principle is the dislike of anything that was not specifically necessitated in Scripture. Some non-institutional churches do not have kitchens in their buildings, fellowship halls for church gatherings, Sunday school programs for children, or even air conditioning in their buildings. Some congregations drink from one communion cup and consider it evil to have multiple, individual cups for the Lord's Supper.

Most Anti-churches do not invest in formally trained preachers, but often support their own preaching schools, which are two-year institutions specifically designed for the study of Scripture. An exemption to this is Florida College, a school founded in 1944 by individuals from the militant sub-group. While understanding the importance of education, the founders of Florida College did not ask nor did they accept contributions from churches, but only donations from individuals. The most interesting feature of this sub-group is that they produce a group of regulators who claim it is their responsibility to expose error and hold other preachers accountable to biblical truth. The ideology of Franklin lives within these men. Thus, Benjamin Franklin was the founding father of a new militant movement in the post-termination period of the Restoration Movement following the Civil War and the death of Campbell that will continue to have implications well into the 21st Century.

Looking at the larger snapshot of Campbell's Restoration Movement in this post-termination period, I have established two distinct ideologies. First, Pendleton envisioned a celebration of Campbell's work through associations in which the Movement would add to society through good works like education and humanitarian

49. Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement, 567-568.

efforts. Second, Franklin sought to arouse dissent regarding the current state of Christianity, thus creating a new inception period of the church as a militant army of strict biblical adherents seeking to correct the evil of all denominations. Both sub-groups grounded their strategies in the work of Campbell, seizing a portion of his rhetoric to reinstate a Movement in turmoil. Tolbert Fanning, a leader from the southern states, initiated another sub-group that sought to purify the church using less militant strategies than those employed by Franklin. I turn to Fanning's work in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

A PERFECTING MOVEMENT IN THE WORK OF TOLBERT FANNING

Tolbert Fanning's ideology was plain; the Movement served to perfect the church by distancing itself from impure teaching and drawing closer the examples of faith and practice in the earliest church of the New Testament. Campbell's Restoration started by purifying the denominations into one church, but also sought to purify other institutions like the American government. As much as Campbell enjoyed his work among the churches of the Movement, he knew and communicated to others that the work of purification would never be fully accomplished. Fanning dedicated himself to the ongoing work of purification; he sought perfection through a simple and plain Christian system. This system arose out of the patterns of the New Testament church, found completion in the patterns of Fanning's contemporary church, and moved forward with the hope of consummation once perfected.

Fanning never entrusted himself to governments; the Civil War provided him with enough experience to denounce all governmental institutions and human political endeavors. However, Fanning trusted the Restoration Movement churches because he believed that moral power of the church would triumph over physical power of government, and that the Kingdom of God, represented by the Movement, would triumph over all other governments and denominations. Herein was an important distinction between Franklin's militant view of the church and Fanning's triumphant view of the church. Fanning produced rhetorical strategies that were contingent on the moral power exerted by believers, and did not seek to be as radical or demeaning in his methods or

language. However, this does not mean that Fanning did not see the ongoing Restoration efforts as superior to all other institutions, because he most certainly did.

The Restoration Movement knew Tolbert Fanning through his editorial work in four influential journals: the *Christian Review*, the *Christian Magazine*, the *Gospel Advocate*, and the *Religious Historian*.¹ The longest lasting and most influential of the four was the *Gospel Advocate*, which served congregations in the southern states of the Movement at the time of Campbell's death. The journal had to stop publication during the Civil War, but started publication again in 1866 at the close of the war. Therefore, Fanning's post-termination strategies were widespread and influential among his readership in the southern states.

By listening to Fanning through his sermon in the *Living Pulpit* titled, "The Mission of the Church of Christ," we uncover a strategy in which he wanted to perfect the Movement and hold the members of Restoration Churches to the divine standard that separated the Movement from all other entities. This was Fanning's rhetorical vision that he kept before the people. Thus, once the church had been properly purified, it could return to its true authority upon the earth, which had been forfeited through the time of Civil War and division. This assertion had two important themes that permeated Fanning's teaching and leadership.

First, the ongoing Restoration Movement must perfect itself to reverse the harm done by all of the corrupt Christian denominations. The Restoration Movement had made great strides in the time leading up to the Civil War, but after the war, Fanning knew that the consummation of the Movement was simply not achievable in its current state. Much

1. *Christian Review* (1844-1848), the *Christian Magazine* (1848-1853), the *Gospel Advocate* (1855-), and the *Religious Historian* (1872-1874).

like other Christian denominations, Fanning perceived the Restoration Movement settling into contentment, pleased with the accomplished work. He created a dissonance that asked the members to consider whether the current Movement could be better and do better to set itself as a standard for all other organizations to follow. In doing so, Fanning moved the Movement toward his idea of perfection.

Fanning attacked Campbell's Bethany College in 1857 when a series of articles in the *Millennial Harbinger* criticized some of the rationalistic extremes that were beginning to characterize the movement, attacks obviously directed at Fanning.² Fanning wrote a series of articles in his *Gospel Advocate* arguing that some on the college's faculty were trying to sell the birthright of the *Christian Baptist* for a "bowl of Spiritualist porridge."³ Represented best by the writings collected in the *Christian Baptist*, young Campbell was argumentative and direct, calling for all church groups to surrender their allegiance to the denominations and return to God. However, scholars like Hughes and Verkruyse demonstrate that Campbell did not stay a "prophetic" voice, but evolved to a much more nurturing language as the movement matured, while sustaining the high logic that was characteristic of his earlier debate style. Fanning did not evolve in the same way, and, like Franklin in many ways, sought to protect the Movement from all voices of contentment, even Campbell's voice.

2. R. Richardson, "Nature of the Christian Doctrine—No. I and II," *Millennial Harbinger* 4 (March 1856): 198-211; "Nature of the Christian Doctrine—No. III," *Millennial Harbinger* 4 (June 1856): 331-337; "Faith versus Philosophy—No. 4," *Millennial Harbinger* 4 (May 1857): 269-270.

3. Fanning, "Professor R. Richardson's Notice of the Senior Editor of the Gospel Advocate," *Gospel Advocate* 3 (June 1857): 189; "Professor R. Richardson's Second Notice of the Gospel Advocate," *Gospel Advocate* 3 (July 1857): 204-205.

Second, the ongoing Restoration effort must seek to overcome human governments by asserting its moral power in the world to defeat them in the name of Christ who is the world's ultimate authority. While Campbell had a heavy influence on Fanning, this particular idea arose out of the teaching of Barton W. Stone, who was a major voice of the Movement as referenced in chapter one of this work. Stone taught that the moral power of the true church, represented by the Restoration Movement, would unite all Christians in an earthly Kingdom in which believers would experience an authentic, utopian life until the second coming of Jesus. Therefore, once perfected, the Movement would be a real power for good in a world full of evil powers. For Fanning, if the church was not reigning over all governments and authorities, then it had yet to be perfected. Therefore, Fanning's rhetoric called the Movement away from evil influences, like political debates and Christian denominations, into the purity of the biblical text.

Historical circumstances and situations are not excuses for the Movement to choose against rising up to what God ordained it to be. Fanning used clear language and straightforward arguments. His resolve was clear, taking issue with any leader, including a deceased Alexander Campbell, when he thought he must battle against the corruption of the Movement's standards. Fanning's voice emerged as the perfecting strand of the post-Campbell Restoration Movement.

The chapter will first introduce the reader to Tolbert Fanning focusing on his preaching tours with Campbell and his experience as a southern church leader throughout the Civil War. Emerging from Fanning's southern American experience is a deep contempt for government, which he used to argue against all institutions as enemies of the authentic church. Understanding Fanning's unique experience as a southerner sets up

our analysis of his sermon published in Moore's *Living Pulpit*. After exploring rhetorical themes in the sermon, I will expand the scope of this study to look at the foundations of a perfecting group of Fanning's followers. Last, this chapter considers the outcomes and consequences of the perfecting sub-movement and draw some conclusions about the lasting rhetorical effects of Fanning's work in the post-termination period.

**Background:
Tolbert Fanning Seeking Pure Loyalty**

This brief sketch of Fanning's personal background and thought processes will help deepen understanding of the particular stance taken in his writing, particularly in his sermon, "The Mission of the Church of Christ." Fanning associated himself with the Movement in 1829, spent two years studying the Bible, and then enrolled into Nashville University. Tolbert Fanning grew to be an influential voice in the Stone-Campbell Movement when he accompanied Alexander Campbell to Ohio and Kentucky on a preaching tour in 1835.⁴ Before graduating in 1835, he preached at several congregations throughout Tennessee. A year later, Campbell and Fanning set off again to preach in Ohio, New York, Canada, the New England states, and several Eastern cities. In 1844, Fanning began to edit the *Christian Review*. In addition, in 1844 Fanning started Franklin College⁵ and became the first president of the school by an election held that same year. He held that position until 1861, becoming a financial campaigner for the school. Unfortunately, the institution burned down in 1865. Fanning traveled to fifteen states preaching, teaching, and planting churches all the while writing logical and forceful articles. Fanning's powerful voice in the Restoration Movement in Tennessee during the

4. Biographical Information taken from W.T. Moore, *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 515-516 and *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 331-332.

5. Franklin College was near Nashville, TN.

middle 1800s and his abilities to present biblical ideas and raise money made him an influential leader and a perfect subject for this rhetorical study.

Growing up in Alabama, Fanning learned his approach to biblical material from preachers influenced greatly by Barton W. Stone. Stone held an apocalyptic view of the church according to Richard Hughes, which meant that Stone believed that the Kingdom of God would eventually rise to power and take over the world in an effort to usher into reality the imminent return of Christ Jesus.⁶ Stone and Campbell both believed that the Kingdom of God would eventually take over the established governments of the world, but Campbell grew to place more confidence in the United States government as a partner of the church, thinking that religious freedom and democracy would serve as great fertilizer for the Kingdom of God to grow. Fanning took issue with this idea siding with Stone's ideas. For Stone, the church had to be the antithesis to government; thus, the church must be countercultural and very simplistic in both belief and organization. He taught that the Church had no business in politics because all human governments are essentially evil and Christians are to serve God. Although this call to denounce the political realm included voting, Stone encouraged Christians to pay taxes and obey civil laws. Throughout Fanning's formative early years, he took the position that Christians could not become involved in politics without weakening themselves spiritually. He was certain that they could accomplish much more good in the world by laboring only in the eternal kingdom of God rather than the kingdoms of earth, and produced a strong dichotomy between the two kingdoms. This was a striking contrast to the thinking and

6. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 108-113.

teaching of Campbell, who viewed Christian's participation in politics as a positive and productive enterprise, one in which he participated.

There were areas in which Fanning and Campbell did agree. Through Nashville University, Fanning learned to appreciate Francis Bacon and John Locke's "common sense" epistemology. Fanning believed, as did Campbell, that the Bible was the only source of sacred truth and that if two people were to read the Bible, then they would both come to a reasonable conclusion on which they could build unity as Christians. In this view, a person should be able to empty the mind of human tradition and opinion, seeking direct revelation from the Bible. Campbell moved away from this position later in his life, while Fanning continued to cling to this part of Campbell's voice, which he liked more than the idea that the Bible was truly insufficient to govern a people as large as the growing Restoration Movement. To restore primitive, or New Testament, Christianity, Fanning resolved to simply follow the Bible free from any other sort of distraction.

Nevertheless, there were many distractions. As Movement historians point out, the Civil War destroyed momentum: publications stopped printing, colleges and universities were destroyed, and congregations that once were affiliated began to question their bonds with each other.⁷ In the middle of this turmoil, however, Fanning accomplished a significant act. Fanning penned a letter to Jefferson Davis asking that members of the Church of Christ be permitted to "remain aloof" from the War. Many elders and preachers of Middle Tennessee signed the letter and copies went to the governor of Tennessee, to President Lincoln, as well as to Confederate President

7. See David E. Harrell, *Quest for a Christian American*; Leroy Garrett, *The Restoration Movement*; Earl West, *The Trials of the Ancient Order*; the Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement, 221-225.

Jefferson Davis. The letter sufficiently influenced the representative governments that they permitted many members of the Restoration Movement to remain removed from the conflict of war.⁸ Regarding war, Fanning believed that the civil government acted justly if it enforced its decisions physically. However, physical force was incompatible with the purely moral force used in the kingdom of God. Thus pertaining to the Movement, if Christians had to resort to any type of physical force to attain good, they were acknowledging that the church failed in its divine purpose.⁹ This was an important distinction between government and church.

When the Union troops marched into Nashville and made the city a base of operations for the greater part of the war, they demanded that citizens swear allegiance to the northern cause. Fanning explained to the Union leaders that he would not swear allegiance to the cause; he had been loyal to four governments—the United States, Great Britain, the Southern Confederacy, and now the northern military power. Nevertheless, they still labeled him as a disloyal citizen. As a result, although the authorities did not throw him in prison, they burned all of Fanning's possessions, and they treated him like an outlaw. James Wilburn, a historian of Fanning, remarked that few men suffered more during the war. Wilburn commented, because the Union authorities convicted Fanning of treason, they would not pay him what they owed for a day of work, and there were periods when he went for weeks at a time without food for his household. Fanning watched as groups of southern men who were loyal to the Union robbed his neighbors.

8. James R. Wilburn, *The Hazard of the Die: Tolbert Fanning and the Restoration Movement* (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing, 1969), 219. Fanning's letter was published on pages 217-218 in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1866.

9. *Ibid.*, 225.

In several cases, they murdered whole families in cold blood. Fanning remembered, “We frequently saw openings to lose our life, and have our families outraged by miscreants, had we resorted to violent resistance. Many of our intimate acquaintances lost their lives by physical resistance.”¹⁰ The agony of these memories was compounded when, after the war, Isaac Errett accused him of thinking up his anti-war convictions because of his disappointment in the “lost cause.”¹¹

For Fanning, the whole purpose of the Restoration Movement was in question, since its growing feeling of distrust between congregations as they succumbed to northern and southern sectionalism plagued its claim of seeking unity among all Christians. The Movement was following and falling for the cultural temperament of post-war America. As the Restoration Movement faced the end of the war and sought to regain its ideology, Fanning saw two hazards obstructing the Movement. One was the ever-present danger of an illegitimate purpose and direction. Fanning believes that adherence to wrong voices and groups of disloyal leaders could derail and reorient the Movement. Secondly, he had some anxiety over arrogant satisfaction with past progress and present status of the Movement. In movements like the one for Restoration, stagnation, short of the ever-elusive consummation, always appealed to a communal sense of pride that wanted to believe the Movement accomplished its goals, and Fanning knew that the Movement was far from its divine purpose.

For him, the “restoration principle” produced perennial ferment, agitating each generation to view its positions critically in the light of the Bible and to place them in

10. Ibid., 219-220.

11. Ibid.

judgment facing the spirit of Christ.¹² As Fanning grew older, and after the Civil War, this desire to comprehend the Movement critically and motivate its members to want more from the Bible than what was currently provided by leaders; thus seeking a new direction and purpose in the Movement, became his sole rhetorical venture.

**Summary:
Fanning’s “Mission of the Church of Christ”**

Fanning’s sermon was a series of questions from his audience, assumed to be members of the Restoration effort from across the nation, that he attempted to answer to the audience’s satisfaction. He began by introducing the task before him: “To impress the heart of the erring with the wondrous truth that *The Church of Christ* is heaven’s divinely constituted organization for the salvation of the lost, is the first principle of labor of the minister of peace.”¹³ Fanning, in the first paragraph, provided his response to the situation that faced him by asserting that the Restoration Movement was God’s instrument to save the world. The question that should flow from this assertion was: From what does the world need saved? For Fanning, the world needed saved from two important evil establishments: imposter organizations that call themselves the church and secular governments. Fanning led his audience through a series of questions showing them how the Restoration Movement, or in Fanning’s words the Church of Christ, was a divine plan to purify humanity. This argument placed a strong determination in the heart of those who subscribed to the Movement, and provided them with a rejuvenated purpose.

Fanning, assuming the question, asked why it was necessary that an organization promising salvation should exist; his simple answer was that the creator God decided to

12. Ibid., 241.

13. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 517.

create a church and that should be enough to explain the church's existence. This question did not challenge his audience of members but created a starting point from which to challenge them. Most persons within the Movement, regardless of presuppositions or biases, would have agreed with Fanning's point that the church was God's sole institution of salvation in the world. He did not narrow it down to the Restoration Movement churches quite yet, but he did make an argument that God ordained the Church for existence, and there really can be no credible objection to this.

Establishing that the church did exist within the Restoration Movement, Fanning turned to the second question of how, when, and where the Church of Christ originated. This second move allowed Fanning to pose the challenge to his audience. If such a church did exist, then how did one evaluate whether churches were the spiritual community built by Jesus Christ in the days of the apostles, remain faithful to that standard today, and eventually triumph over all the powers of the earth? This second question moved the audience from the general idea of church to the specific context of the Restoration Movement seeking past remembrances, a present explanation, and a future trajectory. Fanning equated Restoration churches with the biblical apostolic church, thus clarifying for the audience that the Church of Christ was the sole institution in which God would bring the salvation of the earth to fruition. This assertion challenged the audience to view Restoration churches as the sole possessors of God's plan. Later, I will discuss how he used Scripture to substantiate his argument that the ongoing presence and direction of the Restoration Movement is of utmost importance both a world full of evil and to the God who instituted it.

In the third question, Fanning retreated to a different subject to which the audience would not be resistant, since Fanning assumed some hostility to the answer of question two. He changed topics from the establishment of the Church to its organization, arguing that God organized the church so that each member cooperated in the health, growth, and efficiency of the whole. The church, ultimately, was the Lord's organization and the Lord's plan for spiritual service. Fanning allowed his audience to see that God designed the church the way God wanted to do it, and it was at this point Fanning then turned on his audience to set the Restoration Movement apart from all other Christian denominations.

If it were true that God was in control of the church, then it must also be true that humans could not control the church. If God appointed leaders in the church, then how can a group who claimed to be the church appoint their own leaders? This point highlighted one of the distinctive features of the Restoration Movement. Consequently, Fanning produced a clear argument for a strong divine purpose of the Restoration Movement by claiming that the Movement was the only Christian organization in which God continued to raise up leaders whereas in the other denominations, committees and boards appointed leaders.

After proposing this distinction, Fanning asks if the church was a carnal, mixed, or spiritual organization. Fanning forcefully argued that the sin of the religious world was its alliance with world governments. More specific, many leaders within the Restoration Movement, especially in the home state of Fanning and Lipscomb, remained pacifists during the Civil War while other Christian groups gave their allegiances to the Union or to the Confederacy. It is here that Fanning became practical and answered the

critics of pacifism within the Restoration Movement, without addressing the fact that many within the Movement participated in the Civil War. He attacked the Catholics and Protestants saying that they veiled themselves through their connection to human wisdom and they could not see or comprehend God's wisdom.

For Fanning, God wanted the church to abide in divine wisdom and stay out of a bloody civil war, and he claimed that Satan had dominion over those institutions that took part in the war by conceding God's principles and following human passions for political advancement. In the end, Fanning claimed that he and others who taught and practiced pacifism were right and upheld a moral standard that transcended the conflict. Therefore, Fanning concluded that the Restoration Movement was the Kingdom of God and all other denominations and world institutions succumbed to the power of Satan. So in answer to the question, Fanning says, "In Christ's body... the Head is spiritual, his subjects are spiritual, his laws are spiritual, and love is the only motive power,"¹⁴ thus making clear that other denominations, especially those who participate in government and war, acted against God's plan and desires.

So, what was the work of a spiritual organization like the Church of Christ? Fanning noted five securities of an individual's being in the "body of Christ:" remission of sins, adoption into the heavenly kingdom, life from the dead, full enjoyment of the Holy Spirit, and final deliverance to God so that He might be all in all. Ultimately, the Church existed to bring the lost into that "body" and conquer the dominion of Satan, which manifested itself through civil government. Fanning outlined a dualism between the power of Satan and the power of God: the Restoration Movement was the power of God, and all other institutions were the power of Satan; therefore, it was the Movement's

14. Ibid., 531.

duty to conquer these other kingdoms, making it possible for God to reign upon the earth. It was at this point in the sermon that the audience regained a vision of its ideology and recast the ongoing efforts of the Restoration Movement. God needed the Movement, for it was God's only ally to produce the salvation of humanity.

Concluding his sermon with the sixth and seventh questions, Fanning dealt with conflicts in the church and the church's final triumph. Fanning concluded his sermon by stating that the war between "Michael and Satan," or these two kingdoms mentioned above, was still raging; and that there was no hope for conflict to cease until the Lord's return. Fanning understood that these inferior institutions, like other church denominations, did not understand the wisdom of God that had prompted members of the Restoration Movement to remain neutral during the time of Civil War. However, he reassured his audience that eventually the power of the Movement would overpower the current cultural climate, and this would provide evil entities the opportunity to return to God. Fanning called each person to understand that the inaction of the Restoration Movement during the war was a sure sign that it followed God's wisdom; given to the Church directly by God. He proposed that the world would acknowledge the authentic mission of the Movement eventually, as the moral Kingdom of God, represented by the Movement, triumphed over all earthly physical power and insincere authorities.

Fanning used a series of deductive arguments to end at this very point. As he answered one question, another question seemed to flow seamlessly out of his answer providing him with sustained continuity of argument. Consequently, the audience went from the broad, friendly introduction of why the church should exist to the surprise ending of the moral triumph of Restoration churches over all world powers.

When thinking about the sermon's persuasiveness, it depends heavily upon the reader's circumstances given the current divisions among persons in the Movement. Fanning wrote this sermon from a southern pacifist view, which is true to who he is and the stance he took during the war. Therefore, if a reader was a southern pacifist, then they should have no issue with Fanning's presentation. However, how many pacifists were there in the Restoration Movement or in the United States? Even a liberal estimation would conclude that there were very few pacifists, even among Restoration churches. Therefore, the average reader of Fanning's sermon would have to admit wrong doing in that they participated in the Civil War or at least cheered for a side of the Civil War.

Consequently, Fanning's arguments regarding the purity of the Movement were dependent upon his personal stance against war. For its audience, the Movement rhetoric needed to be clear about two things; first, that Tolbert Fanning was a person who could lead a perfecting Movement since he was an agent of perfection during a time of widespread impurity; and second, that the audience needed to change its allegiance if it wanted to see the consummation of the Movement. Therefore, if Fanning himself could be dismissed as not representing the truth of the situation, which was easily done by a northern sympathizer, then the sermon failed to persuade its audience.

**Analysis:
Fanning's Simple Pursuit of Perfection**

In Fanning's sermon, the rhetorical problem facing him was threefold. First, someone needed to redirect the Movement and plead for the churches of the north and south to unify around a single mission. This desire on Fanning's part distinguished his sermon from others in the *Living Pulpit*. While many of the sermons focused on a

particular doctrine or teaching that was representative of the Movement, only Fanning, Franklin, and Isaac Errett focused on the creation of a Movement ideology through exploration of its purpose. Fanning believed that the Movement needed help and healing, therefore he emphasized reexamining the motives of the Movement and acknowledging the deficiencies present within the Movement. If the Movement accomplished these things, then a new direction towards perfecting the Movement could lead the whole Movement, both north and south, into a victorious future.

Second, someone needed to explain why members of the Movement refrained from involvement in the Civil War, especially in Tennessee where Fanning was a major voice of pacifism during the war. Tolbert Fanning and his close partner, David Lipscomb, refused to take a side in the War and warned others to refrain from fighting. This decision, as one can imagine, was not popular on either side of the war; therefore, Fanning felt a strong urgency not only to rekindle the mission of the Movement, but also to douse the fire of skepticism about the Church's silence during wartime. In essence, Fanning had to defend the silence of the movement's leaders by arguing that pacifism, which he practiced and taught during the war, was central to the Church's moral mission.

Third, someone needed to recast the purpose of the Movement so that it could still fulfill its mission by continuing in a pure and thorough ideology within a full knowledge of devastating circumstances. Fanning understood that if the Restoration Movement was to survive these hard times, then it must have a strong ideology and mission. In his estimation, a direct revelation from God establishes a strong ideology of a religious movement. Fanning wanted to clearly answer the question, "What is so special about the Church of Christ that we should rebuild and refocus?"

The Bible: the pure and unfiltered source

From the introduction of his sermon, Fanning made it clear to his listeners that the Bible was the only pure source he would consult for the true answers to the questions. What he wanted to present was the word of God unfiltered, undefiled, and un-interpreted. Concerned how to approach each question, he said, “But we are to deal with what has been revealed in the Sacred Oracles, and not with idle conjectures.”¹⁵ Fanning, by making that statement, seemingly threw out all commentary, tradition, and past voices from his sermon including Campbell’s voice that had developed over the years.

The Bible, according to Fanning, is the only place a Christian could find truth because it was the full revelation of God’s wisdom. If facts were what you wanted to uncover, he asked, then why look in any other place but the Bible? Fanning continually called his listeners back to the New Testament for answers to each question that he presented in the sermon, which was in line with Campbell’s voice. He said, “Believing that all things which pertain to life and godliness are furnished in the Scriptures, we take the Bible, in good faith, as our only creed, and ask no one to believe or do anything of a religious character for which we have not ‘a thus saith the Lord.’”¹⁶

By reducing Christian authority to the Biblical text, much like Franklin, Fanning did not have to dissect eighteen hundred years of church history, development, and commentary. He did not have to explain the development of church structures nor did he have to defend the structural differences of the more contemporary Restoration Movement. Fanning, once again, connected the youngest movement in Christianity directly to the apostolic church, creating authenticity and stability for his audience, which

15. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 518.

16. *Ibid.*, 535.

were mainly adherents to the Movement. This is where Campbell and Fanning would differ, because Campbell came to appreciate the whole of Christian history, while Fanning sought to show its flaws in service of the Movement's perfection.

Fanning's return to the biblical text did something even greater than simplifying Christian history. His assertion that the Bible was the only source needed to understand the Movement's ideology and mission upheld the vision of the Restoration Movement. At the Movement's inception, Restoration leaders viewed the Bible as the direct and full revelation of God and therefore a person who understood the Bible certainly understood what God commanded and desired. The main problems that birthed the Restoration Movement were other denominations were too complex and relied too heavily on extra-biblical materials for the establishment of their ideologies and observances of the Christian faith. Fanning reestablished his belief that even in a time of great turmoil in which the Movement searched for other forms of governance; the Bible alone stood as the church's only guide, and those who did not subscribe to such a view are the friends of Satan.

A simple, plain, and pure Christianity

Consequently, Fanning's *telos* was to separate the Restoration Movement from all other Christian entities and denominations within the scope of ideology and mission. One way to do that was to highlight characteristics that were strengths of the Movement like the principle of simple, plain, or pure religion. We have already experienced this principle in the discussion above in the way Fanning reduced all ecclesiastical authority to the Scriptures alone, but Fanning employed the very language of these guiding principles throughout the sermon.

He asserted that the sermon will consist of, “plain answers to a few very simple questions.” Notice that although his arguments were complicated, Fanning highlighted how easy it will be for all his listeners to come to the same conclusions once he consulted the Scriptures. Answering the first question he said, “The simple statement that God, our Father, chose to offer salvation to a lost world through the kingdom of his Son, must suffice as to the necessity and fitness of such an institution.” In question two, he said, “The simple and only question now to determine is: Does Christ, in the full meaning of the prophecies, sit on David’s throne, or is he to ascend it at a future coming.”¹⁷ Fanning characterized the questions and responses as simple and plain.

Fanning also characterized the biblical text as simple and plain. He claimed, “As further evidence that the kingdom now exists, we may add a few plain passages of New Testament Scripture.” He said again regarding a different matter, “These matters will appear clearer when we examine a little more carefully a few Scriptures with reference to this very simple conclusion.”¹⁸ He called to his aid, “plain passages of Scripture,” in defense of his assessment that the Church was a spiritual organization. In summary, not only are Fanning’s arguments simple, but also followed the style of the Scriptures that are, in his view, simple and plain.

During the most essential part of the sermon, Fanning evoked the concept of purity to make a clear contrast between the spiritual identity of the Restoration Movement and the secular identity of all other denominations. He wrote that the Movement attempted to return to the “spiritual purity” of the primitive church. Its

17. Ibid., 517, 519, 520.

18. Ibid., 524, 526.

leaders pleaded for “pure speech” and “pure religion” and Fanning asserted that this direction pleased the Lord. The mission of the Movement, based upon purity, was to “elevate society to the state of purity required in the New Testament.”¹⁹ The Church of Christ was not only pure, but also sought to purify all world institutions, both political and ecclesiastical.

Fanning’s use of the language of simplicity, plainness, and purity pertained to the rhetorical problem in two specific ways. First, it displayed an enduring desire to fulfill the direct mission given to the Movement by God and it challenged the Movement to occupy itself solely with that mission. The Restoration Movement would not involve itself in politics and war because that activity did not fit into the simplistic and plain mission of God. A movement could not stay pure when involved in human endeavors, especially those that killed individuals instead of saving individuals.

Second, The Restoration Movement would eventually triumph over the historical circumstances and over the world because its identity was purely spiritual, transcendent to the world’s issues. This language of purity affirmed the Movement’s stance among the denominations, but also provided the promise of God for all those who sought to be “pure in heart.” If the audience continued striving for perfection, then they could not fail because God had promised victory for the “pure” according to the Scriptures. Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God,” (Matt. 5:8). In the book of Revelation, the saints were dressed in robes of white indicating their purity and they gathered around the throne of God to worship (Rev. 7:13-16). The employment of this

19. Ibid., 534.

language portrayed the superior ideology and ultimate victory of the Restoration Movement in line with its founding principles.

Fanning reasserts the need for the Restoration Movement in a chaotic time. Why should Campbell's Movement continue without him? Who were we without the unifying leader among us? Fanning built a social pride within the people that transcended the person of Campbell and the work of Campbell. The founding principles of the Movement were not rooted in Campbell, but rooted in the biblical text. One of the major founding principles was a desire for pure religion, which Campbell helped the Movement understand it and take action towards achieving it. The ongoing Restoration Movement under Fanning's leadership would take great pride in its principles, namely its adherence to the Bible as authoritative and its simple and plain mission that would provide moral power to overcome all of the "kingdoms" of the world.

A simple struggle: the Restoration Movement vs. all other institutions

In his sermon, Fanning reduced all kingdoms, rulers, and institutions of the world into two categories – Satan's dominion and God's dominion. In this epic struggle between good and evil, Fanning employed the archetypal metaphor²⁰ of darkness and light to display these two kingdoms as polar opposites and to set up a dualistic strategy that showed the Movement as the only true hope of the world.

Michael Osborn, writing about the use of a light/dark archetypal metaphor and its function in rhetorical discourse, emphasized, "when light and dark images are used together in a speech, they indicate and perpetuate the simplistic, two-valued, black-white

20. The term "archetypal metaphor" originated in Michael Osborn and Douglas Ehninger, "The Metaphor in Public Address," *Speech Monographs* XXIX (1962): 223-234.

attitudes which rhetoricians and their audiences seem so often to prefer.”²¹ With the use of the light/dark metaphor, the rhetorical leader wants to move his audience out of the darkness of midnight and into the light of day. Given that Fanning focused on the future of the Movement, Osborn’s characterization of a “deterministic attitude” are visible Fanning’s sermon “The Mission of the Church of Christ.” Osborn wrote that for the rhetorical leader the future is at stake, and the rhetorical leader must build a “bandwagon effect” to persuade the audience to join him in his effort because “the future will happen just as we predict.”²² As the audience follows the leader out of the darkness of crisis and into the light of ideology, they are filled with confidence and optimism. In the case of Fanning’s work, the Civil War was a time of darkness in which dark forces like government and denominations were powerfully participating. However, in the wake of this darkness, the light of Restoration churches that remained neutral during war and remained devoted to the search for religious perfection was beginning to shine again.

Fanning argued, “The government of Jehovah having been put at defiance, it was resolved in the counsels of heaven to offer release to death’s captives in an organization at war with the powers of darkness.”²³ Seeking biblical authority for such an assertion, he cited the apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossians: “[You] have been delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.”²⁴ Fanning was firm in his argument that other denominations look similar to the true Church if a

21. Michael Osborn, "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: the Light-Dark Family," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53 (1967): 117.

22. *Ibid.*, 118.

23. *The Living Pulpit*, 518.

24. *Ibid.*, 524.

person looked through “colored glasses,” but he questioned how a person could expect to look through the “Roman and Protestant mists” and see God’s organization and direction clearly. He deduced that a person could not see clearly and moved to conclude that all governments, civil and ecclesiastical, fell under the power of Satan and represent darkness.

The Restoration Movement, however, operated under the power of God. Fanning said that when a person became loyal to Jesus Christ, he or she turned from darkness to light. Everything about God’s Kingdom gave light. Fanning appealed to the prophetic books of the Bible to shed some understanding, or light, on whether or not Jesus sat upon David’s throne. He argued, “In the light of the New Testament, there are no incomprehensible mysteries involved.”²⁵ When discussing Church structure, Fanning said that God lived in the members and the members lived in him adding, “He is our light and life.”²⁶ Therefore, the Restoration Movement was a kingdom of light and, in Fanning’s view, a kingdom of enlightenment, both in the sense of making things clear and in the logic of “common sense” thought.

This metaphor allowed Fanning to fix a deep gulf between the Restoration Movement and all other institutions. God was the giver of light, and the Movement was the only light in the darkness of Civil War and sought more and more light as it sought perfection. Satan ruled the darkness. Darkness so enwrapped the denominations and governments that they could no longer see God or see a way out of their situation. The

25. *Ibid.*, 525.

26. *Ibid.*, 526.

Movement was not a deliverer of the other denominations, but Fanning viewed the Movement as a powerful replacement of other denominations.

Additionally, this metaphor connected the present situation in which the Movement experienced darkness with the biblical situation in which the people of God are separated from darkness and asked to walk in the light. Fanning cited the book of Matthew, in which the final resting place for evil people was a place full of darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He went on to show that when Jesus died, Matthew reported that darkness filled the earth. In contrast, the Restoration Movement was the provider of light. Fanning wrote that John said, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”²⁷ The light of God constantly prompted the Movement to seek greater degrees of ideological perfection so that it could fulfill its mission on the earth.

The mission of the Church of Christ, in Fanning’s deterministic vision of it, was a conquest of the world thus ushering in the full reign of Christ. In Fanning’s apocalyptic rhetorical construction of the Movement, conquest of the world overtook unification as the central focus. Ronald Reid wrote that this type of strategy “has been appealing when people were unhappy about their present and nervous about their future.”²⁸ This type of prophetic utterance arises amidst times of economic hardships, social change, and

27. 1 John 1:5-7, *NRSV*.

28. Ronald F. Reid, “Apocalypticism and Typology: Rhetorical Dimensions of a Symbolic Reality,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (August 1983): 248.

prevalent uncertainty. Reid pointed out that during the time of the Revolutionary War, many religious groups like the Puritans and Shakers believed the good American army was creating a place for ushering in the millennial reign of Christ as they marched over the bodies of the European evil empire.²⁹ While Fanning refrained from this militant strategy, he reused the dualistic nature of apocalyptic prophecy to distinguish and celebrate the ongoing efforts of Restoration.

Fanning took his listeners on a logical quest for clarity in determining the ideology and mission of the Restoration Movement. He employed both rational and stylistic proofs to cement his argument into the minds of his listeners. Fanning reminded them of the distinctive features of the young movement and brilliantly connected the Movement back to the apostolic church of the New Testament, creating a desire to join the plain and simple church that sought pure light in a world of darkness. Fanning explained that his audience, if they accept the message, could be members in the triumph of the Kingdom of God through their participation in the ongoing Restoration efforts.

More than that, Fanning answered the criticism of his contemporaries by contending that his Church of Christ was the only denomination that has stood for God during the Civil War. He condemned the other ecclesiastical institutions for their involvement in the war and asserted that Satan was the lord of such groups. He saw the lack of participation in the war only as a display of their continual focus on the moral mission that God gave to them. Because this mission was the only focus of the Movement, it therefore must continue in full view of the destruction and desolation of the South trusting that God's plan would triumph over human plans, regardless of how it looked at any given moment in history. Ultimately, the Restoration Movement would

29. *Ibid.*, 247.

become a force that would overthrow all other powers, not by military but by morality, and to do this, the Movement would need protected from evil infiltrations. The ongoing Restoration effort would need perfected through strict adherence to the Bible, and followers of Fanning would devote themselves to this already determined outcome.

Perfection: Triumph Through Morality

During the time it took to publish this sermon in the *Living Pulpit*, Fanning handed over editorial duties of the *Gospel Advocate* to the younger David Lipscomb and a short time later began work on a new publication entitled the *Religious Historian*. Fanning's *Religious Historian* explored the history of the Christian religion while also providing instruction in religious practices for his readership. The journal only survived for one year, published from 1873 to 1874 the year Fanning died. However, it was in those years from the publishing of his sermon in 1868 to his death in 1874 that Fanning's resolve for perfection began to fully emerge.

Fanning felt a need to "perfect what had been initiated"³⁰ in the first half of the century when Campbell told him that there was much more to be done in the Movement. He perhaps remembered the words of Campbell, and sought to never be satisfied with the efforts of the movement until the apocalyptic vision of Stone was in full view, meaning until the church became a powerful force in the nation. Fanning never forgot that desire, and as he moved into his later years, the desire to perfect what had been courageously started grew within him as a now established and weathered rhetorical leader of the Movement.

Fanning saw an urgent need for more maturity within the churches if they were to be the light that God needed them to be. He noted that churches would meet only a few

30. Wilburn, 242.

times a month years after they were established. This was unacceptable if the members were to reach maturity and if the Movement was to reach its divine mission. Wilburn wrote, “Fanning believed that a genuine appreciation for the biblical message would create in a man a humility so great that he would continue to search for further understanding all of his life.”³¹ Therefore, Fanning viewed the lack of access to biblical teaching and the deficiency of regular meetings of the church as a major issue as the Movement sought a strong ideology and mission. Churches that made up the Restoration Movement needed to hold regular meetings for the sake of maturing its members, thus providing the Movement with the moral power needed to overcome the other entities.

Fanning desired better organization within congregations, but disliked associations that exploited smaller and more rural congregations in favor of larger urban ones. His experience with the American Christian Mission Society in 1863 had much to contribute to his disdain for these efforts. Regarding congregations, Fanning argued that with preaching tours throughout the Movement, ministers would add many persons to churches, and then the ministers would leave for the next town without a strong leadership or organization in place. Fanning saw this as a problem because several persons who were “saved” by the ministers would be absent from the church in a few months. Fanning observed that this happening was a failure of the Movement to create moral power in the life of its adherents. Churches needed strong leadership, in the case of Restoration Churches, strong qualified men to serve as elders or shepherds of the congregation. This was not happening, and Fanning wanted it corrected so that the Movement could again overcome the other entities of the world.

31. Ibid.

Fanning also saw a lack of action on the part of many members of the Movement. Every member of the Movement needed to be an active member. Fanning commented that too many churches were guilty of using a preacher or elder to do everything in the congregation, regulating the members to “idleness.”³² Fanning was afraid that if each person did not have a work to do within the church, he or she would experience a moral death and the Movement would be morally dead. Moreover, this type of do-nothingness did not produce a strong ideology as a member of the Movement. Obviously, this issue was central to Fanning’s idea that Restoration churches needed to serve as moral examples to all other institutions, but he called this issue “possibly the greatest religious error of the age.”³³

As Fanning looked to the future of the Movement, he feared two emerging dangers. First, Fanning feared that Movement would be ignorant of the Bible, thus losing the basis for its ideology. Leaders who moved away from the text into other arenas seeking to define the Movement’s ideology and mission greatly disturbed Fanning. If the Movement were to remain God’s Kingdom, then it would need to substantiate itself in the texts of the Bible, and rhetorical leaders would need to call the congregations back to a scriptural foundation. Second, there were leaders within the Movement who desired increased respectability in political and denominational spheres and Fanning saw this as a purely egotistical effort. The Movement’s mission, in Fanning’s view, was to supersede other institutions and overtake them, not to yearn for their collective approval. For Fanning, any attempt to join another entity or institution belittled the divine purpose of

32. Ibid., 243; quoted from Tolbert Fanning, “Church of Christ, No. 6,” *Religious Historian* 2 (Oct 1873): 289-316.

33. Ibid.

the Movement, and sold out the Movement for something less than what its identity and ideology claimed.

Wilburn summarized Fanning's late efforts well. He wrote:

In the maturity of life, Tolbert Fanning urged man and women to build on the work which Campbell and the others had done and to go 'on to perfection' in emphasizing the spiritual nature of the church, with every Christian as a priest and a king. But at the same time, he labored ceaselessly against the encroachments of those who would change the course of the cause.³⁴

For Fanning, the Movement needed improved, and the people who adhered to the Movement needed improvement. Therefore, while Fanning placed it in high regard, he knew there were several issues, dangers, and threats to the ongoing development of the Restoration Movement. His answer, differing from the plea of Campbell and others, was to perfect the Movement. This perfecting would progress from inside the movement to outside into the world.

Conclusion

Fanning's earnest desire was to help the Movement press on towards perfection, which was made very clear at the end of Fanning's life. While the potential was present for him to bog down in personal or regional experiences, he sought and succeeded in many ways to transcend the circumstances. His audience encountered this in his writing and preaching, including a rhetoric of transcendence that invited the Movement to see beyond the political chaos of American south and to hope in something greater than reconstruction of the physical, but the reconstruction of the spiritual.

For Fanning, the Restoration Movement needed to do as its name stated; it needed to restore the biblical church of the First Century both in ideology and mission, but ultimately in each member's determination. Consequently, Fanning saw many leaders

34. Wilburn, 251.

who were busy in education like W.K. Pendleton or who were seeking a progressive intertwined interaction with culture like Isaac Errett as some of the biggest threats to the divine purpose of the Movement. Following the example of Fanning, a younger man named David Lipscomb would eventually edit the *Gospel Advocate* and become the one to carry the tradition of Fanning into the 19th Century and embed it into the core of Southern Churches of Christ.

Within the Restoration Movement led by Fanning and then by Lipscomb, there was little emphasis on the unity of Christians, but much emphasis on the perfection of the church. This shift was a radical departure from the “restoration principle,” as practiced by other leaders like Campbell and then Errett. Yet, Fanning found an audience in the south among people who experienced a forced national unity founded upon, what they saw as, feeble reasons for consolidation.

This audience who followed the leadership of Fanning and then of Lipscomb made up what would emerge as the Churches of Christ in 1906,³⁵ a particular sub-group of Campbell’s Restoration Movement. While there was an historical distance between Fanning’s death in 1874 and the official division of the Church of Christ from the Christian Church in 1906, there was little rhetorical distance. The Churches of Christ were located mostly in the southern states, opposed mission societies and progressive innovations in worship, and clung to an apocalyptic vision of moral superiority.

David Harrell wrote that in 1906 when the split took place, the census assigned 1,142,359 people to the larger Restoration Movement. Of that number, 159,658 members identified with Churches of Christ. Most of those who identified with the Church of

35. *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* notes that the Federal Census of 1906 provided a “decisive, self-conscious acceptance of separation from the Christian Church,” 214.

Christ lived in Tennessee, Arkansas, northern Alabama, Texas, and Mississippi. In fact, only about 5,000 members could be identified who lived in the northern states.³⁶ The *Gospel Advocate* was a southern journal for southern people and was highly influential during the post-termination period. David Little observed that the *Gospel Advocate*, “was the only paper that many Christians in the south felt they could rely on, particularly after the war.”³⁷ Therefore, a connection should be made between the development of the Church of Christ as a separate entity and the influence that Fanning and his partner Lipscomb had on its development.

From the time of the Civil War, Fanning opposed Christian associations through mission societies. He admittedly stood against them and it was not surprising that southern churches of Christ would agree with Fanning on this issue. However, Fanning believed in the good of education, and throughout the southern states arose several colleges to help educate the sub-movement’s young persons. A notable college is the one that bears Lipscomb’s name, Lipscomb University, which was established in 1891 as Nashville Bible School.³⁸ One of the first faculty members of Nashville Bible School was James A. Harding, whose name would be used in 1924 to start another Church of Christ school known as Harding University.³⁹ Fanning’s perfecting sub-movement distinguished itself from Franklin’s militant sub-movement through the building of

36. David E. Harrell, Jr., “The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900,” *The Journal of Southern History* 30 (August 1964): 263.

37. *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 362.

38. *Ibid.*, 482.

39. *Ibid.*, 382.

schools, but on the issue of missionary societies, Fanning and Franklin were both convinced of their evil.

Post war prosperity in the north brought with it a desire for development and innovation. Among them was the introduction of instruments to be used in worship. Again, southern churches of Christ, which were not experiencing post-war prosperity sought to connect their more primitive desires back to the New Testament text. Reinforced by the teaching of Fanning and Lipscomb in the *Gospel Advocate*, innovation in Christian worship was seen as a sign of evil and darkness, and preservation of the simple way was a sign of light and perfection. For the southern Church of Christ, Fanning's strategy of perfection took root and called members to want only what was clearly expressed in the pages of the New Testament. Consequently, the worship of God became something that could be perfected by following the pattern of the New Testament church and all additions to that pattern or any innovations were viewed as symbols of human arrogance.

At stake in all of this was the apocalyptic vision for the Church of Christ. Therefore, churches had to focus on "individual biblical morality."⁴⁰ The simple life of a Christian held several prohibitions that protected the church from progressive evils. Christians were encouraged not to drink alcohol, dance, play cards, wear extravagant clothing, and wear excessive cosmetics. If the Church of Christ was to be a light in a dark world, then its members must stay away from the trappings, or entertainment, of the dark world.

Fanning's ideology birthed a perfection sub-movement in which followers bought into his apocalyptic deterministic vision and sought to bring it to consummation through

40. Ibid., 215.

personal morality. In the end, Fanning wanted in the Church what he could not find anywhere else—pure motives—and to accomplish this he preached the need for perfection. More than that, Fanning proclaimed hope that once perfected, the Movement would not only restore a biblical model of Christianity, but would restore the world to Christ through moral and just governance in the name of Christ.

Returning to the larger snapshot of Campbell's Restoration Movement in this post-termination period, I have established three distinct ideologies. First, Pendleton envisioned a celebration of Campbell's work through associations in which the Movement would add to society through good works like education and humanitarian efforts. Second, Franklin sought to arouse dissent regarding the current state of Christianity, thus creating a new inception period of the church as a militant army of strict biblical adherents seeking to correct the evil of all denominations. Third, Fanning sought to perfect a movement running after innovations and recognition through his apocalyptic vision of the moral power of the Movement overcoming the evil powers of the world. All of the sub-groups grounded their strategies in the work of Campbell, seizing a portion of his rhetoric to reinstate a Movement currently in turmoil. Isaac Errett, a leader from the northern states, initiated another sub-group that sought a progressive movement in which the church would finally reach its consummation as it sunk back into the larger Christian community. I turn to Errett's work in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

A PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT IN THE WORK OF ISAAC ERRETT

By listening to Isaac Errett, we hear in his rhetoric a new progressive reformist thinking not affixed to the patterns of the New Testament text alone. If the practice of biblical Christianity was tied to the importance of observed science, then how would the new discoveries in science influence the practice of Christianity within the movement given their devotion to the natural world through what Campbell established as natural rhetoric? Errett sought scientific resources to place alongside the text, thus allowing the Movement to be informed by all rational means available. He sought inventive ways to advance further and closer to the belief that the reign of Christ could be initiated through Christian unity, uncovering Campbell's progressive voice that was often seen within his later years, and using that voice to argue for cooperation with the movement of the larger American culture and more organization among its churches.

Through his editorial work in *The Christian Standard* and his sermon in the *Living Pulpit* entitled "The Law of Progressive Development," we uncover Errett's progressive notion that the era of Christian unity would come if the Movement continued in the way Campbell directed it. Highlighted by his rhetorical efforts to keep the dream of the Movement focused on an unfolding eschatological vision consummated through Christian unity, Errett looked forward to see a better future for a Movement that seemed stuck in reestablishing the past. However, there were certain limits and issues with this progressive way of thinking.

While Errett was highly influential among the more educated, northern urban areas of the movement, many other leaders within the Movement viewed his leadership

as too tolerant, and accused him of moving to the point of abandoning the principle of “restoration.” Benjamin Franklin from the frontier and Tolbert Fanning from the south argued against Errett’s progressive ideology as he strove to work among churches, lead among the missionary societies, and edit of the *Christian Standard*. Errett tried to fix the movement’s gaze on the future, but most of the other influential leaders were content pursuing the ancient ways of the church. This created conflict as each leader sought to win an audience of his own. Each leader thought that his treatment of Campbell’s rhetorical leadership was in step with the man himself. Errett’s progressive strategies were dangerous to the militant and perfecting sub-movements that desired to separate the ongoing Restoration effort from the rest of Christianity. They were dangerous because, in Errett’s construction, the larger Christian community could co-opt the movement through compromises and associations thus ending the Restoration effort altogether.

The chapter will first introduce the reader to Isaac Errett focusing on his rhetorical parallels with Campbell and his experiences as a northern church leader in the post-war era. Emerging from Errett’s notions of the ongoing development of the church into a sophisticated, complex organism was his desire to keep the Movement on the path that Campbell continued to negotiate with great care up to the Civil War. Appreciating Errett as an academic mind open to the recent developments in science sets up our analysis of his sermon published in Moore’s *Living Pulpit*. After exploring rhetorical themes in the sermon, we will expand the scope of this study to look at the foundations of a progressive group of Errett’s followers. Last, this chapter will look at the outcomes and consequences of the progressive sub-movement and draw some conclusions about the lasting rhetorical effects of Errett’s work in the post-termination period.

Background: Isaac Errett's Progressive Development

Many in the Restoration Movement saw Isaac Errett as the successor to Alexander Campbell and perhaps rightly so since the parallels between these two men were substantial. Errett was born on January 2, 1820¹ in New York, his father, Henry, served as an elder in the local congregation connected to the Restoration Movement. Just as Alexander received a Restorationist faith heritage from his father, Thomas Campbell, so also Isaac Errett receive a faith heritage from his father. Living in Scotland, Henry Errett adopted the ideas of John Glas and Robert Sandeman. Glas, in his writing *The Testimony of the King of Martyrs Concerning His Kingdom*, argued that the church and the state needed to be separated and that there was no New Testament precedent for a national church. Sandeman was Glas's son-in-law and together they taught an increased reliance on the New Testament as the sole authority of the church and called for the reinstatement of the first-century church of the Bible.² Henry Errett came to the northeastern United States with a strong belief in the principles of Restoration, and his view of baptism highly influenced Walter Scott's view, which would prove to be a pivotal factor in the formation of the larger Restoration Movement.³ While Isaac Errett

1. Biographical Information taken from *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 469-470 and *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 302-303.

2. Lynn A. McMillon, "Scott, Walter A." *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 355-356.

3. Walter Scott paid a monumental role in the merging of the Stone Movement of Kentucky and the Campbell Movement of Pennsylvania. He convinced Alexander Campbell to cut his Baptist ties and to seek a new ecclesiastical status, bringing in the Stone Movement in 1832. In *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, Mark Toulouse writes, "an encounter with a pamphlet on baptism written by Henry Errett, caused Scott to leave Pittsburgh briefly in 1821. Errett argued that baptism's purpose was involved the 'remission of sins.' Scott became convinced that baptism was more than simply a Christian ritual or ordinance. Rather, it involved a positive action taken by Christians. God's response to this action provided formal remission of

was only six years old when his father died, Errett grew up within the movement due to his father's previous work and influence.

At age twelve, Errett was baptized. The family moved to Pittsburgh, PA following Henry's death. In 1839, at nineteen years of age, Errett had become the regular minister in the church. Geography is important in understanding Errett's notions regarding the Movement, because close to him in Bethany, WV were Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott. These men were very close friends. What is demonstrated here is an intermixing of influence and relationship that tied the Campbell family and the Errett family together with Walter Scott, both in ideology and strategies concerning the Restoration Movement.

Errett and Alexander Campbell not only shared a family connection, but also collaborated during the late 1850s until Campbell's death in 1866. Errett co-edited the *Millennial Harbinger* with Campbell and helped fundraise for Bethany College. These two men served as officers in the American Christian Missionary Society, and when Campbell could not make it to the meeting in of the Society in October of 1861, Errett presided over the meeting in his place. This was the start of trouble for Errett among other leaders in the Movement. At the outbreak of Civil War, there was pressure for the Missionary Society to back the efforts of the Union government because the war representatives from the southern states could not attend the meeting. A resolution was introduced that called on all churches to do everything in their power to sustain the authority of the Union government. When another member questioned the appropriateness of the resolution, Errett ruled that the statement was in order but a vote

sins through the death of Christ. Scott bid farewell to Pittsburgh and left for New York to visit Errett's congregation..." (674).

overturned his ruling. Instead of the statement being adopted by the Society, it was adopted by a “mass meeting” of individual Christians during a ten-minute recess.

Two years later while Errett was chairing the meeting again, the same issue arose and this time the Union supporters wanted a stronger statement of support. The resolution read as follows:

Resolved, that we unqualifiedly declare our allegiance to [the United States] government, and repudiate as false and slanderous any statement to the contrary. That we tender our sympathies to our brave and noble soldiers in the field who are defending us from the attempts of armed traitors to overthrow our government...⁴

In this instance, Errett ruled that the resolution was inappropriate, remembering the result of the vote in the previous year, but again the Society representatives overruled Errett and adopted the resolution. Members of the southern churches and those who practiced pacifism during the war were outraged, among them were the co-editors of the *Gospel Advocate* Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb from Tennessee, and they pointed their messages of disgust at Errett.

This incident led to a distrust of Errett within the southern portion of the Movement, especially among more conservative thinkers. In 1866, however, a group of northern investors including James A. Garfield, who would go on to be President of the United States, selected Errett to edit a weekly publication written on a “popular” level. This was the most influential moment of his life, because the *Christian Standard* would be a pro-Union, progressive paper. The paper, however, stirred up a sectional spirit, failed to make a profit and by 1867, the investors handed the company over to Errett to pay off remaining debts. Under Errett’s full discretion, the paper developed a more

4. Proceedings of the American Christian Missionary Society. (1863).

moderate political position as he sought to heal his relationships with southern church members and leaders, like Fanning and Lipscomb.⁵

Errett understood the weight of the Civil War and the ongoing divisive attitude that seemed to be pervading the Restoration Movement in the middle to late 1800s. He clearly saw two sides of the movement--a major threat to unity. On one side, leaders introduced false tests of fellowship, which allowed matters of opinion and expediency to become points of division, which Campbell had warned against on several occasions before his death. On the other side, some leaders abused Christian liberty by adopting whatever the congregation felt appropriate and, in Errett's view, they lost the true purpose of "restoration" as an ideology and lost the momentum toward that ideology. Errett sought to negotiate the rising tensions of the Movement and make it relevant to the culture, now over a half-century removed from its inception. In the Movement that Errett inherited, he would have to delicately negotiate the post-termination period of 1866 at the end of Civil War and the death of Campbell, but he was not without an example to follow because of his personal relationship with Campbell.

Lord Francis Bacon and Progressive Development

Tim Viner pointed out in his dissertation on the negotiations of Campbell in the Restoration Movement that "Early in its development the movement subscribed to the primacy of empirical science as the foundation for all knowledge for all time."⁶ The exclusive sources of understanding were the book of Nature, which was scientific observation, and the book of Divine Revelation, which was a set of observable facts in

5. Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb were leaders in Nashville, TN and edited *The Gospel Advocate*, a major Restorationalist journal in the southern states.

6. Tim Viner, 9.

Scripture. Francis Bacon's inductive method, adopted by Campbell and by Errett, drew conclusions from observation of the facts, and this had always been the means to true knowledge of nature.

In his book *Organon of Scripture*⁷, J.S. Lamar wrote that Bacon held to a peculiar method of induction that differed from more established simpler practices. This peculiar method required the collection of a plethora of facts or particular explanations of a phenomenon.⁸ Those facts were then compared and carefully studied, so that any aspect found to have been an exception should be thrown out and rejected. Thus, the general conclusion made from the evidence provided served as the universal principle from the particular, but only after scrupulous and tireless work had been done. While this explanation is simplistic, it represents the change Bacon made in scientific observation: establishing the scientific methodology that was in turn used to interpret the Bible.

For Bacon, There were four classes of error in scientific research.⁹ First, the idol of the tribe was error that all humans held in common because of their very nature and the limitations of the mind. Second, the idol of the den was error within the individual because of a loyalty to a certain type of thinking or because of an epistemological predisposition to certain habits and behaviors. Third, the idol of the forum, or marketplace, represented error in the way language was used to misrepresent things and actions. Thus, researchers will often make up words to explain new phenomena or reuse

7. J. S. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1860). This book was written as a companion to Bacon's work *Novum Organum* where he established his scientific methodology.

8. Ibid., 180.

9. Ibid., 202.

a word that has previously been established to mean something entirely different. Last, the idol of the theater represents illogical reasoning and bad philosophical structures. Bacon would argue that any good researcher would avoid these pitfalls, and Lamar argues that as one approached scripture, the same care should be used.

Lamar continued by asserting that when approaching scripture, a researcher should always be mindful of two important and prevalent prejudices. First, the prejudice of opinion threatens to delay the truth from being brought forth through proper observation because a conclusion already existed in the collective mind of a group, or in the mind of an individual. Lamar cited the belief that the earth was the largest body in and center of our solar system as proof that just because the masses believe something to be true does not necessitate that it is true.¹⁰ Second, the prejudice of sense can be violent at first, because the human senses have power to cause belief in something. Lamar argued that senses can judge incorrectly and decisions made by our senses must be rejected when the evidence shows that our senses are mistaken.¹¹ An example of the false judgments of senses was the size of the moon, which appeared to be larger at its rising than at its setting. Yet, we all know that the moon does not change size, but simply appears to do so. Lamar wrote, “Absolutely necessary as this is in the study of nature, it is no less so in that of revelation,”¹² speaking of the way a person should approach the biblical text.

Rising out of Bacon’s relentless adherence to scientific methodology, and relevant to the study of Errett’s sermon in the *Living Pulpit*, were the rise of Darwinism and the

10. Ibid., 205.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 206.

idea of evolution in the 1860s. An 1857 essay by Herbert Spencer entitled, “Progress: Its Law and Cause” served not only as the basis for the continued observations in the theory of evolution, but also as the basis for Errett’s invention of the progress of the Restoration Movement. If the practice of biblical Christianity was tied to the importance of observed science, then how would the new discoveries in science influence the practice of Christianity within the movement given their devotion to the natural world through what Campbell established as natural rhetoric?

Before answering this question, we need to understand the premise and arguments used by Herbert Spencer in the essay because they stand alongside the biblical text to build the foundation of Errett’s sermon. Spencer established “the truth that the series of changes gone through during the development of a seed into a tree, or an ovum into an animal, constitute an advance from homogeneity of structure to heterogeneity of structure.”¹³ Thus, he proposed, through a plethora of facts and observations, an organic movement within any organism or system from the uniform to the complex through differentiation.

Spencer displayed how this fundamental truth exhibited itself in multiple areas of observation from the solar system to the development of a human baby. Moving from the world of natural science to the world of social science, Spencer wrote that the law was “exemplified with equal clearness in the evolution of all products of human thought and action, whether concrete or abstract, real or ideal.”¹⁴ Whether it is human language, or

13. Herbert Spencer, “Progress: Its Law and Cause,” *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative*. Library Edition 1891 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1857), accessed July 21, 2010 http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=335&chapter=12314&layout=html.

14. *Ibid.*, 8 of 27.

the unfolding of the arts, like dance, music, and poetry, all aspects of the human experience move from the simple to the complex. He added to this, “[the law of progress] is seen in the evolution of Society in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organisation.”¹⁵

Consequently, the growing complexity of each system or organism also creates instability because each active force or influence produces multiple changes and effects. For example, take the invention of the steam engine. The social organism of trade was changed to be more heterogeneous and more occupations were introduced to meet the new complexities, prices were altered, and every person involved in trade was affected. The trade industry was modified drastically by the invention of one machine. Thus, multiple effects can follow from one simple change producing results so drastically different from the original organism or system that its complexity completely blinds us from seeing the beginning in any meaningful sense.

As it pertains to religion, Spencer argued that scientific inquiry would give a “firmer basis to all true religion.”¹⁶ While a sectarian, who would be alarmed by the progress of knowledge and the challenge it would present to old ways of thinking deeply rooted in his mind, fears that one day all mysteries might actually be explained, there is a “sincere man of science.”

On the other hand, the sincere man of science, content to follow wherever the evidence leads him, becomes by each new inquiry more profoundly convinced that the Universe is an insoluble problem. Alike in the external and the internal worlds, he sees himself in the midst of perpetual changes, of which he can discover neither the beginning nor the end. If, tracing back the evolution of things, he allows himself to entertain the hypothesis that all matter once existed in a diffused form, he finds it utterly impossible to conceive how this came to be so;

15. Ibid., 13 of 27.

16. Ibid., 26 of 27

and equally, if he speculates of the future, he can assign no limit to the grand succession of phenomena ever unfolding themselves before him. On the other hand, if he looks inward, he perceives that both terminations of the thread of consciousness commenced, and he cannot examine the consciousness that at any moment exists; for only and state of consciousness that is already past can become the object of thought, and never one that is passing.¹⁷

Researchers, in this view, face the littleness of their knowledge and eventually must confront the unknowable regardless of whether they are studying the natural sciences or the biblical text.

Spencer claimed that an “impenetrable mystery” was under all things and the more humans think about it, the more baffled they would become. Thus, the material world and the spiritual world were not at war with each other, because both claimed to understand that which no human could possibly understand. As Errett addressed members of the Restoration Movement through his sermon, he assumed that his audience possessed a high regard for natural order and the pursuit of science. Additionally, he assumed that his audience had important questions about the direction of the Movement given the death of Campbell and the condition of the country. He also assumed that the law of progress criticized the regressive approach of returning to Christianity as it was in the Bible. Therefore, what was good for the natural world was good for the Restoration Movement, and instead of looking behind; he challenged the people to consider that the Movement was still changing into something more complex, more diverse, and more mysterious.

**Summary:
Isaac Errett’s “The Law of Progressive Development”**

In his sermon featured in the *Living Pulpit* entitled, “The Law of Progressive Development,” there is little doubt that Errett responded to Herbert Spencer’s essay

17. Ibid.

Progress: It's Law and Cause. For Errett, the idea of separating creation from its Creator would not be tolerated. He wrote,

This stupendous effort to banish a personal Creator and to subdue all things—even the workings of the mind, the movements of nations, and all historical developments, to the operation of blind and resistless forces for materialism, is at war with the fundamental idea of a Divine revelation, and can have no sympathy where faith rests in a Divine Creator...¹⁸

Yet, while Errett did not address the implications that evolution and the idea of progression had on the notion of God, he did explore the theory of progress as a legitimate finding of science that could be applicable to the church. He suggested that his audience should, “render it probable that this law of progressive development pervades the universe.”¹⁹ He said, “Life is growth, development, from the germ of existence through successive stages of infancy, childhood, youth, to manhood’s perfection: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”²⁰ The fundamental premise of the sermon was that whatever natural laws apply in nature was sure to apply to the Restoration Movement.²¹

Errett reflected on three important Restoration beliefs: the unfolding plan of redemption, the development of individual morality and faith, and the historical development of the church. Errett challenged his audience to first view the way in which

18. Isaac Errett, *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 471.

19. *Ibid.*, 472.

20. *Ibid.* The allusion to the growth of an ear of corn is taken from Mark 4:26-29, the text of the sermon.

21. Errett wrote, “It has long been a mischievous delusion that the operations of grace are, if not lawless, at least out of sympathy and out of harmony with the known laws of the mind; that religion is a not a science to be learned, or a life to be developed; that religious faith has nothing in common with other faith; that religious peace and happiness ignore all the established conditions of peace and happiness; that a touch of magic or of miracle flashes light on the mind, peace on the conscience, and joy on the soul; and that, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter, the child of God springs from the bosom of the supernatural, full-armed, into life,” 472.

God's plan of redemption was an unfolding story that was still unfolding for the audience in their contemporary culture. Second, Errett asked them to consider the way a believer grows and develops through his or her lifespan, moving in a progressive, not regressive, continuum. Lastly, it would follow for Errett, that the historical development of the Restoration Movement was also moving in a progression from the uniform to the complex through differentiation.

Starting with the unfolding plan of redemption, Errett addressed some skeptics regarding the omnipotence of God. These skeptics should be viewed by the reader of the this sermon as people outside of the Movement, because it is assumed that a skeptic would not pick up this book of sermons for leisure reading. Therefore, Errett was trying to unify his audience by immediately addressing this group of unidentifiable skeptics and providing common ground for his audience to engage the idea of progress.

He responded to questions from this outside group of skeptics. If God was full of power, then why did it take God so long, Errett suggests four thousand years, to send the Savior to earth? Returning to the law of progressive development, he claimed that if God chose to exert power upon humanity, then the earth would have been destroyed and all humans would have dead. He explained, "Salvation of a rational nature implies that the nature itself desires to be saved; that it is weary of sin; is conscious of its curse; has trust in a Savior; and penitently returns to submission to the will of God."²² Humanity needed experience over omnipotence to truly have salvation. By using the term "experience," Errett returned to a Baconian notion of the consequences of experimentation and the observable facts or events that keep happening given a particular circumstance or set of

22. Ibid., 474-475.

circumstances.²³ For Errett, humans had to conclude that sin was a curse, through the ongoing repetition of its effects on humanity, before they would understand and appreciate God's action of salvation.

Errett proceeded to rehearse the "landmarks" of divine mercy throughout human history as told by the biblical narrative. First, God made a promise to Eve that her seed would crush the serpent's head and this was an act of God planting a **seed** of coming salvation. Second, God chose Abraham as the father of a nation and this was an act of God allowing the seed to germinate. Third, God built the Jewish nation and this was the growth of a blade on the newly formed stock. Last, Jesus was born into the world through the Jewish nation and this was the ear of corn—fully developed plan of redemption. Thus, Errett displayed the relationship between the law of progressive development and the development of the Kingdom of God as it pertained to salvation. Errett displayed for his audience the connection between what is observed in nature and what could be observed in the text of scripture. We need to observe at this point that the unfolding plan of redemption, or salvation, was a fundamental belief for people in the Movement who saw the Bible as a story that revealed God's care and love for the world, first through Abraham, then through the nation of Israel, and now to all people through Jesus. Consequently, this was an easy place for Errett to find agreement and then move onto matters that were more controversial.

Continuing, the law of progressive development could be observed in the individual spiritual life as well. The seed was the word of God contained in the New Testament. Errett was quick to point out that the story of Jesus and the revelation of God's plan of redemption stripped the Old Testament, or Hebrew Scriptures, of all

23. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture*, 204.

authority over any Christian. The seed must be planted in some soil, for Errett the Word of God must be planted in the human heart. Listen to the dependence on natural reasoning in these words:

That soil is the human heart; and as “the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself”—automatically, by virtue of her native capacities, and through the certain, though mysterious, chemistry by which the ever-present God elaborates life, and **bloom**, and fruitfulness from the dull clod of the valley—so is the spiritual nature of man possessed of capabilities for automatic development of the truth it has received. The truth of God is adapted, to our nature, and the soul “brings forth **fruit** for herself,” by virtue of her own capabilities and powers for receiving, digesting, and appropriating truth.²⁴

As the seed then grew “naturally,” men planted and watered and God gave the increase or growth in the sense of personal development. By “man,” the audience would assume that Errett thought of the preachers within the Movement that connected the Word of God to the human heart. However, Errett contended that God was the one working from within to make a person accept the truth of the message, and this process was one that, though blind to the human eye, was “silent and gradual, but beautiful and progressive.”²⁵

The idea that conversion was immediately transformative and somewhat miraculous did not fit within the idea of progressive development. The initial Christian rite of baptism, the act of immersing an individual in water was extremely important to the Restoration Movement, was a point at which the person was a babe in his or her spiritual life, and from this point the development could take place. Errett went further to share three elements needed to grow a mature Christian person. First, the food of a Christian was the truth contained in the Bible. Second, the Christian atmosphere was the Spirit of God, which leads to purity and holy living. Third, activities of faith and love

24. Errett, *The Living Pulpit*, 479.

25. *Ibid.*, 480

which lead us to the example of Christ and the primitive church made up the Christian's exercise.

Errett suggested some practical applications, or might we say consequences, of these observations. To those who fear that they had not been converted due to the absence of any extraordinary experience, he asserted that the spiritual life began small and over time developed into bigger experiences. To those who doubted their acceptable condition and standing before God, he commented that if the Christian life was characterized by growth, then our reality was going to fall short of our ideal. A Christian could be certain, in the face of trial and struggle, that while childhood was full of conflict and toil, it was these very aspects of life that made us strong in adulthood. To those who lived in the past with no signs of growth, Errett suggested that they heavily depend on their conversion story and were a "blade with great promise" that needed to grow to produce fruit. Errett challenged the audience by this law of progressive development, calling them to seek observable differentiations proving that their growth was substantial, that their experience of the divine was unfolding before them, and then he begins to really challenge the audience. Errett called them not to look back to a period of comfort, but to look forward and to recognize their potential future.

In the last major section of the sermon, Errett moved to the historical development of the church, connecting this natural development with the growth of the ear of corn. Adding elements to the story, Errett proceeded to argue that the church, like a plant in Winter, had to weather storms, insect raids, the trampling of animals, and other things before coming back to Spring in the Reformation. He claimed that the full ear yet to be seen, and the Restoration Movement was simply that—a movement in the direction of

ecclesiastical maturity or completeness. Completeness would come when the church “conquers the world” and the reign of Christ begins, Errett saw this as the merging of heaven and earth in which Jesus becomes the political power on the earth and establishes his reign over a utopian society governed by biblical principles.

Errett’s practical applications, or consequences, of this section in the sermon were twofold. First, continued moral development within the church would result in the triumph of the church. Leaders have a tendency to look back on past failures. Errett pushed the movement forward by having its congregations envision future triumphs leading to the full reign of God in the world. This assertion by Errett not only challenged his audience to spiritual development as members of the Restoration Movement, but also gave them a vision of why to do it by looking into the future and showing them an ultimate telos. Second, Errett argued that the world has yet to observe the “noblest fruitage” of the Christian life. Errett did not point the Movement back to primitive Christianity as portrayed in the New Testament, but argued that the Movement must look into the future and see a depth of spiritual life among the Christian community that goes beyond that of the infant church of the first century. He added, “God has a right to demand of the Church now, a strength, symmetry, and fruitfulness beyond any thing that glorified her early history.”²⁶

The sermon ended with a vision of the Kingdom of God on earth displaying for all what the full ear of corn would look like when achieved, when fully grown:

We can not take time here to sketch our ideas of the triumphs yet to be won by the Church of God. A Spiritual Brotherhood, redeemed from all human authority, united only in Christ, with no test of admission but submission to Christ, and not test of membership but obedience to Christ’s commandments—such a brotherhood, enjoying, in the closest spiritual unity, the highest spiritual freedom,

26. *Ibid.*, 492.

and consecrating all their powers, in holy enthusiasm, to the world's regeneration, would soon banish infidelity, superstition, and tyranny from the earth, mold the governments of the world into humaner forms, drive out selfishness, oppression, aristocracy, and caste, before the light of Christ's ideas of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and plant in all lands, and in the islands of the sea, peace and good-will among the families of mankind. The Spirit of God would brood lovingly, in dove-like sweetness and gentleness, over such a scene, and heaven would stoop down to bless, with unwonted lavishness of bounty, the reconciled earth.²⁷

Errett closed his sermon with the vision above adding that this event would mark the “full corn in the ear”²⁸ or in the words of Herbert Spenser, the “heterogeneity” of the Movement. In this vision, there were joyful shouts of the harvest time. The person who sowed the seed of the Movement, perhaps Campbell himself, would be filled with tears. The person who reaps the great harvest, perhaps Errett's contemporaries, would gather up the crop in great joy. Yet, at the end of the sermon, all of these wonderful people of past, present, and future are together before the Lord indicating that the progression had worked and the Lord is now with the people. This rhetorical vision of the consummation of the Movement was one that Errett must have learned from Campbell, in which the Lord joins a unified Christian people for a time of great celebration.

**Analysis:
Errett's Progressive Development Left Members Behind**

In an address to the Ohio Christian Missionary Society in 1871, Errett used a metaphor of an open door found in the New Testament book of 1 Corinthians²⁹ to talk about opportunities that abounded in the Movement and the dangers that were also

27. Ibid., 492-493.

28. Ibid., 493.

29. 1 Corinthians 16:9.

evident as the Movement tried to go through open doors. In this address, Errett returned to the law of progressive development:

But out text places in juxtaposition with this thought of great opportunity providentially afforded, another thought, not in itself startling. But startling from the place it occupies, and the relation it bares; this is *great opposition*. Great opportunity and great opposition. A great and effectual door is opened, and there are many adversaries. Strangely as it sounds the association is not unnatural. The same soil that produces a luxuriant yield of corn, produces also a corresponding abundance of weeds and noxious plants. The same sun and rain that make the grass to spring, start also the poisonous vine; and the slimy serpent is warmed into life by the beams of the same sun that speeds the flight of the lark and wakes his morning song.³⁰

Unlike the sermon printed in *The Living Pulpit*, this sermon provided a way to address the negative side of progress; namely, that there would be opposition to it. Errett did not see this opposition coming from inside the Movement, but from outside forces in other religious groups. However, Errett did warn his audience about their “agency”³¹ in this process. He claimed that God provided the open door, but it was the Movement’s members who had to walk through the door together.

Contrary to Errett’s ideas about opposition coming from outside, opposition to progress arose from inside the movement. Shortly after the warning of opposition, Errett received criticism from Benjamin Franklin in which he accused Errett and other leaders of inappropriate teaching by publishing a *Christian Standard* editorial in his own journal entitled, “Alarmists”³² charging them to be dangerous and unsound. Errett responded,

30. Isaac Errett, “Opportunity and Opposition” *The Christian Standard* (June 10, 1871): 177.

31. Ibid., “There is not only here room for divine agency, but for human agency as well. If God opens the door, we must enter in and bear the Gospel with us.”

32. Benjamin Franklin, *American Christian Review* (Nov. 5, 1872): 357.

“We have no disposition to find fault, and have kept long silence in hope that there would be an end to these needless and mischievous alarms.”³³

Moses Lard was another leader who opposed progress among churches of the Restoration Movement. Earlier in 1865, Lard wrote an article in which he charged:

He is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things. These men must have changes; and silently they are preparing the mind of the brotherhood to receive changes. Be not deceived, brethren, the Devil is not sleeping. If you refuse to see the danger till ruin is upon you, then it will be too late.³⁴

What can be observed at this point are three distinct audiences among the Restoration Movement. First, Lard was, like Franklin, a leader among the people of the frontier. This audience stood against extravagance and refinement. As we learned in chapter three, the Movement knew Franklin for his forceful speech and straightforward attack of any religious leader he thought to be wrong. The American frontier took great pride in their individual freedoms, their strong work ethic, and their simple agricultural life. Restoration Movement leaders sought to connect their audience with a form of Christianity that resonated with these ideals.

Second, Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, editors of the *Gospel Advocate* from Tennessee, had a different audience. This audience comprised mostly of southern persons, who not only faced the destruction of Civil War, but who resented the government because of the conditions they faced with a perceived lack of help from the North. The progressive nature of the northern culture was rejected not because it was progressive, but it was depraved because it was “northern” or affiliated with the “Union.”

33. Isaac Errett, “Alarmists Again,” *The Christian Standard* (November 9, 1872): 356.

34. Moses E. Lard, “The Word of the Past—Symptoms of the Future,” *Lard’s Quarterly* 2 (April 1865): 262.

The sectional spirit of the American South gave rise to another audience, not as simple as the frontier, but not wanting association with northern culture to displace the southern culture in which they had great pride.

Last, Errett's audience, which consisted of northern urban people; better educated from some of the top colleges in the nation and who were no longer satisfied with the simplicity of the New Testament Church. This audience sought ways to reduce the rigid teachings of the Movement making it appealing to a growing audience of sophisticated people in a complex, progressive society. Errett, leading his particular audience, sought ways to interact with leaders from the other audiences. Errett often charged Franklin with being harsh and not conducting himself as a gentleman should. For the frontiersman, this was proof of a widening gap between leaders in the city and leaders in the country. For the urbanites, this was a reason to pay little attention to the mad man out on the farm. Errett interacted with Fanning differently; often Errett would show his support of the Union and of the government of the United States in a way that left the southern audience unable to participate. This again widened the gap between the American North and American South within the Restoration efforts and caused a continued disruption in the healing process of all those affected by the Civil War.

A Movement that fixes its gaze forward

To claim that Errett challenged his audience to consider a new way of looking at the Restoration Movement would completely underestimate what Errett was trying to do in this wonderful moment in which he fully confronted his audience with the absurdity of regression by citing as evidence a world full of progressions. For Errett, the Restoration Movement had to look backwards for a time because the plan of redemption, which he

established first in his sermon, had been forgotten or had at least been belittled by the larger Christian world. Consequently, the people in the Movement landed on the term “restoration” as a way of bringing to the forefront those forgotten principles of New Testament Christianity. Established by Campbell, Barton W. Stone, and other leaders, these principles, such as weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper and full immersion of believers among others, were the hallmarks of the Movement, differentiating it from other Christian groups. Errett, however, asked a question of himself as he prepared, and then to his audience in this sermon. The question is: after over fifty years of the Restoration Movement, does the best vision of who we are and what we are to be still lie behind us? Errett’s answer is so obvious that the audience might assume the question is a rhetorical question given the vast evidence that the past is not an adequate context to place the culmination of the Movement.

Errett did display a vision of what this Movement should look like as it progressed further into the future. This vision, not only contested the idea that the Movement should be focused on restoring past glory days of the First Century church, but also provided a new way to move forward in the wake of Campbell’s death as the Movement searched for new meaning in a progressively changing world.

Errett also provided his audience with a practical way of dealing with the primitive church; that is, the Church as it is represented in the New Testament text. Errett mentioned it three different times in the text of the sermon. First, Errett referred to the primitive church when he addressed the maturation process of a believer. He claimed that three things would help a believer grow: the truth of the word of God, the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, and the exercises of the primitive church. Second, when

Errett addressed the history of Christianity he called the primitive church a “beautiful unspringing of the seed of the kingdom in the first century...”³⁵ Third, near the end of the sermon Errett challenged his audience directly when he wrote, “We sometimes speak of primitive Christianity as if the noblest perfection of character belonged to the first age; as if the blade, in its first springing, was superior to the full corn in the ear.”³⁶

Restoring the primitive church was not the goal of the Restoration Movement for Errett. He saw the primitive church as a good start, an unspringing of hope in what was to come next. While Errett admitted that some eras of Christian history did not build upon this positive start, he affirmed his belief in the Restoration Movement as the continuance of the primitive church. His problem was a lack of hope that he had felt throughout the movement. Errett asked his audience to consider the current Movement in which they were involved as superior to and the natural progression out of the primitive church. While the New Testament church has its practical place within the movement as an example to be followed and a firm foundation on which to build, Errett ended the sermon with a strong vision of a future church that was fully grown, but yet to be realized in the recounting of the history of Christianity or in the present Movement. Therefore, Errett provided something for his audience to progress towards and gave the Movement a goal towards which to move.

Do not break the law of progressive development

One of the most pointed images in Errett’s sermon came after he retold the history of Christianity and in the first application directed to his audience regarding the triumph of the church contingent upon the moral power of believers. He cited a particular image

35. Ibid., 485.

36. Ibid., 491.

from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*,³⁷ which in one of his hells the punishment is to have their faces reversed so that persons are compelled to walk backwards and only look at things behind them. Errett used this image to argue against the constant wrangling of other religious leaders over historical issues, he wrote:

It seems to us that many of our modern prophets have their heads reversed even here, so that their lugubrious gaze is led to the past rather than the future; and they find more material for reflection in the wrecks of past struggles than in the promise of coming triumphs. We should carefully guard against such paralysis of faith.³⁸

For examples of such “lugubrious gazes,” consider these from Errett’s own experience before writing this sermon.

In 1863, after experiencing much success in Detroit, some church members at the Jefferson Avenue and Beaubien Street Church of Christ asked Errett to write a concise tract explaining the beliefs of the church. Errett agreed to write the tract since inquiries bombarded him from numerous people on a daily basis, so he wrote a tract titled, “A Synopsis of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ.” However, Errett wrote the tract in a style similar to a denomination’s creedal statement, with Roman numerals that seem to set the most important beliefs apart from the less important ones. Moses E. Lard, a frontier Movement leader and editor of the short lived *Lard’s Quarterly*, printed the entirety of the tract and then reacted strongly in his periodical on the basis that when the Restoration Movement started, it was opposed to dogmas and creeds. He wrote:

There is not a sound man in our ranks who has seen the preceding “Synopsis” that has not felt scandalized by it. I wish we possessed even one decent apology for its appearance. It is a deep offense against the brotherhood—an offense tossed

37. Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*, or in Italian: *Divina Commedia* (1308-1321).

38. Errett, *The Living Pulpit*, 489.

into the teeth of a people who, for forty years, have been working against the divisive and evil tendency of creeds.³⁹

Of course, in article X of Errett's synopsis, he seemed to confess his legitimate concern over writing such a document:

This declaration of our faith and aims is not to be taken as a creed. We assume no right to bind the conscience with any stereotyped formula. Vital religion is a thing of growth in the heart of the individual Christian. We design a mere statement, for general information, of the purpose which have induced us to band together, and the principles we propose to develop. We have no sectarian shackles with which to bind Christ's freedom—no spiritual prison-house for the confinement of the soul. We present no authoritative standard of interpretation of the Bible. The Spirit that indited the word, can best bring home to the heart the significance of its truths. The practice of the divine precepts, furnishes the best interpretation. We repudiate all human authority in spiritual concerns...⁴⁰

Errett did not allow these historically based issues to overtake him and his ongoing local work, maintaining a focus on evangelism he continued to see success with the congregation he served in Detroit.

Another issue arose when Errett displayed a silver doorplate, which was a gift given to him. It read "Rev. I Errett," and editors throughout the Movement remarked that since Errett chose to call himself "Reverend," he was aligning himself with clergy-glorifying sects. Again, Errett did not react to these unjustified attacks and he just continued to minister, which concerning his effectiveness not one editor in the Movement could argue against him.

Yet in the sermon under review, "The Law of Progressive Development," Errett invited the audience to correlate this constant reaction to the past with the notion of living in hellish conditions. Thus, the conclusion he emphasized was that in the Movement,

39. Moses Lard, "Remarks on the Foregoing," *Lard's Quarterly* 1 (September 1863): 100.

40. Isaac Errett, "A Synopsis of Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ," *Lard's Quarterly* 1 (September 1863): 98.

leaders who look to the past to guide the future were no help; in fact, they created “paralysis of faith.” For Errett, if the Movement was to succeed in being a spiritual brotherhood released from human influence and united in Jesus, “with no test of admission but submission to Christ, and no test of membership but obedience to Christ’s commandments,”⁴¹ then the leaders had to unite in acceptance of progressive development. The Movement had to relent the constant urge to look over its shoulders. While Errett sought unity through progressive ideals, he left behind a major contingency of persons within the larger Restoration effort who did not possess the skills and did not desire the necessities of his target audience. If the Movement sought to unite Christians, then at this point we must explore new purposes for the existence of several sub-movements since unity was not the sole aim of the Movement any longer.

Conclusion

Isaac Errett continued the rhetorical legacy of Campbell through his sustained pursuit of unity among Christians as a founding principle of the Movement. He understood Campbell’s notion that the best days of Christianity were in the future, through which Campbell created an eschatological vision of Christ reigning over all human governments and creating a peaceful Kingdom on the earth, which motivated the title of and teaching within the *Millennial Harbinger*. Errett used the very same notions of natural progression found in Campbell’s rhetorical constructions as evidence of the unfolding truth that the movement would see better days in the future as a foundation for his progressive vision and strategies. The Restoration Movement was God’s unfolding plan to develop a future that looked better than the whole history of Christianity.

41. Errett, *The Living Pulpit*, 493.

Errett's attention to progress faced problems in a Movement dedicated to restoring Biblical practices and principles. Many leaders thought that other denominations of Christianity lost their authentic connection to Christ when they became progressive and replaced the teaching of the Bible with church traditions and systems of doctrine that were not to be explicitly found within the New Testament. Early in the Movement's history, criticism came from Campbell. While Campbell himself seemed to change his position on this over the years, other leaders in the Movement criticized that change and stood firm on, what they would call, the "old paths" of an "ancient gospel." Among these leaders were Fanning and Franklin.

Despite ongoing debates at the national level, Errett enjoyed great success among a particular audience within the Movement, and to that group he was Alexander Campbell's successor and a great rhetorical leader. Dying in 1888, nearly twenty years after the death of Campbell, Errett offered the Movement a future vision. Of course, only some in the Movement agreed with Errett's progressive teachings. Errett was a leader of a progressive and complex sub-movement, resulting in the establishment of the Christian Church as a formal denomination in 1906.

As stated before regarding the 1906 census, the Christian Church officially became a denomination of its own almost two decades after the death of Errett, and almost fifty years after the publishing of the *Living Pulpit*. While an argument could be made against Errett's influence on the split due to historical distance, this work contends that the progressive ideology was birthed during the post-termination period under examination. Errett's work provides a framework through which the Christian Church could identify and work toward a rebuilt Christian communion. The Christian Church

was located mostly in the northern states, supported mission societies and progressive innovations in worship, and clung to Campbell's view of natural development as they sought new opportunities to strengthen Christian unity.

David Harrell provided a breakdown of membership within the Christian Church at the time of the 1906 census, which served as the historical marker for a division within the Movement. In the chapter focusing on the impact of Fanning, this work viewed the southern Church of Christ numbers as a clear indicator of his influence and leadership. Now, we turn to Errett's northern audience and the numbers that Harrell rehearsed. He reported that only 138,703 persons of a total membership of nearly one million lived in the eleven southern states. If we take away persons living in Virginia and North Carolina, that number drops to 99,233.⁴² Most members of the Christian Church, sometimes called the Disciples of Christ, were from the northern states.

In communication with David Lipscomb, co-editor of the southern *Gospel Advocate* with Fanning, Errett affirmed that the *Christian Standard* began publication so that northern members could connect "on the duty of Christians to support the government in its war upon the rebellion, its duty to punish traitors, and to express themselves on the infamy of slavery."⁴³ While a rift between north and south was definitely apparent, the rift over innovations stood alongside the sectional biases. Both northern and southern church leaders created theological convictions based upon their sectional biases. This was clear in the decision that some churches made to use musical

42. Harrell, "The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900," 263.

43. David Lipscomb, "The Truth of History," *Gospel Advocate* XXXIV (July 14, 1892): 436. Lipscomb reported a conversation with Errett regarding the establishment of the *Christian Standard* and while Lipscomb was not unbiased, there was no reason to assume that Lipscomb was giving a false testimony of Errett's words.

instruments in their worship services. Clearly, this decision was a sectional theological conviction based upon postwar prosperity and a desire in the urban northern areas of the Movement to display their progressive notions through innovations such as these. In the south, a strong theology against using musical instruments in worship also emerged. This marked one of the characteristics that divided the Christian Church from the Church of Christ.

Another innovation was the development and support of para-church organizations like colleges, missionary societies, and other humanitarian efforts. Prompted by the new business models of the northern industrial revolution, church leaders sought to better educational opportunities, create associations to spread the unity of the church, and participate in efforts that either advanced the human condition or provided care in the midst of a chaotic situation. While these efforts were not specifically mentioned in Scripture, they were deemed necessary developments to connect with a rapidly developing culture. However, much of the cultural modernization took place in the northern states, among the urban areas. Therefore, criticism from the south and the frontier was inevitable.

In the face of many critics, Errett and his framework of natural development was an observable truth, both from the text of scripture and from life experience. Deeply rooted in the rhetorical negotiations of Campbell, the idea that more complex, developed institutions called for more complex organization than what the Movement traditionally had was a reality that needed to be faced. Errett and the emerging Christian Church still stood on biblical principles, but were open to progress that fit within the guiding rhetorical vision of Christian unity.

Returning to the larger snapshot of Campbell's Restoration Movement in this post-termination period, we have established four distinct ideologies. First, Pendleton envisioned a celebration of Campbell's work through associations in which the Movement would add to society through good works like education and humanitarian efforts. Second, Franklin sought to arouse dissent regarding the current state of Christianity, thus creating a new inception period of the church as a militant army of strict biblical adherents seeking to correct the evil of all denominations. Third, Fanning sought to perfect a Movement running after innovations and recognition through his apocalyptic vision of religious moral power overcoming the evil powers of the world. Fourth, Errett moved the Restorations efforts towards a future that was better than any notion of the past including the patterns and practices of the New Testament church. His progressive ideology allowed the Movement freedom to seek innovations and practice invention in a changing postwar American culture.

Each of the sub-groups grounded its strategies in the work of Campbell, seizing a portion of his rhetoric to reinstate a Movement in turmoil. The Restoration Movement, at this termination point under examination, followed rhetorical leaders whose strategies were in complete contrast with one another. Therefore, at the close of the Civil War in 1866, the year in which Alexander Campbell died, there was no reason to think or speak about the Restoration Movement as one socio-religious movement with a shared vision of consummation and a shared ideology. This work uncovered four distinct rhetorical leaders with their own strategies and consummation visions. In the conclusion of this work, I will summarize the four sub-movements of the post-termination period and suggest some of the consequences that the termination of 1866 had on the Movement. I

will close by considering the larger implications for studying the rhetoric of social movements and offering suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: FROM UNITY TO DIVISION

The year 1866 marked a termination point of the American Restoration Movement. The Movement experienced the simultaneous occurrence of two traumatic events. First, Alexander Campbell who had led the Restoration Movement toward a rhetorical vision of a unified Christian community died. Second, the Civil War ended in 1866 and while the end of the war was a good thing culturally, piecing together American life would prove difficult for the nation, especially in the southern states. For a Movement that relied so heavily on the character and teaching of Campbell, his death was a fatal blow to the ongoing rhetorical vision of people now scattered across the nation in the wake of Civil War, which had all but torn America into two distinct sections.

While thoughts about division arose across the country, most Restoration affiliated churches focused on continuing in the direction previously established by Alexander Campbell. W. T. Moore understood the need to celebrate the accomplishments of the Movement at this critical moment, so he collected sermons from Restoration preachers and leaders across the north and the south, and put them into an anthology entitled *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*. Moore's book served as a piece of epideictic rhetoric, commemorating the achievements of the Movement shortly after the termination event, as well as celebrating Campbell as a reformer of Christianity.

Most rhetorical research would miss this anthology because researchers focus on a particular person or a particular strand of discourse over a certain period. However, this work looked into a moment of history and listened to several voices, all part of one Movement in the wake of termination, seeking to understand the historical impact of

post-termination rhetorical discourse. This work finds new ideologies of a post-termination rhetoric, which was not in the possession of one rhetorical leader, or found in a particular strand of discourse over a longer period, but discovered among the competing voices in an important moment of history. Thus, the sermons of the *Living Pulpit* provided a snapshot within the moment just after the termination event through which a rhetorical study could probe the discourse from multiple vantage points and discover several ongoing sub-movements. Once the study established a clear ideology in the text of a particular sermon, that ideology could be tested against the leader's larger discourse. This study then traced the consequences of sub-movements that started in the post-termination period and matured in the years to come, splintering Campbell's Restoration Movement into smaller sub-movements with differing ideologies.

Rhetorical Ideology in a Termination Event

Alexander Campbell served as the rhetorical leader of the Restoration Movement for several decades. Under Campbell's rhetorical leadership, a key ideology of Christian unity compelled a people to identify with the movement and long for a decontaminated church in which all Christians joined through one fellowship. This vision, once realized, was the consummation of the Movement. Of course, this was Campbell's objective for the movement, tested through rhetorical negotiations and able to navigate the rhetorical problems faced in the years leading up to the Civil War. In the years of Campbell's leadership, dissention arose from inside the Movement but Campbell's rhetorical leadership constructed fitting responses to difficult issues. However, for the Movement to continue after the death of Campbell, leaders had to arise to continue the Movement ideology. Therefore, of primary concern within a post-termination rhetorical study is

how new leaders would use Campbell's voice to continue, recast, revive or restart the Movement.

Four men emerged as leaders during the postwar period after the death of Campbell. They were W. K. Pendleton, Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning, and Isaac Errett. This work revealed Campbell's influence on each of these emerging leaders and showed how each man gathered a following based on adherence to varying strategies. The leaders reacted to each other's discourse, indicating their recognition of each other as rival rhetors. Of interest to this work is how the identified postwar leaders confined their efforts, through the sermons printed in the *Living Pulpit* and their publications, to particular audiences within the larger Movement; meeting the immediate needs of the membership while forfeiting larger ideological concerns that characterized Campbell's leadership.

In this post-termination period, I located four distinct ideologies. First, Pendleton envisioned a celebration of Campbell's work through associations in which the Movement would add to American society through good works like education and humanitarian efforts. Second, Franklin sought to arouse dissent regarding the current state of Christianity, thus creating a new inception period of the church as a militant army of strict biblical adherents seeking to correct the evil of all existing Christian groups. Third, Fanning sought to perfect the church in danger of running after progressive innovations and denominational recognition through his apocalyptic vision of religious moral power overcoming the evil powers of the world. Fourth, Errett moved the Restoration churches towards a future that was better than any notion of the past including the patterns and practices of the New Testament church. His progressive

ideology allowed the Movement freedom to seek innovations and practice invention in a changing postwar American culture. Each new leader rooted his ideology in Campbell's work and manipulated Campbell's voice to speak in agreement on notions that the new leader favored, but silenced Campbell's voice in areas where the new leader disagreed.

Pendleton's association sub-movement

There is little doubt that Campbell worked with associations and dedicated his life to para-church projects outside of the local congregation. W. K. Pendleton, as a close friend and relative to Campbell, not only knew of this passion but also worked alongside Campbell to grow Bethany College and to support the mission society's efforts. In the wake of Campbell's death and the end of the Civil War, Pendleton made what was reported as a hard decision to close publication of the *Millennial Harbinger* and focus on other things, like his leadership of Bethany College and his participation in the missionary societies.

This work argues that Pendleton started an associational rhetoric, seeking to celebrate the contributions of the churches as they influenced larger society. Developments in education and the building of schools so that the church might influence the education of young people were ways to preserve the Movement in the wake of termination. Pendleton was so dedicated to the work in arenas of association, that he failed to realize the importance of the *Millennial Harbinger*, one of the Movement's most precious associations.

Seeking to educate the church, Pendleton lost the ability to communicate with his less educated audience. While this work affirmed that Pendleton was a strong academic mind, he was not a strong public communicator. His lecture on the "Ministry of the Holy

Spirit” left little doubt of his abilities as a professor and his lack of appeal in the larger ecclesiastical movement. There was an active debate concerning the relationship churches should have with associations. What arose out of this debate were two very clear parties; those who wanted the congregations to be secessionist not participating in para-church opportunities, and those who wanted congregations to form associations for connecting the church with other important areas of society. Pendleton was obviously for associations, as were most affluent, urban, Northern churches.

Campbell’s Restoration Movement was not limited to affluent, urban, northern people but also grew among the poor, rural, southern people. While Campbell negotiated those tensions with precise carefulness during the period of the maturation of the Movement, Pendleton was in a different time and did not negotiate, leading the sub-movement of people who most agreed with him. Faced with the rhetorical problems of the termination event, Pendleton celebrated and commemorated the legacy of Campbell and the contributions the Restoration Movement made to Christian association. However, his strategies in the pulpit and in through the once popular periodical never won an audience.

Pendleton’s ideology, however, birthed within Restoration churches a desire to create and build para-church organizations. His ideology of churches working together for the common good of society is a notable function of the Christian faith and his raising of awareness in the post-termination period should be viewed as a new inception of a sub-movement. Not all leaders agreed with Pendleton, Franklin strongly opposed him, but Pendleton’s association rhetoric preserved the educational focus of a deceased Campbell and contributed to humanitarian efforts of the postwar era. Campbell wanted a

better society, and Pendleton adopted strategies so that the churches associated with Restoration could contribute.

Franklin's militant sub-movement

At the inception of the Restoration Movement, Campbell raised dissent among Christian persons by setting forth a dualistic notion that the current reform was superior to all other tainted denominations of Christianity. Franklin's dualistic arguments created an ideology of superiority. A person either was a member of the righteous church of Christ or was a member of the kingdom of evil. Those who enjoyed the rural way of life found Franklin's harsh strategies appealing, upholding the harshness and straightforward communication of the frontier. For others, Franklin's constant attacks on their lifestyles and progressiveness pushed them away, especially among the more affluent and urban Christians.

In his sermon titled "The Church—It's Identity" published in the *Living Pulpit*, Franklin reasserted the agrarian myth as a means of rediscovering the ideology of the Movement in termination. Franklin's message was one of withdrawal from the cities and withdrawal from the denominations. Franklin's desire to condemn the denominations, thus restoring a simple Christianity, much like the Restoration fathers attempted to do when they raise dissent, turned into a deconstruction of sophistication and establishment as he attacked each group for its own individual digressions.

There was no room for the spirit of compromise and brotherhood, which Campbell seemed always to possess. Ironically, Campbell did see the agrarian lifestyle as superior to a person's spiritual life than the urban lifestyle. Therefore, Franklin was loyal to Campbell's younger, more militant voice at the inception of the Movement, but

silenced the older Campbell's voice that called for compromise and fellowship with other denominations.

Franklin failed to understand the rhetorical negotiations that Campbell mastered and, therefore, failed to succeed at connecting the Movement to the spirit of the contemporary times. Franklin wanted nothing to do with postwar America and thought the church should also desire to rebirth itself. He viewed everything as evil including inferior religious groups. However, Franklin also directed his anger at the Movement and asked it to reconsider the direction it was heading. Franklin desired an inception of a more authentic Movement, dedicated to the rhetorical vision of calling people out of evil and into the light of the New Testament Church as it once did. For Franklin's militant sub-movement, the unifying principle was the dislike of anything that was not specifically necessitated in Scripture. Born out of dissent, Franklin wanted to always stay in dissent because the church should never be comfortable in an evil world.

Consequently, Franklin used the post-termination period to correct Campbell's ideology of the Movement. Franklin thought that the Movement was becoming too comfortable and was on the brink of being co-opted into the larger Christian community. Campbell's death provided the opportunity Franklin needed to voice his concerns and to gain a hearing among congregations. The end of the Civil War provided a spirit of new beginning, rising up out of the conflict to be better than the nation was previously, that Franklin could also use to his advantage. Ultimately, Franklin's strategy was an aggressive takeover of the remnants, wanting to begin again as a strong militant movement dedicated to overtaking all attempts at Christianity from anything other than what the New Testament specifically designated.

Fanning's perfecting sub-movement

Campbell communicated to Tolbert Fanning on one of their preaching tours together that there was so much more work to do among the churches of the Movement. Fanning's earnest desire was to help the Movement press on towards perfection. Fanning relied heavily on a rhetoric of transcendence, inviting his audience to see beyond the chaos of postwar America, especially in the south, and to join him in a new effort to move the church towards perfection of the New Testament model.

Within the perfecting sub-movement, there was little emphasis on the unity of Christians, but much emphasis on the perfection in the way of moral superiority of individual Christians. Fanning's southern audience had no real affection for unity, because they experienced a forced national unity founded upon, what they saw as, feeble reasons for consolidation. In his sermon "The Mission of the Church of Christ" included in the *Living Pulpit*, Fanning argued that the church would conquer the world thus ushering in the reign of Christ. Fanning's ideology contained an apocalyptic vision of moral superiority.

Fanning's ideology birthed a perfection sub-movement in which followers bought into his apocalyptic deterministic vision and sought to bring it to consummation through personal morality. Fanning taught that the church of Christ would eventually overtake all authoritative institutions in the nation, including Christian denominations and the American government. Therefore, members had to focus on their personal morality. The simple life of a Christian held several prohibitions that protected the church from progressive evils. The morality of the members would create a moral church, and this was the essence of Fanning's strategy for bringing the sub-movement to consummation.

Whereas Campbell wanted the churches of the Movement to get along with other institutions of government and church denominations, Fanning had no sympathy for it. While Campbell indeed wanted to move on towards perfection, the consummation of the Movement was not dependent upon the perfection of Christians, but upon the unity of Christians. While Fanning aligned with Campbell in his quest for perfection, Fanning placed perfection above unity due to his own apocalyptic views regarding the relationship between the church and the government. Only the church could restore the world to Christ through moral and just governance in His name.

Errett's progressive sub-movement

Deeply rooted in the rhetorical leadership of Campbell, Errett subscribed to two exclusive sources of understanding: the book of Nature, which was scientific observation, and the book of Divine Revelation, which was a set of observable facts in Scripture. Errett sought scientific resources to place alongside the text, thus allowing his audience access to all rational means available when reinstituting the ideology of the ongoing Restoration effort. He sought inventive ways to advance further and closer to the belief that consummation would be initiated through Christian unity, uncovering Campbell's progressive voice that was often seen within his later years, and using that voice to argue for cooperation with the movement of the larger American culture and more organization among its churches.

Moreover, Errett agreed with Campbell's notion that the best days of Christianity were in the future in which Campbell created an eschatological vision of Christ reigning and creating a peaceful Kingdom on the earth in America. Errett used the very same notions of natural progression found in Campbell's rhetorical constructions as evidence

to the unfolding truth that the movement would see better days in the future as a foundation for his progressive ideology and strategies.

In his sermon “The Law of Progressive Development” in the *Living Pulpit*, Errett reflected on three important Restoration beliefs: the unfolding plan of redemption, the development of individual morality and faith, and the historical development of the church. In each case, Errett pointed the church to a growth that takes place from the simple to the complex. This notion of natural development was an observable truth, both from the text of Scripture and from life experience. Errett did not point churches back to primitive Christianity as portrayed in the New Testament, but argued that the Movement must look into the future and see a depth of spiritual life among the Christian community that goes beyond that of the infant church of the first century.

Errett’s progressive ideology faced problems among churches dedicated to reverting to Biblical practices and principles. Many leaders taught that other Christian denominations lost their authentic connection to Christ when they became progressive. Moreover, speaking about the church as a complex organism and using modern scientific discovery to supplement his arguments did not help him win audience approval among the less educated and more rural contingencies. Exposed through the work of Errett was a tension in Campbell’s ideology of the Restoration Movement of a regressive church seeking a progressive consummation. Errett avoided the regressive part; he sought to move toward the future.

Management of a Rhetorical Ideology

What happens to a movement when an influential rhetorical leader, the movement’s unifying force, dies? The movement, lead by a particular ideology, ceases

and must be recast or reestablished. Attempts to recast, reestablish, or revive the movement inevitably fail to reach the remembered splendor of the terminated effort. This is inevitable because each of the new leaders represent a portion of the past leader's ideology, but cannot reproduce the past leader's success. The new leaders do not have a development over years of building trust and negotiating tension among the people, nor do new leaders possess the ethos needed to unify a people in the wake of cessation.

For the American Restoration Movement, each leader evoked Campbell's influence to call into existence his own ideologies, leading to particular strands of rhetorical discourse that formed sub-movements. Yet, none of these sub-movements represented the fullness of Campbell's Movement. Each sub-movement represented a portion of Campbell's ideology. Franklin's militant strand represented a young Campbell calling persons out of Christian denominations and into the authentic church. Fanning's perfecting strand represented a dissatisfied maturing Campbell wanting more than Christian unity, but Christian transformation. Errett's progressive strand represented an older Campbell who desired more friendships among the Christian community, as the world was moving toward greater evils like Civil War. Pendleton's association strand represented the civic leadership of Campbell, resolved that he would not see the consummation of the Movement but wanting to build as many community unions as possible. While each leader preserved a very important piece of Campbell's rhetoric, what they failed to reproduce was his ability to negotiate the tensions of the Movement in a way that sought unity.

What is evident at this point is that the ideologies produced during the post-termination period magnified the tensions and divided the Movement. From the point of

the *Living Pulpit* publication in 1868, it is almost impossible to view the Restoration Movement holistically. From this moment, the ideologies produced at least four different sub-movements. Therefore, the post-termination rhetoric used Campbell's influence to ultimately divide the Movement dedicated to Christian unity. Often, when new leaders use a past leader's influence in this way, we have to wonder how disappointed Campbell would be to know that his life's work fell to pieces so shortly after his death. Moreover, the idea that these leaders used the same strategies he used to move the people toward unity to lead the people toward dispersion should sound a warning for all rhetorical leaders.

In the end, social movements must consider their vulnerability when they mature primarily through the rhetorical leadership of one person, and they must deal with the consequences of a leader's influence after they die. This is especially true given the sequences of history, and the notion that all movements are susceptible to what is happening in the larger culture. The 1906 census categories of Church of Christ and Christian Church can no longer be surprising to the reader of this study; it was a direct manifestation of the post-termination rhetoric established long before division became official. While other social movements have faced the death of a leader and the splintering of the ideology, this study produces evidence of how this phenomenon happens in the context of a particular movement, but cannot argue the same for other movements. This notion deserves more study and brings this work to consider its limitations.

Limitations to the Study

While this study looked at the rhetorical influence of various religious leaders, it is not a comprehensive look at any leader's rhetorical work. Confined by the events of 1866, this study examined rhetorical discourse restricted by a specific time and centered upon a specific theme. There is much more study to be done on the rhetorical leadership of Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, Isaac Errett, and W.K. Pendleton. For the purpose of this study, the sermon was a representative case, revealing each leader's rhetorical construct, in which other texts supplemented the findings within the sermon.

Additionally, the *Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* was the only anthology produced during the post-termination period under examination. This study assumes the importance of this book published in this period. However, the importance of the book is subjective and while this study sought to supplement the sermons contained within the book with journal articles from outside the book, there can still be some speculation as to the validity of the *Living Pulpit* as representative of the Movement's discourse. The stated purpose of the book and the representative sample of preachers from across the nation provide evidence to support the book as a valid sample of the discourse.

The historical component to this work is extremely important to the validity of the findings. I have taken great care to communicate backgrounds, contexts, and the unfolding story of the Restoration Movement in an accurate way. This work made an argument for widespread division long before history records it through census numbers, and long before most historians accept it. However, it is not the intent of this work to write a revisionist history of the Movement, but to discover ideologies that amassed pervasive power out of a particular period and then trace their effects. The unfolding

history, especially after the period under examination, displayed the consequences of preceding rhetorical constructs. One of the reasons these constructs took a long time to manifest in official divisions was due to the lack of organizational structure in the Restoration Movement. While that factor does not fully explain the historical distance from the time of termination to the time of division, it must be considered as an aspect of delayed results.

Last, the transferability of this study as an approach to rhetorical study is unknown because there are so few of them. The Restoration Movement served as a great case study in which to ground this work. However, many other social movements have suffered the death of a rhetorical leader and there is a need to study how movements manage the rhetorical influence of a leader. The traditional tools of rhetorical criticism are not adequate for unraveling the intricacy of social movements and so there is a need for more investigation of critical moments within a social movement so that scholars can draw common principles. These common principles could possibly provide leaders with insights upon which they could create better strategies. For example, can a rhetorical leader have an understudy or mentee who is entrusted to carry on the ideology of the movement? Social movement leaders seldom do this type of long term planning because the constraints on their time are so demanding. What is at stake, however, by not acknowledging the human limits on language and leadership, is the failure of good efforts to improve the human condition. Multiple examinations of these phenomena would add validity to this current study.

Suggestions for Further Research

More study of historical movements is needed, studies that focus on the rise of rhetorical leaders and their constructs during times of crisis. Within the Restoration Movement, several more crisis periods could be examined. Any movement that experienced times of war or economic hardships must have interesting negotiations, arising dissensions, and particular voices that can add to the ongoing pursuit of preserving public discourse. These studies would not only uncover past successes and failures, but would contribute to ongoing efforts for social change by uncovering the historical discourse and seeking to better understand the function of different social movements.

Often much attention within movements, or general rhetorical inquiry, focuses on one particular person. For example, most rhetorical studies done on the Restoration Movement focus on Alexander Campbell. While there is a need to study the major rhetorical leaders, for a full disclosure of the public discourse rhetorical critics must focus on other voices from the margins. For example, *The Living Pulpit* has over twenty other voices represented within it and an expansion of this work would be a study of each preacher contained within it. That work could possibly find several smaller sub-movements that arose in the same time, but operated at the margins of the ongoing efforts. There is much more that can be learned through the study of how rhetorical leaders, gathering both large and small audiences, effect social movements.

Last, there have been several religious reformations throughout the history of American culture. Each group tends to follow the same patterns seen in the Restoration Movement. The group raises dissent to call persons back to some foundational principle important to that particular group. Often tied to the dissent is a vision of what the world

could be like if the religious reformation is fully realized. The group moves to collect persons and mature into a legitimately unified ideology. However, a phenomenon that could use more attention is the failure to consummate the religious reformation. While other social movements tend to reach some end in which they achieve something like voting rights or are co-opted by a larger entity, religious groups tend to tie their strategies to apocalyptic or eschatological events that never happen. Consequently, when religious movements terminate due to the death of a leader or some other unforeseen event, they cannot fail God by giving up and yet most consummation visions are well beyond human control. Scholars need to study termination events of more recent religious movements to discover what happens to a group of people who are devoted to God, believe in their reform, but never succeed in achieving their rhetorical vision. Moreover, many reformation movements will watch another one arise, become the next new hope for humanity.

Brief Summary of the Study

The American Restoration Movement suffered a termination event in 1866 when Alexander Campbell died in the same year as the close of the Civil War. While W.T. Moore sought to celebrate and preserve Campbell's rhetorical legacy through publishing *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, what emerged from its pages were four distinct sub-movements led by W.K. Pendleton, Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning, and Isaac Errett. An examination of the post-termination rhetoric constructed by these men directed this study to conclude that the unity movement led by Campbell died with him, and emerging out of the *Living Pulpit* were sub-movements founded upon Campbell's

influence, but altered to meet the needs of divergent groups who never rejoined each other.

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