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Prophet and Priest: The Redefining of Alexander Campbell's Identity

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PROPHET AND PRIEST: THE REDEFINING OF ALEXANDER
CAMPBELL'S IDENTITY

By

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, Mae March, who is interested in reading anything I write.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CB *Christian Baptist*
MH *Millennial Harbinger*

ABSTRACT

Previous discussions of changes in Alexander Campbell's ideology have focused on an increasing ecumenism in Campbell's thought. Many scholars have argued that as Campbell aged he became more open to denominationalism. By conceiving of Alexander Campbell through the lens of Max Weber's categories of "prophet" and "priest," a different picture emerges. Alexander Campbell was a prophet of primitive Christianity in the early nineteenth century. Campbell attacked the denominational structures of the time and offered a new vision of Christianity should look like in the modern age. In the 1830s, however, Campbell began to become more priestly in his character. His major concern was no longer his vision of restoration. Instead Campbell became concerned with the institution his movement was becoming. Campbell's battles with Sidney Rigdon and John Thomas, the controversy in the movement over a hymnbook, and the death of Campbell's son, Wickliffe, demonstrate a priestly change in Campbell's identity. This shift was the product of Campbell's self-reflection on the role he was taking as well as the role his followers asked of him. Campbell's shift from prophet to priest represents a larger trend in American history. The examples of John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison suggest that many American prophets, like Campbell, have priestly tendencies.

CHAPTER ONE

OF MYTHS, PROPHETS, AND PRIESTS

Born in 1788 Alexander Campbell immigrated with his family to America from Scotland in 1809.¹ The patriarch of the Campbell clan, Thomas, had traveled to America in 1807 for health reasons. The younger Campbell, growing up under the classical teaching of his father, was well schooled on Locke's empiricism, while also sampling some of the tenets of the Scottish Commonsense philosophers. These influences, along with the restorationist leanings of the Glasites, Sandemanians, and Haldanes, formed the foundation for Alexander's questioning of his Scots-Irish Presbyterian heritage while waiting for the voyage to America. His father Thomas, experiencing persecution in America because of his own stances concerning Presbyterian doctrine, was coming to similar conclusions. When the two were reunited in America, father and son found that the other had been raising similar questions about the state of Christianity.

Thomas provided the impetus for the beginnings of a new Christian movement by crafting the "Declaration and Address," a work presented to the Christian Association of Washington, PA. The elder Campbell began the Christian Association when a Presbyterian church had refused to ordain him to the ministry. This association, while not intended as a new sect, eventually formed the basis for the first church of the Campbells. After the publication of "Declaration and Address," Alexander began to come to the forefront of leadership of the fledging movement. His aggressive personality and writing talent motivated the movement to begin spreading.

The "Declaration and Address," however, was not the consummation of the movement's theology, but the beginning. Over the next decade, Alexander continued to

craft a theology for the group that emphasized the restoration of New Testament Christianity and a desire to unify the different sects of Christianity. One of the earliest expressions of this developing theology was the “Sermon on the Law,” delivered in 1816. This sermon began the split of the Campbell movement (often called “Reformers” or “Reformed Baptists”) from the Baptists with whom Campbell had associated because of his views on adult immersion.

In 1823 Campbell began his first journal, *The Christian Baptist*. Although still loosely associating with the Baptists, Campbell felt free to attack them as well as any other sect that he thought was inconsistent in their practice of Christianity or any sect (including Catholicism) that he thought was enforcing rules or ceremonies not found in the New Testament.² Campbell continued to publish *The Christian Baptist* until 1830. In 1830 he started a new journal called *Millennial Harbinger*. Campbell’s prospectus for *Millennial Harbinger* was fairly antagonistic. He wrote, “This work shall be devoted to the destruction of Sectarianism, Infidelity, and Antichristian doctrine and practice. It shall have for its object the development, and introduction of that political and religious order of society called THE MILLENNIUM, which shall be the consummation of that ultimate amelioration of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures.”³ While the prospectus for *Millennial Harbinger* seems as aggressive as the tenor of *The Christian Baptist*, Campbell eventually realized that perhaps his approach was wrong and modified it slightly.⁴

Campbell’s movement united with the movement of Barton W. Stone in 1832. The two groups recognized their similarities and decided their differences were ignorable, at least to some extent. Campbell’s desire for a united Christendom seemed like a distinct possibility. With this now broader movement spread out over several states, Campbell began to push for some organization, particularly in missionizing efforts. From 1841 to 1848 Campbell published several articles on Christian participation in organizations larger than the local congregation. He had previously been against missionary societies, but now encouraged them. In 1849 some of Campbell’s followers formed the American Christian Missionary Society with Campbell as the president. The formation of such a society, however, was not without controversy as some of Campbell’s followers continued to hold anti-institutional

policies.⁵ These individuals charged that Campbell was, at best, changing his mind; at worst, losing it. Campbell continued to publish *Millennial Harbinger*, as well as serve as president of his college, Bethany College, while preaching, debating, and traveling until his death in 1866.

There is no paucity of works addressing the life and legacy of Alexander Campbell. Students, scholars, and preachers have written several hundred books, dissertations, theses, and articles concerning him. Usually individuals connected in some way to the religious movements that are now included under the umbrella term “Stone-Campbell movement” have written these works. These groups include the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (Independent), and Churches of Christ.⁶ Scholars within these churches have taken a keen interest in Alexander Campbell because of his lasting impact on their theology and practice.

Not much of the work, however, has been biographical. Until recently, most biographical information came from Campbell’s son-in-law, Robert Richardson. A few years after Campbell’s death, Richardson wrote a massive two-volume *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* that has served as the standard Campbell biography. It is obviously hagiographical in parts, and Richardson primary focuses on the more prominent events in Campbell’s life (e.g, Campbell’s public debates with individuals like Cincinnati bishop John Purcell). Campbell’s wife Selina, several years after Richardson’s *Memoirs*, wrote another book, attempting to chronicle Alexander’s everyday (“home”) life. Unfortunately, much of the work focused more on Campbell’s teaching and lectures. She often wandered away from her subject, and several times wrote, “I am still diverging from my first plan in writing this book, which was to pen the ‘Home Life,’ the daily sayings and doings at home, of Mr. Campbell in the various relations of husband, father, master and friend.”⁷ Most of the biographical work done on Campbell since then has usually relied heavily on these two works, particularly Richardson’s.

In April 2005 TCU Press released the first of a proposed three volume biography on Alexander Campbell. The biography is based on the work of Eva Jean Wrather, one of the founders of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, TN. Wrather

had been working her biography of Campbell for several decades, but died before it could be published. D. Duane Cummins has revised Wrather's work for publication posthumously. It remains to be seen whether this work will be the new standard in Campbell biography.

Most of the mountain of work on Alexander Campbell, then, has not been biographically inclined, but rather theologically focused. Journal and lecture titles beginning with "Alexander Campbell and . . ." or "Alexander Campbell's views on . . ." form a large portion of the historiography on Alexander Campbell. Several of these works are helpful for scholarly analysis.⁸ Some, however, perhaps most, are related to doctrinal discussions within particular streams of the Stone-Campbell movement. While they also can provide insight into Alexander Campbell, they often make sense only to those involved in the movements and are usually dependent on the works listed later in this chapter.⁹

While scholars have examined Alexander Campbell in a variety of works, we should remember that the story of any religious tradition or the life of a religious individual is broader than what an author can discuss even in a monograph-length work, especially when the individual or tradition under consideration is a part of the history of the United States of America. The history of religion in the United States is a complex one that offers many streams of inquiry. As historians of religion continue to investigate the expanse of American religious history, they will find new roads into what were previously well-traveled areas. Continued investigation and theoretical imagination may shake the foundational answers which seemed so sure a decade or two or more previous, as they offer additional ways to think about past, present, and future of American religion. The continual mining of historical data armed with new methods, or perhaps old ones used in new ways, will offer deeper insight to what it means to be religious and American.

Nathan Hatch has argued that the period of the early Republic (1780-1830) is vitally important for understanding American Christianity specifically and American religion generally.¹⁰ This period combined with the antebellum period (1830-1860) shaped the American religious landscape in enormous ways. Some scholars have called this period of time the Christianizing of America.¹¹ During the early Republic and

the antebellum period, the United States arguably became the Christian nation many have supposed it has always been. During this time many flocked to Christianity, but Christianity of a specific kind: a Christianity that embodied Revolutionary ideals about democracy, autonomy, and individualism.¹² It was also during this period that many new, specifically “homegrown” varieties of American religion (formed from a Christian milieu) arose. Not only did established Christian denominations who espoused democratic ideals grow, but new religions developed to offer the people a democratic choice.¹³

In the midst of this post-Revolutionary/pre-Civil War religious tumult, Alexander Campbell started a movement that ostensibly pushed for a return to primitive Christianity. Campbell was not unique in such a call in American history. In fact many religious groups had argued and continued to argue that they had restored primitive Christianity in an American context.¹⁴ Yet, scholars cannot dismissively classify the influence and importance of Alexander Campbell under a rubric of “restorer of ancient ways.” In his classic text on American religious history, Sidney Ahlstrom, while describing Campbell as “aggressive and disputatious,” presents a picture of Campbell as an individual interested in reestablishing “the patterns of primitive Christianity as he conceived them.”¹⁵ Ahlstrom, of course, has a permanent legacy in the field of American religious history, but his grand consensus history is so expansive that it often overlooks the intricacies of American religions. Unfortunately, his simplistic labeling of Campbell as a restorer of primitive Christianity has endured through other narratives.

In their *Religion in American Life: A Short History*, Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer include Campbell in a chapter entitled “Restorers of Ancient Ways.” They followed Ahlstrom to some extent in their brief examination of Alexander Campbell. Everything they note about Campbell, including his admonition to read the Bible “as if mortal eyes had never seen it before,” is accurate as far as it goes, but it does not go very far.¹⁶ Campbell remains a cut-out figure known as “Restorer of Ancient Ways.”

Nathan Hatch’s work, mentioned previously, offers a slight glimpse into scholarly thinking about Alexander Campbell that pushes, albeit lightly, against the *so la* restorer presentation.¹⁷ The “Christian” movement in Hatch’s presentation includes movements

begun by many individuals including Alexander Campbell. While Stone and Campbell's movements eventually united and subsumed members from the other groups, Hatch attempts to consider not only Campbell's movement, but also movements begun by Elias Smith and Abner Jones, James O'Kelly, and Barton W. Stone as a whole. He describes the "Christian" movement and its accepting of American democratic/Revolutionary ideals the following way:

What sets the Christians apart from earlier revivalists is the extent to which they wrestled self-consciously with the loss of traditional sources of authority and found democratic political culture a cornerstone for new foundations. Taking seriously the mandate of liberty and equality, the Christians espoused reform in three areas. First, they called for revolution within the church to place laity and clergy on an equal footing and to exalt the conscience of the individual over the collective will of any congregation or church organization. Second, they rejected the traditions of learned theology altogether and called for a new view of history that welcomed inquiry and innovation. Finally, they called for a populist hermeneutic premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself.¹⁸

Hatch recognizes the importance of Campbell, and how Campbell and his movement overshadowed the impact of movements begun by Smith, Jones, O'Kelly, and Stone. Hatch's overview of Alexander Campbell and his movement falls short, however. While Hatch's observation of the influence of Revolutionary and American democratic ideals on Campbell's theology is insightful, he overstates his case. He argues, "Whatever Alexander Campbell may have brought to America of his Scottish and Presbyterian heritage, he discarded much of it for an explicitly American theology."¹⁹ Such a statement overlooks the influence of English and Scottish ideas (particularly Lockean empiricism and Commonsense) on American "theology."²⁰ The influence of Locke and Scottish Commonsense philosophers, among others, informed Campbell's theology in Ireland and Scotland and can be plainly seen in Campbell's writings. Campbell did not "discard" these ideas. Instead, he further developed them in the context of American republicanism.²¹

There is, however, some subtlety to Hatch's Campbell not present in the American religion narratives mentioned previously. Hatch does admit that Campbell mediated some of his views as the movement expanded. Due to the scope of Hatch's work, however, he superficially addresses Campbell's shifting thought by saying, "Even

Alexander Campbell came to the conclusion that one could not simply hand the Bible to a congregation and leave it to its own devices.”²² Unfortunately, he does not explain what this statement entails. How did Campbell come to this conclusion? How did Campbell’s followers work this conclusion out in the life of the movement?

What these narratives and others similar to them overlook is that Campbell attempted to shape the thinking of his movement in profound ways. While being anti-clerical, he attempted to wield just as much, if not more, authority than any other religious leader he attacked. While being anti-traditionalist, he established a tradition that influences at least three major religious groups today.²³ This paradox and tension between the two aspects of Alexander Campbell’s career is one that scholars not connected to the religious legacy of Alexander Campbell have largely overlooked. Only scholars located within one of the streams of the Stone-Campbell heritage have investigated the polyvocality of Alexander Campbell. Some have spoken of this paradox in terms of two Campbells or “the myth of the singular Campbell.”²⁴

Robert West is one of the expositors of the two-Campbell thesis. In *Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion*, he acknowledges changes in Campbell’s thinking. West presents a break between the Campbell of *The Christian Baptist* era and the Campbell of the *Millennial Harbinger*. His argument, however, more complex than this. West contends that significant changes occurred in Campbell’s life due to a switch between an attack on “ecclesiasticism” and a defense of “revealed religion.” West places the time of the shift around Campbell’s 1829 debate with skeptic Robert Owen. From 1829 on, according to West, Campbell became more “churchman” in outlook instead of the “sectarian” he had previously been. He further claims that both the defense of revealed religion and attack on ecclesiastical hegemonies can be seen in both periods. There is, however, a notable emphasis on the one compared to the other at different points in Campbell’s life, according to West. When Campbell shifted his emphasis to defending revealed religion, he became more denominational in outlook.

West further clarifies this change in an almost laudatory passage. He states, “Campbell’s ‘Christian Baptist’ type of antiecclesiasticism has ever been at war with his ‘Millennial Harbinger’ type of churchmanship. Campbell made the change without exploding because of *the sheer strength of his body, his toughness of mind, his basic*

theological principles and the religious orientation of his life."²⁵ Campbell shifted his views only in emphasis and not in "basic principles." According to West, Campbell did not make major changes in his beliefs.

Harold Lunger followed West's theory of two aspects to Campbell, but believed investigators could best understand the shift of Campbell's ideology by studying Campbell's views on the relationship between church and state. Lunger argued that around the early 1830s, Campbell began to moderate his views concerning the role of the Christian citizen in the secular state. Campbell's shift between sectarian and denominationalist formed the basis for this thought. According to Lunger, as Campbell became more denominational in his ecclesiology, he became more denominational in his patriotism. Lunger cites Campbell's support of the American Christian Missionary Society, and Campbell's support of interdenominational cooperation and unity as evidence for a more denominational ecclesiology. Lunger, however, is quick to note that there is no clear break. Campbell continued to hold sectarian views on certain subjects.²⁶

Lunger's hypothesis has shaped the thinking of many individuals concerning Alexander Campbell. David Harrell seems to adopt Lunger's position in *A Social History of the Disciples of Christ*. Harrell's intention is not an examination of the thought or role of Alexander Campbell. Consequently, there is no extensive examination of Alexander Campbell in Harrell's work. Yet, he does agree with Lunger that the 1830s formed a crucial turning point, not only in the thought of Alexander Campbell, but in the social life of the Disciples of Christ at large. Harrell does not envision Campbell's shifting ideology as wholesale either. "There is truth in Alexander Campbell's contention in 1855 that he had not changed his views on 'any Christian doctrine since I wrote the first volume of the *Christian Baptist*.' But Campbell's emphasis did change." He goes on to argue that this change was writ large in the movement as a whole when it gradually diverged into two foci: denominationalism and sectarianism. This divergence was one of the bases for the division between the Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ in 1906.²⁷

Paul Conkin is one scholar who has briefly examined changes in Campbell's theology as an outsider.²⁸ Conkin, in some ways like Hatch, attempted to place Campbell's movement in the context of American Christianity. Unlike Hatch, however,

Conkin made no attempt to classify Campbell's theology as distinctly "American" in any other way than observing that the movement, like the others Conkin observes, was indigenous to America.²⁹ Despite his focus on America, however, Conkin does take notice of the ecclesiological influences (particularly certain types of Scottish Presbyterianism) that formed Campbell's theology prior to his coming to America.³⁰

Conkin also expands on the changes that occurred in Campbell's thinking and practice. His Campbell is more multidimensional than the Campbell presented in other works. The discussion about Campbell and his movement(s) has more depth than what any of the narratives or Hatch's work presents. Conkin notes that Campbell was "less polemical" in later years, but Campbell was also very authoritarian when it came to doctrinal matters. "Alexander Campbell, as editor-bishop, could be at times a moderating peacemaker, helping cement bonds between widely diverging ministers and congregations. But he could also be narrow, dogmatic, even testy when he sensed a challenge to basic doctrines or to his status in the movement."³¹ Yet, Conkin does not explain why this is the case, nor does he offer any explanation for Campbell's defensiveness for a position he was never supposed to have.

Richard Tristano, another outsider, offers more extensive insight into this change in Campbell. Tristano's work, *The Origins of the Restoration Movement*, is an intellectual history focused on the backgrounds of Barton W. Stone's and Alexander Campbell's thought. He does, however, offer insight into the issues that served as a foundation for the division between the Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ, formalized in 1906. Tristano, however, is heavily indebted to scholars within the Stone-Campbell movement (specifically Earl I. West and Richard T. Hughes whose works I will notice below). Understanding Campbell, Tristano notes, is problematic because there is no consensus, specifically within the Stone-Campbell churches, that Campbell made any changes in his thought. Tristano, however, maintained that Campbell did "change his mind" on some issues. Campbell did this because "he recognized a new reality, a non-denominational reality." Tristano further contextualizes this shift as a movement from "extirpator of the sects to guardian of a sacred movement." Tristano, however, limits this discussion to the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society among the Disciples of Christ and does not push it into other areas.³²

Tristano, however, does open the question of the change in Campbell's theology. Students of Campbell have made several attempts to negotiate this course to determine whether Campbell had changed or not and why. As noted above, one of the individuals that Tristano relied on for his work was Earl I. West, a scholar firmly rooted in the Church of Christ tradition. West's four-volume work, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, covers the history of the Churches of Christ from their beginning unto 1950. His first volume attempts to examine the origins of the movement and set the stage for its division. While West often moralizes about events in the history of the movement, he does lay out an extensive amount of information on Campbell's changes, but he seems to limit the change solely to Campbell's position on whether organized missionary societies were acceptable for a movement based on the proposition of restoring New Testament Christianity. West notes that two viewpoints on Campbell's support arose contemporaneously with the origins of the American Christian Missionary Society. There were those (opposing the society) who argued that Campbell's "old age" had made him easy prey for younger individuals who needed a figurehead for their desires to organize. Others maintained that Campbell was still operating with full mental faculties, by noting the enormous amount of administrating, preaching, and writing Campbell continued to do. These individuals usually said that Campbell's harangue against societies recorded in *Christian Baptist* was against societies improperly established and governed. Campbell, they claimed, had always been for the right kind of missionary society—the kind they were now proposing.

West observes in intricate detail the information from those one both sides of Campbell's support of the missionary. He states that Campbell was not aware of a change "in his conviction on the Missionary Society." Although Campbell was presented with evidence from *Christian Baptist* regarding his position, he continued to defend himself, arguing that the type of convention he was supporting in the 1840s was not the type he had attacked in the 1820s. Furthermore, notes West, Campbell had favored missionary societies prior to the one begun in 1849, and he never stood against other "human organizations" that were present in the movement prior to the American Christian Missionary Society. West concludes, then, that Campbell did not make a change in his thinking. As noted, Richard Tristano, using West's coverage of the

subject, came to a different conclusion.³³

Richard T. Hughes, however, believes that Campbell did come to a change in ideology. Hughes, though, does not place the change wholly with the Missionary Society. He believes Campbell came to a change in thinking much earlier. Yet, Hughes has taken different routes to examine this change. In an essay in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Hughes argued that investigators can find a perceptible change in Campbell's thinking on the millennium. For early Campbell, argued Hughes, the restoration of New Testament Christianity would inaugurate the Millennium by bringing about the unification of churches and sects. What changed in Campbell's thinking, according to Hughes, was the role the American government would play in the onset of the millennium. In the beginning of his career, Campbell believed that only the New Testament church without the intervention of human superstructures like governments could bring about the Millennium. By the 1830s, however, Campbell had moderated his thinking on both the restorative unity he sought and the non-importance of human government in the millennium. Hughes argues that Campbell had "increasingly lost faith in a radical restoration of the primitive church to produce ecclesiastical and societal unity." Because of this lost faith, Campbell turned to the larger world of Protestantism and the unifying power of the United States of America, which had brought many states together into one country. By 1860, according to Hughes, the millennium was to be brought about by America, not some fictitious restored millennial church.³⁴

In his 1996 work, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, however, Hughes seems to have modified his thesis. Instead of focusing on changes in Campbell's thought regarding the millennium, Hughes places questions regarding the relationship between Campbell's movement and other Christian groups in the center of the shift in Campbell's theology.³⁵ Specifically, Hughes argues that the growing "threat" of Catholicism in America along with the "sectarianism" of certain of Campbell's colleagues (like John Thomas, founder of the Christadelphians) provided the foundation for Campbell to mediate his original goals of restoration and unity to a goal focused entirely on unity. Hughes offers the Campbell-Purcell debate in 1837 as the touchstone moment for Campbell's change.³⁶ The "threat" of Catholicism taking over the United States was reason enough for

Campbell to put aside his antagonism to Protestantism and openly accept the “Protestant *faith*” while rejecting the “Protestant *denominations*.” The fruit of this change from primitivist to Protestant was the American Christian Missionary Society.³⁷

The inadequacy of most two Campbell hypotheses, however, is that they assume that the more “denominational” (i.e., later) Campbell is actually a more ecumenical Campbell. The foundation for most of these arguments is the belief that Campbell was more “sectarian,” and hence more exclusivistic, when younger (e.g., the *Christian Baptist* years). So the second Campbell is more denominational, hence more inclusivistic, in his later years. While writers could argue that Campbell took a more ecumenical outlook in his later years, such an assertion does not mean that Campbell entirely rejected his sectarian foundations. Instead, what appears to also be the case is that Campbell actually became more concerned with boundaries than previously.

By focusing on Campbell’s inclusivism, some scholars have unintentionally obfuscated the exclusivistic undertone that much of his discourse began to undertake. This thesis challenges the prevailing historiographic trend that the second Campbell is a more democratically, denominationally oriented individual. Instead it will argue that Campbell’s battles with “heresy” within the ranks pushed him into a more exclusivistic mindset. Struggling with defections to the Mormons and Christadelphians, as well as attempting to map out a course for his movement, Campbell moved from a restorer of ancient ways to the head of a denominational hierarchy meant to consolidate Campbell’s vision into a concrete organization that would maintain the emphasis on New Testament Christianity as Campbell understood it. The events of the 1830s-40s moved Campbell into the position that caused this shift.

I will use the Weberian categories of “prophet” and “priest” to shape this argument. While Weber saw “prophet” and “priest” as two distinct categories of individuals within the religious experience of organizations, this thesis will challenge that notion by asserting that Alexander Campbell was both. Campbell was never wholly one or the other. He had qualities of both throughout his career. Yet, in his later life, Alexander Campbell focused more on the maintenance of his movement rather than being a prophetic voice for primitive Christianity as he had been in his earlier days.

Chapter two will examine Alexander Campbell’s more prophetic period. An

examination of several early writings will establish Campbell's prophetic status. One document of importance in this early period is Campbell's "Sermon on the Law." In "Sermon on the Law" Campbell attacked some of the foundations of Baptist doctrine. Campbell framed history in terms of three dispensations, that is, periods of time: the dispensation of the patriarchs (the period from creation to Moses), the Mosaic dispensation (the period from the giving of the Law of Moses at Sinai until the Crucifixion), and the Christian dispensation (from the day of Pentecost [Acts 2] through the end of time). Campbell then argued that Christians could not authorize any practice based on other periods; they were under the Christian dispensation. This meant, for Campbell, that unless a practice was specifically authorized in the New Testament, it was not valid, even if it had been *commanded* under the Mosaic age. Intrinsicly, this was an attack on church-state relationships, specifically Sabbath laws.

Campbell further attacked Sabbath laws and other religiously constructed public ordinances in the "Candidus" essays. In 1820-1821 Campbell wrote a series of letters to the local Washington (PA) newspaper using the pseudonym "Candidus." In these essays Campbell criticized Sabbath legislation and the proliferation of moral societies that attempted to enforce religious morality in the public sphere.

Articles from *The Christian Baptist* will complete the identification of Campbell as a prophet. The main series I will discuss will be a set of thirty-two articles under the title "On the Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things." In these articles, Campbell set out his vision of how Christians should organize the New Testament church in the modern age. Campbell covered a variety of topics including worship practices, Christian morality, and church government. Other articles on a variety of subjects will fill out the image of Campbell as prophet.

Chapter three will explore Campbell's later life. Campbell's self-reflection along with his recognition of the desires of his followers led him to modify his conception of his role in the movement. I will argue that after 1830, Campbell became more of a priest than a prophet. This means that Campbell became concerned with institution building and maintenance than prophetic proclamation. After 1830, Campbell had to contend with defections from his movement to the Mormons. The struggle between Campbell and Sidney Rigdon led to Rigdon leaving the Disciples and joining the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints. Campbell then launched a series of articles against Mormonism, his most famous being “Delusions,” which was later reprinted and circulated by Joshua Himes, publicizer of William Miller. Campbell also dealt harshly with John Thomas, another disciple who had disagreements with him over how far restoration should actually go. Thomas had argued for the ritual re-immersion of Baptists who had decided to join themselves to the Disciples. He had also presented certain theological tenets concerning the afterlife with which Campbell disagreed. Because of his “heterodox” beliefs, Thomas, in the words of Hughes, “brought upon himself the wrath of Campbell.” Thomas left the movement and formed the Christadelphians.³⁸

Another example of the authority that Campbell attempted to wield was in the controversy over which hymnbook would serve the movement. The question of religious music has been a perennial source of discord among religious movements. The hymnody of a church is sometimes almost as important as its doctrine, especially since the hymnody, idealistically, should represent the theology. The same was true for the Disciples of Christ. The controversy over the hymnbook was another example where Campbell attempted to legislate which hymnal (his, of course) should be used by the churches.

A third factor that shaped Campbell’s priestly experience was the death of his eleven-year-old son Wickliffe. The reaction Campbell had to death of Wickliffe represents the concern Campbell had for the future of his movement. No clear leader was arising to continue his movement. Wickliffe, however, was one who could have filled his father shoes. Wickliffe was “one on whom clustered many a hope of eminent usefulness to society in coming years.”³⁹ The tragedy of Wickliffe’s death solidified in Campbell’s mind (albeit probably unconsciously) that his movement needed structure for it to continue on the path he intended. This may explain Campbell’s insistence on the importance of the American Christian Missionary Society. Although Campbell’s thoughts on organizing the Disciples of Christ in a tighter way preceded Wickliffe’s death, the passing of his son made organization all the more important so that Campbell could be sure that what he had started would continue.

Because of these factors, among others, Alexander Campbell shifted from

...serving a predominantly prophetic function to serving a priestly one. Although Campbell claimed that he did not want such a function, it became unavoidable in many ways. Campbell began to understand that some of the individuals who followed his teachings needed and wanted a strong priestly figure to help guide them. While disdaining a religious system with any human ruler, Alexander Campbell recognized the need to consolidate his movement, not only to fulfill the wishes of his followers, but to ensure its success. By becoming a priest, Campbell left the goal of restoring New Testament Christianity and began to push for a consolidation of his burgeoning movement. This means that although Campbell may have become more inclusivistic in his views on specific doctrines, he was, overall, actually being more exclusivistic. He enlarged the borders of his kingdom, but they were just that: the borders of *his* kingdom. Any ecumenical drive was undertaken in order to bring more individuals into the Disciples of Christ fold. Ecumenism, if it can be properly called that, was simply part of the means for consolidating a legacy.

The conclusion will draw prophet Campbell and priest Campbell into the discussion of American religious history in the work of Martin Marty, particularly *Righteous Empire*, and Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment*. While the Stone-Campbell movement can be seen as an exemplar of Marty and Mead's theses, this exploration of Alexander Campbell will provide an additional framework in which to consider the role leaders had in shaping the movements that Marty and Mead discuss. By briefly examining John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison, I will conclude that it is possible to see many of the leaders of America's nineteenth-century movements, religious and secular, as prophets with priestly characteristics.

CHAPTER TWO

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: PROPHET

A restoration of the ancient order of things is all that is necessary to the happiness and usefulness of christians. No attempt "to reform the doctrine, discipline and government of the church," (a phrase too long in use,) can promise a better result than those which have been attempted and languished to death. . . . Just in so far as the ancient order of things, or the religion of the New Testament, is restored, just so far has the Millennium commenced, and so far have its blessings been enjoyed.

Alexander Campbell

"A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things: No. 1"⁴⁰

Max Weber argued that "prophets" were individuals who had charisma and "proclaimed religious doctrine of divine commandment." Weber specifically noted that when discussing religious prophecy there is no need to make a "radical distinction" between an individual who claims new supernatural revelation and an individual who is attempting to renew an already established religion. Investigators can consider both types of individuals as "prophetic" in Weberian terms. One of the distinctions between individuals who can be called prophets and those denominated priests, for Weber, is the call to ministry. The prophet is able to draw authority from "personal revelation and charisma" and not inherited office.⁴¹

Prophets do not receive their missions from human agency. They "seize" their calling.⁴² They assume their power; human beings do not appoint them. Anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace noted that this calling can occur either with a vision of or interaction with a supernatural being or in "a brief, and dramatic moment of insight, revelation, or inspiration which functions in most respects like the vision in being the occasion of a new synthesis of values and meanings."⁴³

Campbell discussed his prophetic call in the sixteenth article of a series called "A

Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.” It was not a dramatic calling, but Campbell’s recollection of it expresses his belief that he had a divine mission. It is worth noting at length:

May I tell a little of my religious experience, as this is much the fashion now? I will once at least, comply with the will of the religious populars. . . . I felt not the attractions of the love of God; but soon as I was enabled to calculate the import of one question, viz. "What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world and lose his life?" and soon as I understood that it was "a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus the Messiah came into the world to save sinners," even the chief of sinners, I reasoned on different premises and came to different conclusions. . . . I found all my faculties, and powers, and means, and opportunities were claimed on principles at which no generous heart could demur. Had I a thousand tongues as eloquent as Gabriel's and faculties of the most exalted character, 'twere all too little to tell his praise and to exhibit his excellencies to men. The only question then was, How shall I do this to the most advantage? . . . It was all comprised in two sentences--Publish in word what he has done, and as his own institutions will reflect the greatest possible honor upon him in this world, let them be fairly exhibited and the end is gained. This chain of thought just led me to the question, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" Now, in attempting to find an answer from his oracles to this petition, I took it for granted that there was no new communication of his will to be expected, but that it must be sought after in the volume. . . . Thus too I was led into a secret, which as I received freely, I communicate freely. It is this: There is an ancient and a modern order of things in the Lord's house.⁴⁴

A call, however, is not the only attribute distinguishing a prophet from other religious leaders, since many religious leaders claim some sort of divine call. Weber also noted that prophets have charisma. Students of Weber and other thinkers have heavily debated the topic of charisma. They have used the idea of charisma in different ways. This disparity is primarily due to the fluidity of Weber’s concept of charisma.⁴⁵

Weber defined charisma as “a gift that inheres in an object or person simply by virtue of natural endowment.” Weber, however, also believed that the production of charisma could occur. He hypothesized, thought, that there was still some type of “germ” of charisma in individuals who acquired charisma “artificially.”⁴⁶ However prophets acquire charisma, they exert their power through “virtue of . . . personal gifts.”⁴⁷

In order to avoid entanglement in the seemingly endless debate about charisma and its source, I will understand charisma as being the result of “voluntaristic

recognition” of “unique, extraordinary, supernatural or heroic qualities of the charismatic leader.”⁴⁸ Sociologist Bryan R. Wilson believed that attributed charisma was an important part of Weber’s theories on charisma. For Wilson, the relationship between a prophet and his or her followers forms the basis for understanding charisma. The followers believe that the prophet has some connection to the divine that legitimates his or her authority or message.⁴⁹ In applying the concept of charisma to Alexander Campbell, I will accept Wilson’s definition of charisma as “a marked natural ability, special wisdom, knowledge, lucidity, or unction.”⁵⁰

Did Campbell have charisma? The success of his movement, especially in the antebellum period, suggests that he did. The speed of growth, as well as the size of growth, demonstrates that his message resonated with individuals. Hagiographic accounts further enforce the belief that Campbell’s charismatic leadership attracted followers. “Raccoon” John Smith, a minister in the Campbell movement, related the tale of traveling a great distance to hear Campbell speak. When Campbell finished his message, Smith complained to another attendee about the brevity of the message, assuming it had been a mere thirty minutes. He was later astounded to find out that he had listened to Campbell for two and a half hours.⁵¹

While historians could offer additional hagiographic stories like this one to demonstrate what Campbell’s followers thought of him, Campbell also won over individuals outside the movement, even those who were his opponents at various times. They may not have accepted his views, but they were often charmed by his personality and manner of life. Selina Campbell, Campbell’s second wife, records in her memoir of Alexander a letter that former Confederate general Robert E. Lee wrote describing Campbell as a good representative of the human race.⁵²

Robert Owen, the socialist, met Campbell in debate in Cincinnati in 1829. Owen, the founder of a utopian community known as New Harmony, presented himself as an antagonist to Christianity for a variety of reasons. Although opponents in the debate, it appears that the two had a cordial relationship even after the debate. It also appears that both esteemed the other highly, even until Owen’s death in 1858. Neither man, however, won the other over to his side.⁵³

Bishop (later Archbishop) John Baptist Purcell of Cincinnati was another of

Campbell's opponents who retained a positive relationship with him after their 1837 debate. In an 1899 interview for a Disciples periodical, Purcell gave a glowing memorial to his deceased adversary. Calling Campbell "my worthy friend" and "my brother in the Lord," Purcell related that he had prayed daily for Campbell when Campbell debated the Presbyterian Nathan Rice in 1843. Purcell further estimated that Campbell would in future times be placed "on the same pedestal with Luther and Calvin and Wesley" and that Christians would have considered Campbell "a worthy successor of St. Peter and St. Paul," if he had been born at that time.⁵⁴

Prophets receive a call. They exhibit charisma. Finally, they present a message or vision. It is usually one of dissatisfaction with the current state of society. Usually the prophet provides a new cultural vision that is meant to repair the defective model that serves as the normative conception (what Anthony Wallace calls a "mazeway").⁵⁵ Campbell's approach to his mission was two-fold: attack the status quo and present a vision of what primitive Christianity would look like in the nineteenth century. He believed that the religious public would be able to see the degeneration that had overwhelmed Christianity by engaging their defective conceptions of it.

Attack on Priestcraft

In 1816 Campbell preached his "Sermon on the Law" to the Regular Baptist Association of Cross Creek, VA. He argued in that message that the Law of Moses was not binding upon Christians. Campbell postulated that because writers in the New Testament plainly contended that the Mosaic Law was unable to give righteousness to those who followed it, was unable to demonstrate how horrible sin is to the deity, and was unable to "suitably" guide humanity; the Mosaic Law (including the Ten Commandments) was not a valid religious system. According to Campbell, God, "by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," had corrected "all those defects."⁵⁶

Campbell concluded that Christians did not need the Law of Moses as a "rule of life." Even those that claim such, argued Campbell, are inconsistent because they argue that the Law of Moses is valid only so far as it was "enjoined by Christ." Campbell was ultimately concerned with this subject because religious elites had used the Mosaic Law to enforce contemporary regulations and practices not only on their congregants, but also on nonmembers (and even non-Christians). Such enforced

morality ran counter to what Campbell believed God wanted in society.⁵⁷

Campbell contended that such enforcement in American religious and civil life was anti-Christian:

[A]ll arguments and motives, drawn from the law or the Old Testament, to urge the disciples of Christ to baptize their infants; to pay tithes to their teachers; to observe holy days or religious fasts, as preparatory to the observance of the Lord's supper; to sanctify the seventh day; to enter into national covenants; to establish any form of religion by civil law:--and all reasons and motives borrowed from the Jewish law . . . are inconclusive, repugnant to Christianity, and fall ineffectual to the ground; not being enjoined or countenanced by the authority of Jesus Christ.⁵⁸

Campbell's "Sermon on the Law" was a direct attack on many clerical practices. He was specifically assailing the lack of disestablishment in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. While the first amendment and various state constitutions had guaranteed that the United States would not have a by-law established church, this disestablishment occurred only gradually. Quite often, state and local governments enacted quasi-religious laws and practices undermining the Bill of Rights.

Historian Martin Marty has noted that in place of a by-law established church a *de facto* established religion grew up at this time. Prior to full disestablishment, Protestants were able to get legislators to enact moral laws which covered a multitude of religious infractions from blasphemy to Sabbath-breaking. It was these laws which Campbell prophetically railed against. A devoted republican, Campbell believed that such laws and ecclesiastical practices undermined the freedoms of American society and were antithetical to primitive (i.e., "true") Christianity.⁵⁹

Campbell attacked these issues further in a series of letters written to the *Washington (PA) Reporter* in 1820-21.⁶⁰ Under the pseudonym "Candidus," Campbell railed against the moral societies arising in Washington. As Campbell saw it, the purpose of these societies was to "make the immoral wretches pay well for their immoralities and when in these hard times it costs them more to live immorally than morally, they will become moral as a cheaper way of living. When they pay dear for their sins they will from principles of avarice become morally correct!!" The fines for immoral practices, according to "Candidus," were then given to clergy who were to use it to educate individuals for the ministry. Campbell sarcastically enjoined, "[G]o on ye

profane, the more you sin, the more preachers we shall have.”⁶¹

Campbell was opposed to moral societies because he believed them to be “anti-evangelical, anti-constitutional, and anti-rational.”⁶² Moral societies were anti-evangelical (or “antichristian”) for two reasons:

[I]f the moral societies are [composed of Christians and non-Christians], if they claim jurisdiction over things civil, moral, and religious, they are antichristian--if they are all christians, they are prohibited from the exercise of any power over them that are not members of churches by the express law of Christ. And if they were even a christian church, and the offenders professed christians; it is antisciptural for them to punish them by any civil pains--in a word, I affirm that the Bible will justify them equally in burning a man, or stoning him to death, as it will in exacting money off him for his sins.⁶³

Moral societies were also unconstitutional. The constitution of the state of Pennsylvania contained language similar to the first amendment of the United States Constitution. Because of this, no one can impose fines, wrote Campbell, for an individual not observing the Sabbath, for example. “[T]he observance of any day in a religious manner is exclusively a *right of conscience*, and as such the non observance of it cannot be *constitutionally* censured and punished by civil law in any shape or form whatsoever.”⁶⁴

By the tenth letter in the series, an individual using the pseudonym “Timothy” engaged in debate Campbell, and it appears that Campbell never fully delineated what he meant by moral societies being “anti-rational.” Probably, he assumed by presenting them as anti-evangelical and unconstitutional, it would be obvious that they were “anti-rational.”

The “Candidus” essays represent a way Campbell offered up a prophetic voice against institutionalized and established (albeit *de facto*) religion. The enforcing of morality was not to be part of the public (or civil) sphere. Such matters were matters of conscience. Campbell, however, did believe in a stringent morality. He was very concerned with what he saw as the lack of morality of the times. Instead, he was disappointed that certain religionists attempted to enforce morality, a religious concept, through unscriptural and unconstitutional means.⁶⁵

Campbell also attacked the established clergy of different religious systems. Over the first seven issues of Campbell’s *Christian Baptist*, Campbell wrote scathing

condemnations of the clergy. He began by claiming that “for about fifteen hundred years” the clergy had wielded enormous power, not only over the congregations they oversaw, but even over “kings and emperors.” Such authority, argued Campbell, allowed the clergy to withhold from the common Christian the ability to interpret scripture for themselves, allowed them to demand monetary support from congregants, and provided a foundation for amassing large amounts of property.⁶⁶

The establishment of a specific class of Christians known as “the clergy” was not a feature of primitive Christianity, argued Campbell. Instead, over time individuals had used the idea of a special call from God to legitimate their authority over congregations. The use of this call combined with the belief that the clergy needed to secure “the interests of the church” allowed them to gain power they should not have. This “scheme” of institutionalization of the ministry was “unwarranted by God, founded on pride, ignorance, ambition, and impiety; and, as such, ought to be opposed and exposed by all them that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.”⁶⁷

Campbell further contended that the result of a clerical class was oppression. While Americans had cast off the idea of a king in the Revolution, many Christians allowed themselves to remain under the oppression of “priestcraft.” Campbell hoped that he could awaken Christians to the dangers of the clerical class. He imagined a time when “allied priests shall be driven to confusion; or rather, as we would earnestly desire, led to repent and become obedient to the truth.”⁶⁸

Clerical monetary support offered another problem for Campbell. Clergy, as they were awaiting their “call” to a particular church, set about attempting to find one that was suitable. Once there, pastors and priests preached that the congregation must financially support its ministers. For Campbell, Christianity, especially among those hired to preach the gospel, had become infected with the desire for money. Campbell accused the clergy of waiting for a call from a church that could support a minister well financially instead of doing the work for the work’s sake. Such emphasis on money with respect to professional religious service proved that the clergy were worshipping the God Mammon, and not Jesus Christ.⁶⁹

The message of the prophet, however, is not simply about attacking institutionalized religious systems. Prophets also offer a vision for a new system.

Dissatisfied with the current cultural idea, prophets present the people with a new image to guide them. This image is meant to correct the people's defective view of the culture. Usually this correction appropriates "elements and subsystems which have already attained currency in the society and may even be in use." Out of this reformulation, new movements are born.⁷⁰

Restoration of the Ancient Order

Alexander Campbell, as Nathan Hatch has noted, used the ideology present in the early Republic in formulating his religious system. Relying on the Revolution's rejection of tyranny, Campbell crafted a system that used the evangelical and equalitarian ideals that were present in the culture. By fostering anticlericalism, stressing individualism, and fashioning a vision of peace and harmony, Campbell offered a prophetic vision that appealed to many.⁷¹ Campbell also consciously positioned himself as an outsider who had no (or at least very little) official clerical or theological training. He was (or at least presented himself to be) on the outside of the Protestant establishment pointing at their corruption and calling for those who desired true Christianity to join him in the margins.⁷²

In 1823, after several years of preaching and debating, Alexander Campbell published his first journal *Christian Baptist*. Campbell offered *Christian Baptist* as a journal that would attempt to "turn away" individuals from the staid and, as Campbell saw it, unscriptural religious systems that humanity had developed since the primitive years of Christianity. Human beings had taken pure Christianity and tarnished it with doctrines, creeds, confessions, institutions, practices, and educational systems that were at best, non-scriptural, at worst unscriptural.⁷³

Over the seven years that Campbell published *Christian Baptist* he took many churches ("sects"), ministers, and beliefs to task for the damage they had done to primitive Christianity. To counteract this damage, Campbell wrote not only scathing attacks, but also offered up a vision as to what primitive Christianity should look like in the nineteenth century. Over four years Campbell wrote a series of thirty-two articles under the broad title "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things." In these articles Campbell covered a variety of subjects including Christian worship, organization, morality, spirituality, and church discipline.

Campbell's vision of a restored Christianity was an ambitious, but not necessarily unique one.⁷⁴ Yet, Campbell saw his mission as something distinct from other religious movements. They had all "failed" because they were not restorative enough. In place of the doctrines and hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant reformers had established their own doctrine and hierarchy and failed to restore the primitive order of apostolic Christianity. The time of reformatory Christianity was over; only a return to Christianity based on the teaching of the apostles could bring Christians into the unity that was desired. His vision was a lofty one:

A restoration of the ancient order of things is all that is necessary to the happiness and usefulness of christians. . . . This is in substance . . . what we contend for. 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, as presented in the blessed volume; and this is to restore the ancient order of things. Celebrated as the era of reformation is, we doubt not but that the era of restoration will as far transcend it in important and fame, through the long and blissful Millennium . . . [J]ust in so far as the ancient order of things, or the religion of the New Testament is restored, just so far has the Millennium commenced, and so far have its blessings been enjoyed.⁷⁵

Campbell's vision was a millennial one. Campbell's millennial thought has been examined by several writers, Richard Hughes, perhaps, the most prominent.⁷⁶ Certainly Campbell's millennial thought is important in understanding not only Campbell as a thinker, but also in understanding Campbell's prophetic message. Yet, he does not develop this aspect of the vision in great detail in *Christian Baptist*. It is not until his *Millennial Harbinger* years when he constructed a more concise conception of the Millennium.

What does seem clear from the early period of Campbell's thought is that the onset of the Millennium was connected to the restoration of primitive Christianity. One could not be had without the other. It also seems clear that Campbell believed human beings had to be active in order to bring about both the restoration of the apostolic order and the Millennium. Hughes argues that Campbell believed restoration and the Millennium were interconnected because the unity that a return to primitive Christianity would bring about was a prerequisite for the "millennial age."⁷⁷

Hughes, however, seems to present the Millennium as a static concept in

Campbell's thought. Campbell's Millennium in Hughes' retelling appears as a self-contained period of time with discrete beginning and end. This is perhaps accurate for the mature millennial thought of Alexander Campbell. It may not be accurate for the earlier Campbell.

Campbell argued that "just in so far as the ancient order of things, or the religion of the New Testament is restored, just so far has the Millennium commenced, and so far have its blessings been enjoyed."⁷⁸ Such a statement seems to suggest a progressive Millennium that humanity would gradually establish. Their progress would eventually reach a consummation with full expression of millennial harmony, peace, and joy. The Millennium, for Campbell, was not necessarily entirely a distinct experience but a gradually developing one. As human beings worked to restore primitive Christianity, they would experience the "blessings" of the Millennium.⁷⁹

The first phase in Campbell's vision of restoration and millennial blessings was to remove the "human" elements out of Christianity and to return to the simple teachings of the apostles, which, of course, Campbell believed did not come from the apostles themselves, but from God. For Campbell, the first things that had to go were creeds and confessions of faith. Although such were based on scriptural teachings, they did not make the gospel clearer (as some religionists claimed). In fact, confessions of faith made the teachings of the apostles more obtuse by clouding them in theological language that only a few could understand.

Nor did confessions bring about the unity of Christians. In fact, argued Campbell, creeds and confessions either brought about or were products of division in the church. "Every attempt to found the unity of the church upon the adoption of any creed of human device, is not only incompatible with the nature and circumstances of mankind, but is an effort to frustrate or to defeat the prayer of the Lord Messiah, and to subvert his throne and government."⁸⁰ In a later article Campbell wrote that creeds actually kept some from Christianity. By the bickering over theological terms not found in the New Testament, churches had "hardened the hearts" of those who had not been converted.⁸¹

Along with creeds and confessions of faith, Christians had to discard theological nomenclature. Campbell believed that the removal of religious terms not included in the New Testament would bring about unity. Such "Babylonish" language created division

and made Christianity unintelligible to the common person. Terms like “effectual calling,” “free will,” “original sin,” “total depravity,” and even “trinity,” did not meet with Campbell’s approval. These terms needed to be “purified from the christian’s vocabulary, before the saints can understand the religion they profess.”⁸²

Once Christians had “purified” the human from nineteenth-century Christianity, they could restore the primitive order in all its splendor. The first area that Campbell described was restored Christian worship. “[T]here is a divinely instituted worship for the assemblies of the disciples.” By approaching scripture in a rational way (supposedly) separated from the theological baggage of 1900 years, wrote Campbell, individuals can come to understand that worship. To save them time, however, Campbell explained what that divine institution was.⁸³

One of the first parts of Christian worship that Campbell desired to see Christians restore was the “Breaking of Bread” sometimes called communion, the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper and various other names. The apostles and other primitive Christians had observed this practice every Sunday, Campbell argued. The “contribution” was another activity that was done every week. It was not simply a collection of money to pay the minister. Instead, Campbell envisioned the collection as being for the poor “saints” in the congregation.⁸⁴

Worship, however, was not the only thing that Campbell believed needed restoration. Human opinions and desires had also corrupted church organization. Campbell asserted that individuals known as “bishops” had governed the primitive church, and thus such individuals should govern the nineteenth-century church. Campbell believed that the bishops should be teaching those who were under their charge. They were to “convince and exhort.” Yet, bishops were also to be spiritual providers. They were to be like shepherds and preside over their “flocks.”⁸⁵

Campbell used his discussion of church leadership as an opportunity to attack the names religious elites used. “They love *Rabbi, Rabbi, or Reverend and Right Reverend*, too well to lay them aside, or to exchange these haughty titles for the apostolic and humble name of overseer or bishop.” He was also concerned that others would be hesitant about using the term bishop because of its connection to Roman Catholicism. Again, however, for Campbell it came down to a question of apostolic

usage. The apostles had used the term “bishop.” It was time to reclaim the term from “misuse.” “[L]et us give to divine institutions divine names, and to human institutions human names.”⁸⁶

Another aspect of Campbell’s restored Christianity was the participation of Christians in “love feasts.” Campbell envisioned the love feasts as an opportunity for Christians to get together “for the purpose of social eating and drinking or eating.” They were also opportunities “for the promotion of humility, benevolence, joy, and peace.” Love feasts would bring about a perfect society, because they played to the social nature of human beings. By fostering the opportunity for Christians to encourage one another in their restoration of the New Testament order, love feasts would enable nineteenth-century Christians to experience “hope, and joy, and love, and confidence in God,” which the current religion had extinguished.⁸⁷

Campbell did not find the restoration of the apostolic order only in legalistic reinvention of outward forms and practices. It was important as well for Christians to be devoted to God. This devotion was partly legalistic in that one devoted to God was devoted to God’s will. Devotion, however, was also emotional in nature. Devotion to God (meaning obedience in all things) was a means to participate in God’s love. For Campbell, “there was no love like the love of God, either in nature or degree.” The commandments and ordinances given by God were expressions of that love. “Every expression of the will of God, every commandment of God is only drawing to a certain point, and giving form and efficacy to his love. It then becomes visible—it is then audible—we see it—we hear it—we feel it.”⁸⁸

Campbell concluded the series by talking about church discipline. He delineated what the practice should be concerning “offences” whether public or private. “Offences” in the “private” sense were difficulties between two individuals, one of whom “injured” or “trespassed” against the other. Campbell does not explicitly qualify what the term “offence” includes, but he does give the impression that such actions could involve a any of a variety of moral infractions in which one party could violate the rights of another.⁸⁹

“Public offences” covered a variety of issues as well. Such “public offences” appear to be questions of moral violations as well, but they are public in the sense that

they are widely known. Campbell was more explicit about what such “public” transgressions could be. While “public offences” could be any type of moral evil, Campbell expressly railed against evil speaking (slander) and speculation (incurring debt in business). Such activities brought disrepute to the congregation’s image, and hence brought shame to the image of Christ. Thus, the church needed to discipline those who had participated in such activities.⁹⁰

The severing of bonds between the church and the offender, however, was not a matter Christians should take lightly. The bonds holding the church together were to tightly connect Christians to each other. They were not bonds meant to be severed easily. Campbell argued that in disciplining a member for moral laxity “so much is to be done before a member is to be severed from [the church’s] embrace.”⁹¹

Alexander Campbell, at least in his early years, was a prophet of a new Christian movement. He combined elements from Christian tradition along with American ideals to formulate a new religious system in the antebellum United States. Campbell’s vision was a bold one intended to reignite primitive Christianity in a modern context. While wielding invective as well as constructive rhetoric, Campbell took to the field of American religious history and remade a part of it in his own image.

Conclusion

Hundreds and thousands flocked to Campbell’s movement. For whatever reason, Campbell was offering a vision that resonated with many religious people. Affected by Campbell’s charismatic interpretation of primitive Christianity in an American context, Campbell was able to move through the criticism that he received to success as a leader within American Christianity.

Yet, the story of Alexander Campbell does not end there. As Campbell’s movement continued to grow, it began to fracture both from outside pressure and inside discord. Faced with the deterioration of the dream he had worked hard to create, Campbell, reflecting on his leadership and the importance of his mission, slowly began to move from a prophetic role into a priestly one. Self-reflection, however, was not the only reason for this change. As *Christian Baptist* continued to grow in exposure and subscribers, readers addressed a variety of questions to Campbell. Some could argue that readers asked these questions of an accomplished, prominent Christian so that

they could get his assistance in studying the Bible. The questions also indicate, however, a growing dependence on Campbell's views. In a movement that prized the individual's ability to comprehend scripture, doctrine, and ecclesiology on one's own, the reliance on Campbell's insight indicates a shifting role for Alexander Campbell. He was no longer the prophet attacking degenerate Christianity. While he never entirely gave up a vision of restored Christianity nor gave up a prophetic voice, Campbell became one of the priests he had so vociferously attacked in his early years. It is the reasons for this change and the way it came that form the basis for the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: PRIEST

Was it, then, to be expected, that if I maintained the truth, and what I maintained were reported by an enemy of *the* faith, that that report would do honor either to me or my defence? For my own part, I expected no more justice at the hands of a priest than I have received at those of Mr. Hunnicutt. But what I most regret is, and that, too, more for your own sake than my own, that you *should seize with such avidity upon the report of a Sectarian, upon which to found that "Bull of Excommunication" which you have thundered against me in the form of "remarks."*—What would the brethren have thought of me, or how would you have liked it, had some popish priest published a report of your Debate with Purcell, attributing to you blasphemies against God, if I had ground an edict upon it, turning you over to Satan, or proclaiming you to the world as every thing that was heretical and diabolical?

John Thomas
To Mr. Alexander Campbell: Letter II⁹²

Lewis Snyder in his dissertation on Alexander Campbell marks the decade of the 1830s as an important decade in the development of Alexander Campbell and his movement. He cites the rapid growth the Disciples underwent, the complete and final separation from the Baptists, and the uniting of the Campbell movement with the Stone movement as major transitions in the decade. Yet, as Snyder notes, not all of the transitions in the movement during this time were positive. Snyder also cites the difficulties with John Thomas and Sidney Rigdon as events in the 1830s. The question of who was really a Christian (addressed in the so-called "Lunenburg Letter") and the institutionalization of the movement in formation of colleges rounded out Snyder's list.⁹³

Most scholars of the Stone-Campbell movement would agree with Snyder that the manifold events which occurred in the 1830s molded not only Campbell's movement, but Campbell himself. Yet, there are a variety of hypotheses on how those

events shaped Campbell. Most have taken the changes in Alexander Campbell's thinking and rhetoric as evidence of a more ecumenical outlook. Richard Hughes demonstrates that even Campbell's opponents, like Baptist preacher Jeremiah Jeter, saw Campbell as becoming more acceptable to a larger audience.⁹⁴

Investigators have exhumed evidence from the pages of the *Millennial Harbinger* to demonstrate Campbell's increasing openness to other religious groups. It appears, according to the work of these scholars, that Campbell was attempting to reach others and see his movement as simply a part of "Christianity" instead of a movement attempting to restore something that had been lost. Even Campbell said, "[W]e, as a denomination, are as desirous as ever to unite and co-operate with all Christians on the broad and vital principles of the New and everlasting Covenant."⁹⁵

Campbell's ecumenism, however, is not the final word on the question of Campbell's shift in ideology. Instead, there is an undercurrent to the surface ecumenism many scholars have seen in Campbell. Instead of open boundaries and tearing down barriers, scholars can observe Campbell redefining boundaries and making them stronger than ever. In this conception of Campbell, it is possible to assert that he was trying more than ever to define his movement and solidify his legacy. Weber's conception of priest helps in this construction.

The priest for Weber is part of "a regularly organized and permanent enterprise." Such individuals are "actively associated with some type of social organization" and operate "in the interest of the organization's members." Priests are equipped with "special knowledge, fixed doctrine, and vocational qualifications." They rely on doctrine which is "a rational system of religious concepts and . . . the development of a systematic and distinctively religious ethic."⁹⁶ In other words, priests are a part of an institutionalized religious system.⁹⁷

The priest, then, is concerned with the continuation of the religious system. The identity, livelihood, and authority of a priest are connected with the system: no system; no priests. A priest, then, is antagonistic toward any prophecy that threatens the system. Wilson notes, "Institutionalised religion is challenged by those who claim new inspiration which threatens the monopoly of access to divine knowledge that priests claim for themselves. It has often been easier to blame a leader as a false prophet for

misleading men, than to accept the idea that some men conscientiously disagreed with orthodoxy.”⁹⁸

It is in the context of the events of the 1830s that Alexander Campbell shifted from predominantly prophet to predominantly priest. In the flourishing years of his movement, Campbell came to realize the exigencies of leading a religious group. Not only did he observe that he was taking on a role of movement leadership, but he also recognized that his followers expected and welcomed (at least some of them) his guidance. Campbell took this responsibility, albeit grudgingly, and moved from prophet to priest.

Weber does not address the issue of prophets becoming priests. For Weber prophets do not become priests. Prophets act against the very ideas and structures that priests are desperate to protect. A prophetic tradition, though, will develop priests after the prophetic vision has been rationalized and routinized. In other words, when the vision becomes the institution, the priests arise. Prophets do not become priests, or do they?

As was noted in the introduction, many scholars have noted a difference between Alexander Campbell in his early years (sometimes called the “*Christian Baptist years*”) and Alexander Campbell post-1830 (the “*Millennial Harbinger years*”). While multitudes of evidence including much from Campbell’s pen could be advanced as proof of the ecumenical trend, by conceptualizing Campbell in Weberian terms, the picture is somewhat different. Instead of a Campbell whose sole desire is unity at any cost, a priestly Campbell appears through a Weberian lens—a Campbell interested in the preservation of his movement. Ecumenism is a means to this preservation, but it often obscures the priestly tendencies that pervade Campbell’s later life. By examining Campbell’s interactions with individuals who left his movement for others, observing Campbell’s actions concerning a hymnal for the movement, and analyzing Campbell’s response to his son Wickliffe’s death, I will show the priestly transformation of Campbell.

Prophets vs. the Priest

History would probably not have remembered Sidney Rigdon if he had not managed to get into altercations with prominent people. Not only did Rigdon have conflicts with Alexander Campbell, but he also had problems with Joseph Smith and,

later, Brigham Young after Rigdon had left the Campbell movement for the Mormons. These incidents are why people know Rigdon. Sidney Rigdon's defection to the Mormons, however, is an important event in understanding the changes in Alexander Campbell.

David Harrell in *Quest for a Christian America* creates an image of Rigdon as a "widely known and popular Disciples preacher on the Western Reserve."⁹⁹ A brief mention of Rigdon in *Christian Baptist* demonstrates his success. In 1828 Campbell noted that "Bishops Scott, Rigdon, and Bentley, in Ohio, within the last six months have immersed about eight hundred persons."¹⁰⁰ Yet, Rigdon's success was not enough to keep him in the Campbell movement. By the early 1830s Sidney Rigdon's reading of the Book of Mormon convinced him that it was another revelation from Jesus Christ, and because of this he joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹⁰¹

In 1831 Campbell wrote an article announcing Rigdon's defection with "mingled emotions of regret and surprize [sic]." Campbell placed the blame for Rigdon's conversion on "a peculiar mental and corporeal malady." Rigdon, according to Campbell, was subject to "[f]its of melancholy succeeded by fits of enthusiasm accompanied by some kind of nervous spasms and swoonings." Campbell further argued that Rigdon was insane and "laboring under some morbid affection of the mind."¹⁰²

In the same issue of the journal Campbell published for the first time his attack on Mormonism entitled "Delusions." Campbell attacked the book of Mormon with great ferocity. No apparent contradiction, probable lack of historicity, fault of logic, or supposed blasphemy escaped his pen. Campbell probably would have argued that he was antagonistic to Mormonism because of the "heresies" that it claimed as its doctrines. Yet, he certainly must have been disappointed to see "a number of disciples" leave the Disciples of Christ for the Mormons.¹⁰³

Defections to the Mormons were not the only internal problems that destabilized the Campbell movement. Shortly after Rigdon's departure, similar struggles arose due to a man by the name of John Thomas. Dr. Thomas had joined Campbell's movement in 1833, but he felt that Campbell had not gone far enough in his condemnation of the other denominations in America. Thomas' specific concern was that Campbell was too

lenient on Baptists who were becoming members of the Disciples of Christ. Because their baptism was not “for the remission of sins,” Thomas believed that it was not scriptural. Baptists, then, needed to be re-baptized, or re-immersed, in order to have their sins forgiven. Campbell disagreed.¹⁰⁴

The relationship between Campbell and Thomas deteriorated quickly. In 1834 Campbell noted that “Brother Thomas is . . . so well known as a talented, devoted, and zealous disciple of the Messiah.” Thomas was still “our beloved brother” at the beginning of 1835, but by the end of 1835 Campbell was concerned about Thomas’s “error” concerning re-baptism.¹⁰⁵ By the end of 1837 Campbell, who had “exposed” Thomas’s “errors” in a variety of articles, compared Thomas to Sidney Rigdon:

Exceedingly fond of *new ideas*, and always boasting of originality, [Rigdon] sought distinction by his lucubrations on the Prophecies. . . . Finally, having discovered the Golden Bible, he and Joseph Smith covenanted for a new religion, and delivered us from a great calamity.

And now I fear we are about to find, or rather have found, in the person of Dr. Thomas, another of these infallible dogmatists, so supremely devoted to his own opinions, and his own glory in defending them—so confident in asserting them—so diligent in propagating them, that to oppose him is, as he avers, to call the doctrine of the conditionality of eternal life, *materialism*.

Campbell declared his “non-fellowship with [Thomas] on account of his having become a factionist and having departed, in part at least, from the faith of the New Testament.”¹⁰⁶

Campbell’s excommunication of Thomas represents a certain level of authority that was both taken by him and given to him by his followers. Even Campbell recognized that he was acting at a different level of authority. His language as he describes his split from Thomas is certainly priestly:

It is with great reluctance that I thus express myself, aware as I am of the easy perversion and misapplication of these expressions. I sympathize with many of our brethren, who, through the fear of the reproach of “Campbellism,” would rather appear to dissent from me than to be governed by my views or my advice. Yet I need as much of their sympathy as they do of mine, because, while discharging a duty which I owe them and my Master, I am hazarding that which is as painful to my feelings, viz.—the appearance of dictating to, or assuming any authority over my brethren, as the charge of “Campbellism” is to them. This opprobrious designation has, I fear, usurped a sinister influence both upon my brethren and myself. I have hesitated to speak out in proper season, and

refrained from giving my advice, lest I should appear to dictate; and some of my brethren, *I suspect*, in some cases have rather boasted a little in differing from my views and conclusions, as a proof of their not being led by any person. Thus, between this commendable delicacy, or, as others might regard it, morbid sensibility on both sides, Satan is likely to carry his point and baffle our course as though the calumny feared were ever so well founded. For if he turn away the ears of the unconverted from the gospel, and the disciples from doing their duty through the fear of the reproach of “Campbellism,” then indeed he has succeeded as well by this name as by persecution or any other means which in former times he has had ingenuity to employ

But the present crisis elevates me above all this squeamishness; and although a perverse genius may easily misrepresent my interference, the call upon me is too imperious to be disregarded; and be the consequences what they may to myself, I hazard them rather than silently to permit the truth to be perverted and the cause of reformation to be disgraced by winking at the propagation of doctrines which have since the days of the ancient Sadducees till now, been repudiated by the wise and good.¹⁰⁷

In 1838 Campbell banned Thomas and his paper, the *Apostolic Advocate*, from appearing in the *Millennial Harbinger*. Vowing that “his [Thomas’s] name shall never again appear on our pages, until he reforms,” Campbell attempted to remove Thomas from the movement saying, “We have better names and more useful themes for the edification of our readers.”¹⁰⁸ That Campbell could express such a ban and expect it to be followed demonstrates how priestly he was becoming.

Thomas’s responses to Campbell’s assault also reveal that Campbell had begun to take a priestly role over a prophetic one. Thomas, obviously, was dissatisfied with the way Campbell was treating him in the pages of *Millennial Harbinger*. Especially disturbing for Thomas was Campbell’s willingness to hear a variety of other individuals concerning Thomas’ beliefs and then write those up in the *Harbinger* as true. Thomas argued that the way Campbell was writing about him gave the impression that “*in effect*, I am no longer of any use to the cause you plead.” He further complained that Campbell’s writings had unduly affected Thomas’s reception. Campbell’s readers relied more on the *Harbinger* to explain Thomas’s beliefs instead of attempting to understand Thomas’s beliefs on their own merits.¹⁰⁹

Thomas went on to accuse Campbell of being the leader of a sect called the “Campbellites,” as many of Campbell’s opponents had charged:

My good brother, shall we have you or Jesus for our Captain? That you are the

Leader of many there is no doubt. I do not say you wish it to be so; but, I have seen too much not to know the truth of this. I do not believe that you are pleading a cause that can in all its parts be sustained by the scriptures; if I am mistaken, and you are pleading as God would have you, then God speed you and may you proselyte men abundantly.¹¹⁰

Thomas saw Campbell as wielding more authority than Campbell had a right to under the doctrines of the movement.

As noted previously, prophets and priests are enemies because they act on opposite sides of an institution. Priests are concerned with the maintenance of institutions that provide them with opportunity, authority, and, often, livelihood. Prophets, however, are more often dedicated to the tearing down of institutions which are often seen as corrupt. In anthropologist Anthony Wallace's terms, prophets seek to present new mazeways to a people; priests are determined to keep current mazeways intact.¹¹¹

Dissatisfied that Campbell had not pushed the movement further along the restorationist track, both Rigdon and Thomas found contentment in other ways: Rigdon with the Mormons; Thomas with his own movement, the Christadelphians. Campbell's response to both men evidences a priestly change in his character. By attempting to solidify his hold on his followers instead of relying on his vision, Campbell moved from prophet to priest. He was no longer railing against the institution; he was the institution.¹¹²

Hymnal Controversies

Historian Nathan Hatch argued in *The Democratization of American Christianity* that the early Republic was a period of democratization in church worship music. While Hatch's interest is in how church music moved from "formal" to "indigenous folk," his attention to music in American Christianity demonstrates that music is often as important (if not more important) than doctrine. One can discover much by studying a movement's hymnody that may not be evident in its theology. Quite often music is as much a contentious issue as confessions of faith. The Stone-Campbell movement was not an exception.

In the December 1827 issue of *Christian Baptist*, Campbell made note of a new

hymnal that he was publishing that was meant to be used by the fledgling movement. The remark was made in passing as Campbell introduced the twenty-first article in his “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things” series. In that article as well as the next one of the series, Campbell offered a prophetic denunciation against hymnody that did not follow biblical principles. Because “[o]ur hymns are, for the most part, our creed in metre,” it would be totally inappropriate for these restorationists to be pushing against established doctrines and yet extolling those same doctrines in their music. Such hymns were “an essential part of the corrupt systems of this day, and a decisive characteristic of the grand apostacy [sic].”¹¹³

Campbell, however, was not the only one in the movement that was interested in church music. Barton W. Stone had also published a hymnal in 1829, and when the two movements united in 1831-2, several of the leaders agreed that the new movement should have one hymnal that all would share. Campbell and Stone, as well as Walter Scott and John T. Johnson, assembled a variety of songs which Campbell then published. Unknown to Stone, however, Campbell and Scott had published the book under the name *The Disciple Hymnbook*. When Stone found out, he sent word to Campbell so the confusion could be settled. At the base of the contention was the disagreement between Stone and Campbell over what restorationists should be called, “Christians” or “Disciples” with Stone preferring the former and Campbell the latter. In a subsequent publication Campbell changed the title to *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Original & Selected*.¹¹⁴

When he published the new edition, Campbell gave it his stamp of approval. Despite the suggestion by some that Campbell was succumbing to this “mercenary age” by publishing a new hymnbook, Campbell was adamant that it was an important update to previous hymnbooks and one that would last. He wrote, “Except it be the alteration of a word or phrase, I must say to my brethren, that I think the present selection ought to satisfy all, and that I will not consent, as far as I can judge from the past and the present, to any new or material change in the work, or addition to it.”¹¹⁵ As far as Campbell was concerned, the movement had found its hymnbook.

Commenting on a later edition of the hymnbook, Campbell presented the effort as a joint enterprise. Campbell allowed that “[t]he perfecting of the book of praise for a

great community is not the work of an individual.” Yet, in the same article Campbell gave the new work his imprimatur while noting why it was important for him to make such comments:

The book now in use amongst us, meagre in size though it is, I yet think is the most scriptural and Christian of any one volume I have ever seen . . . I never approved it all; but my peculiar position to the community constrained me to yield my own judgment, in some measure, to that of others, for whom I entertained much affection and esteem.

Using his “peculiar position to the community,” Campbell continued to push for “[o]ne book of psalmody, and but one” for the movement.¹¹⁶ Of course the one that was “most scriptural and [most] Christian” happened to be the one put out by Campbell and his press.

Campbell’s priestly authority is also evident in an advertisement for the 1843 hymnbook. Noting that it now contained 475 songs, Campbell did not want individuals to feel like previous editions were worthless. Nor was he pressuring individuals into buying the new hymnal. Instead, he noted that “[t]he present hymn-book, so far as it goes, *may still be used* in families and churches.” He even began the advertisement by calling it *our* hymnbook.¹¹⁷ For a movement which prided itself on the rights of the individual and the autonomy of congregations, comments branding any particular piece of literature as “ours” and giving permission to others to continue to use other hymnals seem out of place.

Even while publishing proposals for other hymnals, Campbell took the opportunity to comment on those he found unscriptural. Particularly problematic for Campbell were hymnbooks that combined the words of songs with musical notes on the same page for ease of singing. For one such song book, Campbell felt that “as a Christian” he could not approve of a particular hymnal because it used musical notes. Campbell believed that the notes would capture the attention of the singers causing them to ignore the importance of the words they were singing. “I would prefer to have an organ, or a fashionable choir as a means of my worship than the words of a hymn set to the notes of a tune on which to fix my eyes while engaged in the worship of God.”¹¹⁸

Choosing or creating an appropriate hymnal for a religious movement is an

important decision. Campbell realized that religious music was a vital aspect of Christianity. In order to be consistent in doctrine, he pushed for the acceptance of a common hymnal that was scripturally correct. In doing so, he evidenced his priestly character as he sought to dominate that decision.

The death of Wickliffe Campbell

Alexander Campbell had fourteen children, most of whom died by their early twenties. While Campbell never explicitly expected one of his children to succeed him as *de facto* leader of the Disciples, there are some indications that this may have been Campbell's wish for his son Wickliffe. Whether Wickliffe could have had this position is irrelevant. He died at the age of ten in Virginia while his father was touring Europe.¹¹⁹

Campbell's son-in-law, W. K. Pendleton, was the first to make notice of Wickliffe's death in the *Millennial Harbinger*. While Campbell was still ignorant of his son's fate, Pendleton wrote of Wickliffe:

WICKLIFFE was a boy of remarkable and peculiar character, and had given many evidences of a precocious piety, which made him the object of special hope. The moral influence of these makes them well worthy of narration, and we only postpone their insertion for want of room. His mother is left disconsolate,--bowed down under the mighty hand of God. His father, unconscious of his fate, is laboring in a distant land. The stroke which has fallen upon her, and which awaits him, is one of more than ordinary bereavement; and will not a common brotherhood unite in asking the God of all consolation to give them both strength to bear and resignation to suffer the calamity that has befallen them.¹²⁰

While it is completely understandable for a poetic tinge to color Pendleton's remarks on the death of a child, his words suggest more than simple grief over the death of a child, even one who was family. Pendleton clearly saw Wickliffe as something special compared to the other Campbell children. Perhaps since Wickliffe died at a younger age than some of the other Campbell children (ten of whom preceded their father in death), the idea of lost opportunities presented itself to Pendleton's mind. Yet, why was Wickliffe the "object of *special hope*"?¹²¹

Two months after Pendleton's obituary for Wickliffe appeared in the *Harbinger*, Campbell penned his own memorial for his son. Calling him "a child of more than ordinary promise," Campbell noted that Wickliffe "was a child not only beloved by all his relatives and acquaintance, and dear to his parents, but one on whom clustered many a

hope of eminent usefulness to society in coming years.”¹²² Do these lines suggest that Campbell entertained notions that Wickliffe would somehow succeed him as leader of the movement? Or are they simply a parent’s grief? While grief over lost opportunities could surely be coloring these sentiments, there is something else underlying these words. Campbell believed that Wickliffe had some special destiny that he might have fulfilled had he not died.

Wickliffe was Campbell’s “choicest lamb from my flock.”¹²³ The loss of his son was a terrible experience, especially if those hopes that people entertained for Wickliffe were hopes of his succession to Campbell’s position. The loss, however, was much greater for Campbell’s second wife and Wickliffe’s mother, Selina. In writing her memoirs of the home life of Alexander Campbell, Mrs. Campbell addressed the issue of Wickliffe’s drowning, although she produced the work almost forty years after his death. Calling Wickliffe a “child of great hope” and “promise,” Mrs. Campbell presented a similar picture to that of her husband, although she went into much more detail about his death and the circumstances surrounding it.¹²⁴

Selina Campbell also recorded that her husband had asked her to “write a tract for the Sunday School, containing a history of his beloved son.” She could not do it, but was able to spend a significant amount of space in her memoirs of Campbell addressing Wickliffe’s death.¹²⁵ Why would Campbell make such a request to his wife? Why should Wickliffe’s life be recorded for Sunday Schools among a movement devoted to the Bible alone?

A final aspect of Wickliffe’s distinctiveness is the portentous events that surrounded his death. Mrs. Campbell recorded Alexander feeling uneasy on the night of Wickliffe’s drowning. Despite Campbell being in Europe at the time, “he was conscious that something *sad* had happened at home.” Mrs. Campbell also had an ominous dream after Wickliffe’s death. He appeared to her, but would not answer any questions his mother asked him concerning his drowning. She took this to mean that she was not to know the reason and manner of Wickliffe’s death. Such recollections added to the mystique of Wickliffe Campbell.¹²⁶

Campbell scholars Joseph Jeter and Hiram Lester have presented a counter-factual argument supposing that Wickliffe’s succession to his father’s position may have

averted the split between the Disciples of Christ and Churches of Christ. They note that none of the other Campbell children showed any aptitude or desire for a leadership role within the movement. For Jeter and Lester, however, Wickliffe could have filled that potential role and would have had the aura of the Campbell name and legacy. While counter-factual arguments can offer interesting diversion into the what might have been, they are just that—what might have been. There is no indication that Wickliffe or any other Campbell, or really any other leader, could have stopped the divisive impulses already present in Alexander Campbell's life. But Jeter and Lester's identification of Wickliffe's promise presents a further dimension of Campbell's transformation to priest.¹²⁷

If it is a correct hypothesis that Campbell had some special hopes for Wickliffe's destiny, particularly hopes that he would take over a leadership role in the movement, then Campbell's vision of the movement had changed from a prophetic one to a priestly one. Jeter and Lester accurately note that "leadership among the Disciples was not official but charismatic."¹²⁸ If this remained the case for Campbell, what were his hopes for Wickliffe? As a priest, however, Campbell would have been concerned with the continuation of the movement. Who better to continue his legacy than a gifted son who had demonstrated talents similar to his father?

The desire for routinization and continuance frustrated by the death of his son may be behind Campbell's 1849 push for an overarching society that would organize mission work among the growing movement. A national organization like the American Christian Missionary Society would in theory make the movement cohesive while still allowing congregations to express autonomy and the movement as a whole to argue that it did not suffer from the hierarchy of the other denominations. It could conceivably be argued, however, that Campbell had been writing on church cooperation since 1841, six years before Wickliffe's death. It could also be argued that "men such as David S. Burnet, John T. Johnson, Lewis L. Pinkerton, and John W. Parish . . . were the real fathers of systematic and organized benevolence among the Disciples."¹²⁹

While both of these facts are true, it was only in 1849 (after Wickliffe's death) that Campbell decided that the Disciples should form "a general organization for cooperation." Furthermore, while others may have been involved in the creation of such

an organization, without Campbell it may not have succeeded. Campbell's approval or disapproval often was the decisive factor for many in the movement.¹³⁰ It is no wonder that the Missionary Society elected Campbell its first president.¹³¹

Ecumenism and priestcraft

While it is the opinion of many Stone-Campbell scholars that the period after 1830 was a period of increased ecumenism for Alexander Campbell, as has been noted it was also a period of consolidation, of "priestcraft," a term Campbell used against opponents he thought were acting overly authoritarian. Scholars like Richard Hughes and Mark Noll, among others, have argued that Campbell's 1837 debate with Cincinnati bishop John Baptist Purcell was the turning point in Campbell's thinking about the relationship between his movement and the larger world of American Christianity. Because Campbell presented himself in the debate as the defender of "Protestantism" and not primitive Christianity, these scholars argue Campbell was lowering the barriers he had erected between himself and the Christian world. Campbell began to speak "more as a mainstream American Protestant than as a simple, primitive Christian."¹³²

Other scholars have pointed to the so-called "Lunenburg Letter" as an important turning point in Campbell's denominational transition. A lady from Lunenburg, Virginia, wrote Campbell concerned that he believed that there were Christians in all "Protestant parties." Campbell responded that "he that . . . infers that none are Christians but the immersed, as greatly errs as he who affirms that none are alive but those of clear and full vision."¹³³ Scholars offer Campbell's conciliatory attitude toward other denominations as well as his increased support of interdenominational cooperation and societies (like the Evangelical Alliance) as evidence that Campbell was becoming more ecumenical in outlook.¹³⁴

What these scholars tend to overlook, however, is that even though Campbell was reaching out to other Protestants, he was attempting to do so on *his* terms. Harold Lunger in his discussion of Campbell's openness to cooperation with other Protestant groups has to admit that while Campbell was encouraged by plans for the uniting of Protestantism, he still made "his own proposals for a congress of all Protestant bodies." Lunger also notes that Campbell's address to the Bible Union Convention in 1852 afforded Campbell the opportunity to call for a Bible that appropriately noted that

immersion was the only scriptural mode of baptism.¹³⁵

William Baker's observations of Campbell's views of the Evangelical Alliance are insightful as well. He notes that Campbell was "enthusiastic, even exuberant" for the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. Yet, Baker additionally observes that Campbell critiqued heavily the wording of the Alliance's propositions, emphasizing his particular doctrinal stances. While Campbell may have been "sympathetic" to the Evangelical Alliance, he "neither desires nor sees the need to throw his hat in with the Evangelical Alliance. In fact, he seems to think of himself *as an elder brother to them.*"¹³⁶ Campbell, then, applauded the work of Christian union, but thought it appropriate to offer "elder brotherly" advice. It would appear Campbell was attempting to make plans of union conform to his beliefs instead of attempting to join himself to them.

There is no doubt that Campbell took a more positive stance toward Protestantism after 1830. Yet, focusing on that stance obscures his change from prophet to priest. Campbell may have been encouraging cooperation between Protestant "sects," but he made every effort to use his beliefs as the framework for success.

Conclusion

In the 1830s Alexander Campbell transitioned from acting as a prophet to conserving his movement as a priest. The defections of followers to the Mormons and the Christadelphians following the leadership of Sidney Rigdon and John Thomas combined with questions of "official" literature, like the hymnbook controversy, along with other issues not noted here, provided the impulse for this transition. The events surrounding the death of Wickliffe Campbell demonstrate that Alexander Campbell was concerned with the survival of his movement and sought to appoint, albeit probably implicitly, his son as his successor. The death of Wickliffe frustrated these plans and may have hastened the organization of the American Christian Missionary Society as a measure to insure continued survival of the movement.

By seeing Campbell as a priest, I have questioned currently held beliefs concerning Campbell's ecumenism. His ecumenism, while present, covers his priesthood. He was concerned with the unity of American Christianity, but he was particularly concerned with being the architect of that unity.

CHAPTER FOUR

OF PROPHETS, PRIESTS, AND AMERICAN HISTORY

It is tempting to either lionize or demonize America's prophets. The role individuals like Alexander Campbell have played in American history can lead one to gloss over the difficult and unsavory aspects of their character while focusing only on those things that might recommend their legacy to history. On the other hand, those individuals who, although prophets, have offered a message that is incompatible with the *zeitgeist* of a more enlightened age may find themselves the target of excoriation by their posterity.

My intention has not been either to lionize or demonize Alexander Campbell but to examine how his prophetic role gradually shifted into a priestly one. Alexander Campbell, at different points in his career, exhibited qualities of individuals Max Weber termed "prophets" and "priests." In his early years up to 1830, Campbell sounded loudly against the institutional structures of Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant. In *Christian Baptist* Campbell laid out a vision for what restored Christianity should look like in nineteenth-century America. After 1830, however, while Campbell still propounded his characteristic doctrines, he also began to be concerned with movement building. As the Disciples separated from the Baptists, Campbell became the leader of a distinct movement in American Christianity. Faced with the challenge of creating a cohesive movement, Alexander Campbell mediated between his original prophetic role and the priestly one his followers demanded. While many of his themes mirrored those of other American and Christian movements, he was able to take those themes and create something different and successful.¹³⁷

I have suggested that Campbell modified his role due to his reflection on the

state of his movement and the pressure from his followers to take on a priestly role. Campbell gradually began to recognize that not only did his followers look to him for more than prophetic vision, but they also sought in him priestly guidance that would stabilize their experience of American Christianity. They had come to his movement, not only persuaded by his biblical interpretation, but also because they hoped to find an identity as the New Testament church in nineteenth-century America. Campbell's charismatic personality drew people out of the denominations of the time, but his followers demanded stability that those denominations had provided them. Campbell, although grudgingly, offered them that as he considered the future of his movement and his desires for its continuance.

Such a contention, however, raises larger questions than simply those encountered in an examination of the role of Alexander Campbell. In many ways the Stone-Campbell movement fits the theses of Martin Marty and Sidney Mead. Both of these historians argued that from the period of the early Republic through Reconstruction, Christianity in the United States moved from a motley collection of sects to voluntary denominations interested in building an empire in the United States that was both Christian (specifically Protestant) and American. Both Marty and Mead demonstrate the importance "America" had in the shaping of American Christianity. Such trends can be found in the Stone-Campbell movement as well, although they have not been developed here.¹³⁸

There is more to this narrative, however, than looking at the transitions that *movements* have made. The influence of charismatic leaders who have offered new visions of religion in America has often caused these transitions. Yet, these individuals, although working in an American, democratic, individualistic framework, have often been authoritarian. Nathan Hatch notices this as the great inconsistency of those movements that arose during the early Republic.¹³⁹

How could these movements, as well as American Christianity in general, have accepted authoritarian rule while espousing "American" ideals of democracy and antiauthoritarianism? Alexander Campbell demonstrates for us that it is possible that successful American prophets must also be priests. In a land of competition for the soul of the nation, it became necessary for prophetic voices to temper their message with

authoritarian concern for the survival of their movements.

Such a contention does not seem unlikely when one considers other religious movements. The Mormons provide a similar example of a prophetic voice with priestly overtones. Historians could certainly construct Joseph Smith as a Weberian prophet. He offered a new vision for antebellum American that was a challenge to “orthodox” Christianity. The institution he set up, however, was a “virtual religious dictatorship.”¹⁴⁰ Other movements that started with prophetic denouncement that ended up with the prophet becoming a priest could be added. Is it possible that “America” likes its prophets to be priests?

This desire for prophetic priests (or perhaps priestly prophets) in America’s religious movements may be larger than the confines of “religion” in American society. While it may be difficult to extrapolate this thesis to twentieth-century American life, it appears that there were a variety of individuals outside of a conventionally religious sphere who functioned in the modality of this prophet and priest duality. Two examples from the “secular” world provide further evidence for this possibility: John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison. While both Brown and Garrison had religious backgrounds and for a time acted within the confines of Christianity, both men found their “calling” outside of official religious organizations. The fact that both were prophets, however, cannot be denied. Both Brown and Garrison offered heavy invective against the institution of slavery and any person or organization that supported or tolerated it. While they were on opposite sides on the question of whether violence should be used for slavery’s end, both called to account America’s “mazeways,” especially when it came to the enslavement of African Americans. Both Brown and Garrison, however, had an authoritarian slant that could be described as priestly.

John Brown is best remembered for his failed attempt to incite slave insurrections after his capture of the arsenal at Harper’s Ferry, Virginia. To many, he was an insane man with an (at that time) insane goal. Yet, he was also a prophet to his followers, as he offered a vision of an America united: an America where slavery did not exist and all “maltreated” groups would have equal rights. While capitalism and land speculation were “evils” of American society Brown attacked, he saw slavery as “the ‘sum of all villanies.’ Slavery must be abolished before other problems could be addressed.”¹⁴¹

Yet, many are unaware that Brown drew up a constitution for a government that would replace the current system with an authority that would respect all groups equally. Full of “Puritan values, from the radical to the prudish,” Brown’s constitution represents his priestly side.¹⁴² Despite his failure at Harper’s Ferry and his death in 1859 (which ended Brown’s hopes of a new government), Brown had already been exhibiting a priestly side with his followers. As early as Bleeding Kansas in 1854, Brown exhibited a measure of authority his follower felt needed to be obeyed.¹⁴³ If Brown had succeeded and set up his government as he had planned, perhaps his authoritarian side would have surfaced to greater prominence. In a position of power like he most certainly would have had, his concern, like that of Alexander Campbell, would most likely have shifted to one of consolidation, stabilization, and priesthood. Although much of this argument (as opposed to the Campbell argument throughout this thesis) rests on a counterfactual hypothesis, it is not difficult to imagine that at least seminally, John Brown was both prophet and priest.

William Lloyd Garrison, on the other hand, does evidence both a prophetic and a priestly side. Like Brown, William Lloyd Garrison offered a prophetic voice against slavery in antebellum America. In 1831 Garrison published the first edition of *The Liberator*, his famous newspaper denouncing slavery. In *The Liberator*, as well as in his public speaking, Garrison offered a vision of America that did not contain enslaved persons. Garrison was an “agitator” to clergy, politicians, and the American public in general. Garrison demonstrated the height of his prophetic rhetoric (as well as his gift for flair) in an 1854 speech on the Fourth of July.

While he was speaking of “an America compromised by slavery,” Garrison held up to the audience the Fugitive Slave Law as well as other legislative and judicial decisions and pronouncements and summarily lit them on fire. Not satisfied with such burnt offerings to the ideal of freedom for all, “Garrison held aloft a copy of the U.S. Constitution. Pronouncing it ‘the source and parent of the other atrocities,’ he struck another match and watched in bright-eyed satisfaction as the paper burst into flame.” Satiated with the flames of a document supposedly committed toward freedom, Garrison intoned, “And let all the people say, ‘Amen.’”¹⁴⁴

Yet, William Lloyd Garrison, a prophet of antebellum abolition, also exhibited

priestly characteristics. In 1847 Frederick Douglass let it be known that he was interested in starting his own newspaper. Despite Garrison being previously supportive of Douglass's endeavors, he balked at the idea of another paper being offered to the public. Concerned about a field that was being to be crowded by a multitude of papers, Garrison encouraged Douglass to drop the project citing "*The Liberator's* decline in black subscribers [as indicative of] how crowded the field had already become."¹⁴⁵ Years later, once Douglass had established a paper (against Garrison's advice), the relationship between the two men became strained and Garrison publicly criticized the direction and ideology of Douglass's ventures. Garrison's most recent biographer, Henry Mayer, notes that Douglass felt that "he stood in relation to Garrison 'like that of a child to a parent'" due to the way Garrison treated him.¹⁴⁶

Garrison's relationship toward the American Anti-Slavery Society (AAS), however, more definitively evidences his priestly side. Although Garrison was present and instrumental in the founding of the AAS, Arthur Tappan and his brother originally guided the project.¹⁴⁷ When the society moved to Boston from New York, however, Garrison became president. Mayer notes that by this point in the abolitionist movement, "Garrison's leadership did come increasingly to rely upon his *paternal* stature as a pioneer and founder."¹⁴⁸

While the abolitionists had built the society on the premise of "the free expression of ideas," Garrison's paternalism formed the basis for his interaction with the society from 1843 to 1865. According to Mayer,

Garrison's 'great facility' for preserving the flow of a meeting with pointed and humorous interlocutory remarks contributed to his fatherly image, though when sessions turned to less structured debate, he was "rather apt, with all the innocence and simplicity in the world, to do all the talking himself," [Edmund] Quincy said. Critics, of course, took the less benign view that the domineering editor could not brook disagreement.¹⁴⁹

In later years, Garrison remained president of the American Anti-Slavery Society because of his "fear for the success of [the] organization."¹⁵⁰

John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison perhaps do not demonstrate such a dramatic change between prophet and priest as Alexander Campbell does. Brown's prophetic vision never found success due to his ineptitude at military planning. Thus,

Brown never really set up an institution similar to the one Alexander Campbell created. Garrison differs from Campbell because his vision was perhaps too successful. Because Garrison was so intensely devoted to the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of the slaves left Garrison with the sense of a completed mission. In the wake of the Civil War, Garrison decided to end *The Liberator* and push for the dissolution of the AAS. After Appomattox, Garrison stood more as “vindicated prophet” than priest of an institutionalized system of civil rights.¹⁵¹

The examples of Brown and Garrison alongside Campbell reveal the possibility that religious leadership and secular leadership, at least in the antebellum period and likely throughout most of the nineteenth century, followed similar paths and arose in similar ways.¹⁵² The anti-authoritarian nature of the early Republic may have founded the rise of several populist organizations, but in many of them, especially in religious organizations, authoritarian leaders arose. This priestly slant to America’s prophets may be due to the establishment of voluntarism in American culture.¹⁵³ Many American prophets in the early Republic and antebellum eras centered their message on the right of the individual to choose for himself or herself what was true without the mediation of an authoritarian intercessor.¹⁵⁴ Yet, many of America’s prophets became authoritarians.

If Alexander Campbell is a representative template, for many such prophets the conscious recognition of their identity in these burgeoning movements plus the desire from their constituency for a strong leadership interested in institutional development led them to moderate their prophetic vision with priestly authority. These individuals realized that the success of their prophetic vision was dependent on a priestly impetus for institutional stability and continuance. In a culture where the individual was not bound by law or custom to a particular (religious) institution, leaders had to find ways to keep members content in the movements these prophets had started. How ironic, then, that in the wake of the American Revolution those most vociferous in offering a populist prophetic vision would become the very priests they had railed against.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

¹Except where noted biographical information is adapted from Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 2 vol. (1897; reprint, Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, n.d.).

²See the discussion of the Christian Baptist in Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 21-46.

³Alexander Campbell, "Prospectus," *MH* 1 (January 1830): 1. Campbell continued *Christian Baptist* for about three months after the first issue of *Millennial Harbinger*.

⁴In "Address to Reformers," *MH* 2 (September 1831): 419-20, Campbell recognized that *The Christian Baptist* was "the most severe, sarcastic, and ironical" that he had ever written. While calling it "an experiment to ascertain whether society could be moved by fear or rage," he was also calling for his fellow associates not to follow his lead, noting that he had never been as severe in his preaching as they were.

⁵David Edwin Harrell, *A Social History of the Disciples of Christ*, vol. 1, *Quest for a Christian America* (Nashville, TN: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966; reprint, Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 78, argues that economic tension formed the foundation for opposition to the society.

⁶Other groups that have some, albeit tendentious, connection to Alexander Campbell would be the Christadelphians as well as the International Churches of Christ (sometimes called the Boston movement). Connections to Campbell could also be made through Sidney Rigdon to the Mormons.

⁷Selina Huntington Campbell, *Home Life and Reminiscences of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: John Burns, 1882; reprint, Joplin, MO: College Press, n.d.), 81. The only work of some substance on the second Mrs. Campbell is Loretta Long, *The Life of Selina Campbell: Fellow Soldier in the Cause of Restoration* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2001).

⁸Two works of note that combine scholars from the Stone-Campbell traditions

with academic scholars are Lester McAllister, ed., *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial, 1788-1988* (Nashville, TN: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988) and Perry E. Gresham, comp., *The Sage of Bethany: A Pioneer in Broadcloth* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960; reprint, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1988).

⁹Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 823, makes a similar assertion.

¹⁰Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

¹¹See, for example, Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹²Hatch, *Democratization*, 3.

¹³See Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

¹⁴See essays in Richard T. Hughes, ed., *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

¹⁵ Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 447-9.

¹⁶Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 214-5.

¹⁷Hatch also expressed his thought on the “Christian” movement in Nathan O. Hatch, “The Christian Movement and a Demand for a Theology of the People,” *The Journal of American History* 67 (December 1980): 545-67.

¹⁸Hatch, *Democratization*, 71-73.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 71.

²⁰Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93-113. See also George M. Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, 2d. ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), 41-42.

²¹See S. Morris Eames, *The Philosophy of Alexander Campbell* (Bethany, WV: Bethany College, 1966) for Campbell’s indebtedness to Locke and other philosophers.

²²Hatch, *Democratization*, 206.

²³Hatch does address Campbell’s authoritarianism, but only to a minor degree.

²⁴Hughes, *Reviving*, 43. This is not to suggest that all Stone-Campbell historians have spoken of two Campbells. Some, like Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1975), 158, have suggested that conservatives within the movement have misunderstood (“distorted”) Campbell’s primitivism. This, they argue, has led to the belief that Campbell was more of a primitivist when younger than he actually was. Those that have argued for a singular, misunderstood Campbell have been primarily, although not exclusively from the Disciples of Christ stream of the Stone-Campbell movement.

²⁵Robert Frederick West, *Alexander Campbell and Natural Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 220, emphasis added.

²⁶Harold L. Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), 115-28.

²⁷Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, 59-60.

²⁸Conkin, *American Originals*, xiv, does note, however, that he was a member of a Christian congregation.

²⁹*Ibid.*, vii. Conkin does not discount that many of the movements he discusses (Stone-Campbell, Mormons, Adventists) have European backgrounds or connections, but he asserts that these groups “have a special home in America.”

³⁰*Ibid.*, 14-18.

³¹*Ibid.*, 26-27.

³²Richard M. Tristano, *The Origins of the Restoration Movement: An Intellectual History* (Atlanta: Glenmary Research Center, 1988), 129. In Appendix B, Tristano does note that scholars were producing research as he was finishing the book suggesting a connection between Campbell’s shift and the growth of American Catholicism. Again, he is basing his conclusions on the work of Richard Hughes. It is difficult to tell if he was modifying his conclusions in the text or not.

³³Earl I. West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 1, 1800-1865 (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1990), 181-95. An example of West’s moralizing can be seen on page 195, where he argues concerning the missionary society, “Campbell is not our authority. . . . Campbell believed in them, but Campbell was wrong.”

³⁴Richard T. Hughes, “From Primitive Church to Civil Religion: The Millennial

Odyssey of Alexander Campbell," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 44 (March 1976): 87-103.

³⁵Interestingly, Hughes, *Reviving*, 45-46, argues that the millennium was the "constant" in Campbell's thought.

³⁶Others have taken interest in Campbell's emphasis on republican government and the separation of church and state as forming the basis for his anti-Catholicism. See L. Edward Hicks, "Republican Religion and Republican Institutions: Alexander Campbell and the Anti-Catholic Movement," *Fides et historia* 22 (Fall 1990): 42-52, and Keith Huey, "Alexander Campbell's Church-State Separatism as a Defining and Limiting Factor in his Anti-Catholic Activity" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2000).

³⁷See Hughes, *Reviving*, 32-46. Hughes covers much of the same ground West does on the Missionary Society but in a more concise fashion.

³⁸Hughes, *Reviving*, 38.

³⁹Alexander Campbell, "Obituary," *MH*, 3rd series, 4 (December 1847): 713.

CHAPTER TWO

⁴⁰Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things, No. I" *CB* 2 (January 1825): 128.

⁴¹Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Germany: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922; reprint, Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 46.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 51.

⁴³Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist*, n. s., 58 (April 1956): 270-1.

⁴⁴Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XVI: The Spirit of Ancient Christians," *CB* 4 (December 1826): 295-6.

⁴⁵Roy Wallis, "Charisma and Explanation," in *Secularization, Rationalism and Sectarianism*, ed. Eileen Barker, James A Beckford, and Karel Dobbelaere (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 167.

⁴⁶Weber, *Sociology*, 2.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁸Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu, "The Embodiment of Charisma," in *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality, and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu (London: Routledge, 1998), 14.

⁴⁹Bryan R. Wilson, *The Noble Savages: The Primitive Origins of Charisma and its Contemporary Survival* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 4-7.

⁵⁰Idem, *Sects and Society: A Sociological Study of the Elim Tabernacle, Christian Science, and Christadelphians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 10.

⁵¹E. West, *Search*, 246-7.

⁵²Selina Campbell, *Home Life*, 118.

⁵³Ibid., 305-6. See also Richardson, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, 543.

⁵⁴Ira Chase, *The Christian Evangelist* (September 1898) quoted in J. J. Haley, *Debates that Made History: The Story of Alexander Campbell's Debates with Rev. John Walker, Rev. W. L. McCalla, Mr. Robert Owen, Bishop Purcell, and Rev. Nathan L. Rice* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1920), 246-8.

⁵⁵Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," 266.

⁵⁶Alexander Campbell, "Sermon on the Law," *MH*, 3rd series, 3 (September 1846): 501-3.

⁵⁷Ibid., 510.

⁵⁸Ibid., 520.

⁵⁹Martin E. Marty, *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire*, 2 ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 47.

⁶⁰One of the few individuals to examine the "Candidus" essays is Keith Brian Huey, "Alexander Campbell's Church-State Separatism as a Defining and Limiting Factor in his Anti-Catholic Activity" (Ph.D., diss., Marquette University, 2000). All the "Candidus" letters are available online at <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/acampbell/ce/CE00A.HTM>. Citations are taken from this website.

⁶¹Candidus, "For the Reporter—No. I," Washington (PA) *The Reporter*, April 17, 1820, 1.

⁶²Idem, "For the Reporter—No. II," Washington (PA) *The Reporter*, May 13, 1820, 1-2.

⁶³Idem, "For the Reporter—No. III," Washington (PA) *The Reporter*, June 5, 1820, 1.

⁶⁴Idem, "For the Reporter—No. VI," Washington (PA) *The Reporter*, August 21, 1820, 1.

⁶⁵For Campbell's concern on the immorality of antebellum America see Alexander Campbell, "Christian Morality—No. I," *Christian Baptist* 3 (April 1826): 227.

⁶⁶Idem, "The Clergy—No. I," *CB* 1 (October 1823): 18.

⁶⁷Ibid., 19-21.

⁶⁸Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy—No. III," *CB* (December 1823): 30.

⁶⁹Idem, "The Clergy—No. V," *CB* 1 (February 1824): 42-43. It is interesting to note that Weber, *Sociology*, 47, argues that "prophecy is unremunerated." Campbell himself claimed that "[F]or some fifty years [I have] waived any remuneration. In some few cases my traveling expenses have been paid, on the plea that I should allow others to participate and not selfishly to deprive them of the pleasure of co-operating with me in this most felicitous work of faith and labor of love" (Alexander Campbell, "Is it the Duty of Christian Churches to Support Their Pastors?" *MH* 5th series (August 1860): 465-6.). Even if accurate, Campbell never despaired of money and was quite comfortable when it came to finances (See Harrell, *Quest*, 63).

⁷⁰Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," 270.

⁷¹Hatch, *Democratization*, 7-11.

⁷²R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), has argued that this is the way many successful religious groups in America have defined themselves. The conscious expression of "outsiderhood" is another ideal of American religion that Campbell and others have exploited in inventing their movements. See also Moore's earlier article "Insiders and Outsiders in American Historical Narrative and American History," *The American Historical Review* 87 (April 1982): 390-412.

⁷³Alexander Campbell, "The Christian Religion," *CB* 1 (August 1823): 5-8.

⁷⁴Hatch, *Democratization*, 167. Hatch also excellently delineates how Campbell (and others) played on the ideals of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary era in the formation of their movements.

⁷⁵Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. I," *CB*

2 (February 1825): 128.

⁷⁶See for example Hughes, “Millennial Odyessy,” and *Reviving*, 29-30. See also Richard T. Hughes, “The Apocalyptic Origins of the Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism,” *Religion and American Culture* 2 (Summer 1982): 181-214. In this essay Hughes compares the millennial thought of Campbell to the apocalyptic thought of Barton W. Stone and argues that the Churches of Christ followed Stone’s apocalypticism while the Disciples followed the millennial strain.

⁷⁷Hughes, “Millennial Odyessy,” 88.

⁷⁸Campbell, “Restoration—No. I,” 128.

⁷⁹If this is an accurate observation of Campbell’s early millennial thought, this may fit in with Anthony Wallace’s discussion of the way prophets communicate their message of revitalization. Wallace, “Revitalization Movements,” 273, argues that “The doctrinal and behavioral injunctions which [the prophet] preaches carry two fundamental motifs: that the convert will come under the care and protection of certain supernatural beings; and that both he and his society will benefit materially from an identification with some definable new cultural system.” “Blessings” of the Millennium, for Campbell, would certainly qualify as coming from the care and protection of God.

⁸⁰Alexander Campbell, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. II,” *CB* 2 (March 1825):134.

⁸¹Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. III,” *CB* 2 (April 1825): 139-40.

⁸²Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. IV,” *CB* 2 (June 1825): 159.

⁸³Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. V,” *CB* 2 (July 1825): 165.

⁸⁴Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. VI: On the Breaking of Bread—No. I,” *CB* 3 (August 1825):174; idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. X: The Fellowship,” *CB* 3 (January 1826): 210.

⁸⁵Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XII: The Bishop’s Office—No. I,” *CB* 3 (April 1826): 232.

⁸⁶Idem, “A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XIII: The Bishop’s Office—No. II,” *CB* 3 (June 1826) 242-3.

⁸⁷Idem, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XV: Love Feasts," *CB* 4 (November 1826): 283.

⁸⁸Idem, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XX," *CB* 5 (August 1827): 362.

⁸⁹Idem, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XXV: On the Discipline of the Church—No. II," 6 (August 1828): 467-8.

⁹⁰Idem, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XXVI: On the Discipline of the Church—No. III," *CB* 6 (September 1828): 471-2; "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XXVII: On the Discipline of the Church—No. IV," *CB* 6 (October 1828): 485-6.

⁹¹Idem, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XXVIII: On the Discipline of the Church—No. V," *CB* 6 (December 1828): 501.

CHAPTER THREE

⁹²John Thomas, "To Mr. Alexander Campbell: Letter II," *The Advocate for the Testimony of God* 4 (November 1837): 233.

⁹³Lewis Leroy Snyder, "Alexander Campbell as a Change Agent Within the Stone-Campbell Movement From 1830-1840" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1987), 54.

⁹⁴Hughes, *Reviving*, 38.

⁹⁵Alexander Campbell, "Letter from Mr. Broaddus," *MH*, n. s., 4 (December 1840): 556.

⁹⁶Weber, *Sociology*, 28-29.

⁹⁷Bryan Wilson, *Religious Sects: a Sociological Study* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 49.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 18.

⁹⁹Harrell, *Quest*, 82.

¹⁰⁰"Extracts of Letters, received by the last mail, stating the success of the ancient gospel in different parts of the country," *CB* 5 (June 1828): 452.

¹⁰¹Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 28.

¹⁰²Alexander Campbell, "Sidney Rigdon," *MH* 2 (February 1831): 100.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴Hughes, *Reviving*, 38. Thomas later argued against the immortality of the soul, another issue that caused dissension (see Wilson, *Sects and Society*, 237).

¹⁰⁵Alexander Campbell, "Proposals," *MH* 4 (April 1834): 190; *idem*, "Letter from Dr. John Thomas," *MH* 6 (February 1835):90; *idem*, "Re-baptism," *MH* 6 (December 1835): 619.

¹⁰⁶Alexander Campbell, "Extra, No. I" *MH*, n. s., 1 (December 1837): 578.

¹⁰⁷Alexander Campbell, "Remarks on the Preceding Documents," *MH*, n. s. 1 (November 1837): 512-3.

¹⁰⁸*Idem*, "The Richmond Letter and Dr. Thomas," *MH*, n. s., 2 (May 1838): 226. Campbell, however, did not follow this ban and continued to occasionally notice Thomas and his teachings in the *Harbinger*.

¹⁰⁹John Thomas, "Letter to Mr. A. Campbell," *The Advocate for the Testimony of God* 4 (May 1837): 10. Thomas also had problems with the way Campbell had switched from calling him "Brother Thomas" to "Dr. Thomas."

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹¹Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," 270-3.

¹¹²Weber, *Sociology*, 71, explicitly connects concern over followers transferring membership to another denomination with priests.

¹¹³Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things—No. XXI," *CB* 5 (December 1827): 395-6.

¹¹⁴Earl I. West, *The Trials of the Ancient Order, 1844-1865* (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1993), 245-6. Information on Stone-Campbell hymnals as well as scans of the pages can be found at <http://www.lccs.edu/library/hymnals>.

¹¹⁵Alexander Campbell, "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs," *MH* 5 (May 1834): 239-40.

¹¹⁶*Idem*, "Psalmody," *MH*, n. s., 7 (March 1843):128-33.

¹¹⁷Idem, "New Hymn-book," *MH*, n. s., 7 (February 1843): 94-95, emphasis added.

¹¹⁸Idem, "The Christian Psalmist," *MH*, 3rd series, (March 1847): 179.

¹¹⁹Joseph R. Jeter, Jr. and Hiram J. Lester, "The Tragedy of Wickliffe Campbell," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 22 (July 1987): 87-90.

¹²⁰W. K. Pendleton, "Death of Wickliffe E. Campbell," *MH*, 3rd series, 4 (October 1847): 595-6.

¹²¹Jeter and Lester, "Tragedy," 87.

¹²²Alexander Campbell, "Obituary," *MH*, 3rd series, 4 (December 1847): 713-4.

¹²³Idem, "Letters From Europe—No. XXXVI," *MH*, 3rd series, 5 (December 1848): 679.

¹²⁴Selina Campbell, *Home Life*, 28.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 38.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 35-36. Jeter and Lester, "Tragedy," 93, compare Mrs. Campbell's response to Mary Todd Lincoln's response to the death of her son, Tad.

¹²⁷Jeter and Lester, "Tragedy," 86-90.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 90.

¹²⁹Earl West, *Search*, 167; Harrell, *Quest*, 77.

¹³⁰Earl West, *Search*, 167.

¹³¹D. S. Burnet, "Letter from Brother Burnet," *MH*, 3rd Series, 6 (December 1849): 707.

¹³²Hughes, *Reviving*, 35. See also Mark Noll, "Foreword," in *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. William R. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 12-13.

¹³³Alexander Campbell, "Any Christians Among Protestant Parties," *MH*, n. s., 1 (September 1837):411-4. Campbell had to address this matter several times because many were astonished that he would take such a position.

¹³⁴Lunger, *Political Ethics*, 118-20; See also William R. Baker, "Christian Churches (Independent): Are We Evangelical?" in *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. William R. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 31-36, for Campbell's attitude toward the Evangelical Alliance.

¹³⁵Lunger, *Political Ethics*, 119.

¹³⁶Baker, "Are We Evangelical," 32-35, emphasis added.

CHAPTER FOUR

¹³⁷This is not to suggest that scholars should conceive Campbell as a prophet only prior to 1830 and priest only afterwards. While Campbell exhibited qualities of both throughout his career, at different points certain characteristics were more pronounced.

¹³⁸ See Marty, *Righteous Empire*, 67-95; Sidney E. Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 103-33.

¹³⁹Hatch, *Democratization*, 10-11.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 11.

¹⁴¹David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 192.

¹⁴²Ibid., 243-55.

¹⁴³Ibid., 190.

¹⁴⁴Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 444-5.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 373.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 430. Mayer notes, 431, that some have regarded this break as based on a sublimated "racism" in Garrison, although he discounts this and focuses on the disagreement of the two men ideologically.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 171-7.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 357, emphasis added.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 590.

¹⁵¹Ibid. One could argue, however, that Garrison's decision to dissolve the AAS demonstrates a distinctively priestly bent to his thinking.

¹⁵²Mead, *Lively Experiment*, 124-6, argues something similar. Mead, however, notices how individuals successful as revivalists and those successful as politicians both were able to speak to the emotions of their hearers in similar ways.

¹⁵³Mead, *Lively Experiment*, 114, argues that in America "whatever else top denominational leaders *may* be, they *must be* denominational politicians."

¹⁵⁴This does not mean that such prophets were relativists when it came to truth. Alexander Campbell would have definitely argued that there was objective Truth found in scripture, but that individuals could understand it for themselves.

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