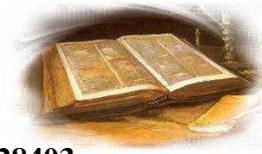


# The Examiner



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## A Moment in History - by Eric Keiper

In 1831, a remarkable event occurred in two cities in the state of Kentucky. Alexander Campbell's "Disciples" were meeting with Barton Stone's "Christians." The purpose of their meeting was to bring the two separate restoration movements together as one. On Christmas weekend of 1831, the first meeting took place in Goergetown, Kentucky. It was followed immediately by another meeting in Lexington, Kentucky on New Year's weekend. Garret describes it as a "festive occasion with the spirit of Christmas and New Year's in the air, along with the dream of a united church."

At first, one might think that this unity was an easy proposition. It's true that the Campbell and Stone groups both believed in the Bible as the only source for religious authority. In fact, Raccoon John Smith appealed in his closing comments at the Lexington Meeting, "Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stonites, New Lights or Old Lights or any other kind of Lights, but let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need."

However, the task of achieving unity

was much greater than one might imagine. To many, their differences would seem insurmountable. Let's just look at a few. One might guess already that there was disagreement over the name of believers. "The Stone movement was adamant in wearing the name Christian . . . while Campbell followers preferred Disciples." There was a "rather serious conflict between Stone and Campbell over the doctrine of the pre-existent Christ." "The Christians had an ordained ministry and a higher concept of the ministerial office . . . The Disciples were actually anti-clerical . . ." "The Christians . . . were emotional even to the point of using the mourners bench . . . the Disciples . . . were more rational in their approach . . . and rejected the mourners bench." "While they were both immersionists, the Christians did not emphasize it like the Disciples did, believing that one could be saved without being immersed and that it was not necessary to Christian communion." "The Disciples served the [Lord's] Supper every first day, the Christians observed it on an irregular basis . . ." "The Christians had a broader view of the ministry of the Holy Spirit . . . The Disciples were

inclined to limit the Spirit's influence to the word . . ." "While both were unity conscious, the idea of uniting all men in Christ was predominant with the Christians. The Disciples were more concerned for a restoration of the ancient order."

Today, we look at these points of difference and may be aghast. Some may not be aware that such differences existed. Others, may be surprised that such a great gap could exist between two groups who claimed to use the Bible as their only guide. One can look at this list of differences and see the formation of points of doctrine that we believe today. However, note that neither side had all the truth. They benefitted greatly from coming together. Both were able to throw aside error and learn from each other. This was because they came together upon the foundational plea of both groups, "the Bible only."

How did such unity take place. Well, it was "fragile" at the outset. But, in the next 30 years it grew together toward the unity of the faith. One of the most important attitudes that permitted this to happen was a deep desire for unity. It was a commitment that guided brethren with carefulness in the teaching of God's word and in diligent love towards one another. When Raccoon John Smith rose to speak at the close of the Lexington meeting he exemplified this careful attitude in all he did. "Smith arose with simple dignity, and stood prayerful and self possessed, before the mingling brotherhoods. He felt, as

no one else could feel it, the weight of the responsibility that rested on him. A single unscriptural position taken — the least sectarian feeling betrayed — an intemperate word — a proud, unfraternal glance of the eye — might arouse suspicion and prejudice, and blast the hope of union in the very moment it was budding with so many promises. Every eye turned on him, and every ear leaned to catch the slightest tones of his voice." Do you see the carefulness that brought unity? Do you see the diligence that allowed each group to see the good in the other and cast away their own error? It was an attitude of love combined with a commitment to be unified. I am aware of no better example than Raccoon John Smith at the Lexington meeting to keep the words of Ephesians 4:2-3. "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Do you ever wonder why we lack in the unity department today? Perhaps, we're not implementing the principles that unified the Restoration Movement — scriptural principles.

Perhaps, now, we go about purposefully causing suspicion and prejudice among brethren. Perhaps, now, we are filled with pride, giving "the unfraternal glance," and toss flippant "intemperate words" towards brethren. Make no mistake about the truth of God's Word! When we embrace "lowliness," "meekness," "longsuffering," "forbearing love" as

we work to the unity of the faith, then we'll have unity. Maybe with careful words and tempered demeanor we can see the good in one another and cast away our own error. Maybe with humility, love, and truth we can be the answer to the Savior's prayer, "that they may be one."

May we all draw from this pivotal point in our history and learn from the good example of faith. References: The Stone Campbell Movement, Revised and Expanded, Garret, Leroy, 1997, College Press, 185. As quoted from Williams, "The Life of Elder John Smith," 183, 193-194. - 2032 Wrens Nest Rd., Richmond, Virginia 23235-3664 ---- **Via - Truth Magazine Vol. XLIV: 24 p16 December 21, 2000**

### **When to Pray - by Mike**

Willis, Danville, Indiana

Man has many opportunities to pray. To name some of the appropriate times for prayer may help us.

1. When we are sad. Dark hours come to all of us, whether through sickness, death, marital conflict, conflict with children, loneliness, or whatever. When our hearts are heavy, we should lift them in prayer to God. Don't forget to pray.

2. When we are happy. Few of us forget to pray during adversity, but many of us are like the nine lepers whom Jesus healed. They forgot to return and thank him for his blessings. When things are going well in life, we should praise God for answered prayers and his providential guidance in our lives.

3. When we are tempted. None of us

is so perfect that we are not tempted to sin. The desires of the flesh reside in our body and through them Satan tempts us. When sore temptations come to us, we should pause to pray. Jesus taught us to pray that we not enter into temptation. When he taught his disciples to pray, he said, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (**Matt. 6:13**). Not only will the Lord lead us from temptation, he also has promised to help us with a way of escape when the temptation comes. Paul wrote, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (**1 Cor. 10:13**).

4. When we are worried. Christians have been taught to cast their burdens on the Lord. Paul wrote, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (**Phil. 4:6**). When we are worrying about a problem, let us pause to analyze and evaluate the situation. If there is something we can do to solve the problem, let us be busy doing it. If there is nothing we can do to solve the problem, let us lay it before God in prayer and be ready to accept whatever his providence gives to us in answer to that prayer. Someone has said that worry is like a rocking chair - you move a lot, but you don't go anywhere. Rather than allowing worrying and fretting about the

possible problems we may face tomorrow to ruin today, let us live today to its fullest and cast our burdens on the Lord.

5. When we have a great decision to make or problem to solve. The day before Jesus chose his twelve apostles, he spent the entire night in prayer (**Lk. 6:12,13**). There are times when we must make momentous decisions which will affect the rest of our lives. In such hours, we need divine guidance. We should turn to God's word to see what it speaks on the subject, seek out the best counsel you can find (**Prov. 11:14** - "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety") and then ask God's direction in our lives. James said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (**Jas. 1:5**). The Lord will help us make these decisions when we ask for his guidance.

6. When we become discouraged in living the Christian life, We should not quit. We need to turn to God in prayer. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (**Lk. 18:1**). Paul said, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (**Eph. 6:18**). When we are discouraged, let us ask God to send us some help in the form of other Christians.

7. When we have evil thoughts. Sometimes circumstances fill our minds with evil thoughts, even without our premeditation. When we find that occurring, we can either allow those thoughts to stay in our minds which will likely lead us to sin or we can drive them out through prayer and meditation upon God's word. We cannot keep birds from flying over our heads, but we can prevent them from nesting in our hair. In the same way, we cannot prevent every temptation, but we can keep ourselves from dwelling on these evil thoughts.

8. When we have sinned. John instructed us to pray for forgiveness of our sins. He said, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (**1 Jn. 1:7-9**). God has made forgiveness of sins conditional to his erring children. They must repent of them and pray that both their deeds and their intention to commit them might be forgiven (**Acts 8:22**).

Here are some times that we should especially be taking our requests to God in prayer. Remember the words of Paul when he wrote that we should "pray without ceasing" (**1 Thess. 5:17**). We all can do better in prayer. ----  
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