

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN CANADA, AN OVERVIEW

“Restorationism” refers to the effort to reverse the fracturing of Christianity into separate Churches, Sects and Denominations that has been growing since the beginning of the Reformation in the 16th century, by seeking a general unity on the basis of a Bible-only faith and practice. A specific Restoration Movement developed in the 19th century, beginning in the United Kingdom and spreading to North America where it enjoyed major success in the United States and modest advance in Canada.

This movement had roots in an 18th century reform that drew energy from the Evangelical Revival in Europe and the Great Awakening in America. It began within Scottish Presbyterianism and spread to an English-Baptist movement in Scotland. This led to the formation of a small fellowship of “Churches of Christ” in Scotland and England by the mid-19th century, a growing movement in North America, then spreading around the world. Achieving a period of general unity during the 19th century, the movement stumbled into some separation in the 20th century. This introduction focuses upon these restoration experiences as they developed in the Old World and then spread to Canada.

Beginnings in Scotland

The earliest influences that subsequently affected the Canadian condition were three reforming Baptist movements with a Presbyterian backdrop in Scotland: the “Scotch Baptists,” the “Scottish Baptists,” and the Haldane movement. The faith of a number of migrants to Canada was shaped by these developments. Subsequently, in America there were also three Baptist groups along with both Methodist and Presbyterian connections that exerted an influence in the colonies of British North America: the Christian Connection, the Free Will Baptists, the early Baptist phase of the Disciples of Christ, and the “Christians” of North Carolina and Kentucky. The journals and missionaries of these groups influenced the early Canadian settlers.

“Scotch Baptists” was a description given to a small group of believers who added baptism to the tenets of the “Old Scots Independents,” a sect that followed the teachings and practices of John Glas (Glasites) and his son-in-law, Robert Sandeman (Sandemanians). Glas (1695-1730), a Presbyterian minister, removed from the Church of Scotland in 1725-30. Sandeman (1718-1771) popularized Glas's teaching in Scotland and then founded a congregation in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1765 (that had similarities to the later “Churches of Christ” in America). All told, eight Sandemanian churches were planted in New England and one in Nova Scotia. They advocated simple congregational life, taught the supreme authority of the Scriptures, the restitution of primitive Christianity, the church as the New Israel, the “mystical body of Christ” made up of visible members of the church, autonomous congregations, the rejection of a national “established” Church, congregational

leadership by a plurality of elders, weekly observance of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, love feasts, mutual exhortation, a weekly collection for the poor, justification being the act of God through faith of the believer, baptism as a sign and seal of the New Covenant, and worship to follow the pattern established in Acts 2:42.

In Scotland two former Sandemanians, Robert Carmichael and Archibald McLean, became convinced of the necessity of Baptism and submitted to it in 1765. Through McLean's leadership, the "Scotch Baptist" churches emerged while maintaining essentially the position of the Glasites-Sandemanians. This movement carried on into the mid-19th century having developed some 50 congregations.

"Scottish Baptists" is a term describing Scots believers who accepted the beliefs and practices of English Baptists. These entered Scotland in about 1800 where they were free to enter the universities, a privilege not open to "Dissenters" at that time in England. The first converts were made in 1801, including Christopher Anderson, who developed as an influence in Scotland, and Dugald Sinclair who, after an outstanding service as a missionary to "the Highlands and Islands" of Scotland, migrated to Canada in 1831 where he continued to minister. Unlike the "Scotch Baptists" who structured their autonomous congregations under the leadership of a plurality of elders and engaged in mutual ministry, the Scottish Baptists ordained pastors for the leadership of their congregations and favoured collective arrangements. The Scottish Baptists were destined to become the leading group among Baptists in Scotland, and their ecclesiology would extend a major influence in North America among Disciples of Christ.

Robert and James Haldane, well-to-do Presbyterians in Scotland, influenced by the evangelical fervour of the day, determined to encourage a more vibrant faith among their countrymen through lay preaching, beginning in 1797, and training men for evangelism. Schools (1797-1808) were funded by them in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, where Grevelle Ewing was a leader, and in Dundee. In these schools the teachings of Glas and Sandeman were respected; in all, some 300 men were trained.

Congregational churches were established and supported by the Haldanes. In 1808, when the Haldanes accepted baptism, a resulting disagreement curtailed their influence. Of the three "Baptist" influences from Scotland upon the Canadian movement in the early years, however, the Haldane influence was the greatest.

The Early Baptist Phase in North America

The American Disciples who influenced the Restoration in Canada developed through the leadership of Alexander Campbell. By happen-chance, young Campbell, from Ireland and a Presbyterian, spent the year 1808-09 in Glasgow where he studied in university and associated with

Greville Ewing and the Haldane community. He with his mother and siblings had begun a voyage from Ireland to America to reunite with Alexander's father, Thomas Campbell, when they were shipwrecked. Forced to spend the year in Scotland, Alexander was exposed to the teachings of John Locke and to the positions of the Baptists and the Haldanes. When the family was reunited in Pennsylvania in 1809, Thomas and Alexander discovered that they were in the same advanced position in religious thought. Thomas, a Scots Presbyterian minister serving in Ireland, had gone to America for health reasons. His unhappiness with the divided state of his Church and his interest in the evangelical stirrings of his time led him to break with the Presbyterians in America and pursue Christian unity on the foundation of the Scriptures. His “Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington” of 1809 is considered a classic in Restoration literature. The Washington (a community in Pennsylvania) Association was constituted as the Brush Run church in 1811. When the Campbells agreed that baptism was essential, the Brush Run congregation joined the Redstone Baptist Association in 1815, moving to the Mahoning Baptist Association in 1824. Alexander Campbell published the *Christian Baptist* from 1823 until 1830, when Campbell and his followers gave up their Baptist connection, and Campbell began publishing the *Millennial Harbinger*. Campbell urged widespread unity among all believers on the basis of Biblical essentials, e.g. congregational autonomy, the plurality of elders, weekly communion, and immersion for remission of sins—positions he had heard of in Glasgow. The Scottish connection with the Disciples movement in America is significant.

Other groups in America that would affect Restoration in Canada were: the reforming “Christians” of O’Kelly’s influence of North Carolina, and of Barton W. Stones’ in Kentucky, the first a Methodist and the second a Presbyterian; the “Christian Connection” of Elias Smith and Abner Jones, former Baptists of New England (there were 33 “Christian Connection” churches planted in Upper Canada by 1834); and the “Free Will Baptists” of Benjamin Randall’s leadership in New Hampshire who impacted the early days of Restoration in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and in Upper Canada via New York state.

John R. Stewart is believed to have planted the first restorationist church in the Canadian colonies, in 1810, at “the Crossroads,” “Lot 48,” Queen’s County, Prince Edward Island. Stewart was baptized by Alexander Crawford who had come to Nova Scotia from the Scottish Island of Arran in 1810, and to PEI in 1811. Crawford had been a student of the Haldane school at Edinburgh and had witnessed the baptism of the Haldanes. As well, several of the families including the Stewarts at Crossroads may have responded to Haldane preaching at revivals in Perthshire, Scotland before migrating.

James Murray was immersed and became a member of the Foggieloa (Aberchirder), Scotland

Scotch Baptist congregation. He arrived in Nova Scotia in 1811 where, in 1815, he began meeting with a group in River John. This fellowship would later identify as a “Congregation of Disciples of Christ.”

The church established at New Glasgow, Prince Edward Island, in 1823 may be the one Canadian restorationist congregation that can accurately be described as “Scotch Baptist” from its beginning. A gathering there under the leadership of John Stevenson included members of the Houston and Nesbit families, all of whom had previously been members of the Scotch Baptist congregation in Paisley, Scotland.

This is not to imply that the Scotch Baptist position—a position which was chiefly that of Glas and Sandeman—was not influential in Canada: a “Treatise on the Elder's Office,” written by William Ballantine (1807) under Haldane sponsorship, largely supported the Scotch Baptist view of the elder's role and helped to popularize it among Haldane Baptists and Restorationists in Canada.

Elder Jacob B. Norton, a minister of the Christian Connection in Maine came to Nova Scotia in 1818 and sparked a revival through his preaching. He reorganized the Barrington Baptist Church as a Christian Church. His group practiced baptism by immersion, opposed statements of belief, creeds, and formalities, and believed that only the name “Christian” should be worn.

In the mid-1820s, a “Baptist” gathering began meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Here William W. Ashley, formerly of North Carolina, introduced Alexander Campbell's *Christian Baptist*. In 1833, this group published *The Christian Gleaner*, the first journal of the Restoration Movement in Canada. In the main, it reprinted articles from Campbell's *Christian Baptist*.

In York, Upper Canada (“Toronto” in 1834, “Ontario” in 1867) in 1818, a small group of believers began meeting as Baptists. Included were Alexander Stewart, John Menzies, Thomas Carfrae, and Thomas Stephens and their wives. All of them had been influenced by the Haldanes, whether through their evangelistic preaching, their schools of evangelism, or in Congregational congregations of their support.

Donald McVicar, a student in the Haldane program, baptized by Christopher Anderson who later ordained him as a Baptist pastor after the English order, equipping him for his work with the Baptist church in Bellanoch, Argyll, Scotland, arrived in Colonel Talbot's settlement in Aldborough Township in southwestern Upper Canada in 1818. There he began working with a small group of fellow migrants who were Scottish Baptists.

In 1820, James Black, who had been baptized by Dugald Sinclair in Loch Awe in 1817, arrived at the same Aldborough settlement and began a career of preaching, teaching and farming that would last until his death in 1886. While he would become a leading Disciple in a growing movement in Ontario, Black maintained the instincts of the Scottish Baptists.

David Oliphant Sr., with Scotch Baptists ties in Largo, Scotland, and from a Scottish Baptist congregation in St. Andrews, migrated to Upper Canada in 1821, settling in Dundas where he was active in a Baptist congregation. He was acquainted with Alexander Stewart and John Menzies, who had just begun a work in Norval, Esquising Township, and with James Black now settled in Eramosa Township, whose neighbor he became when he moved to the Eramosa Township in 1832, and with whom he would help to build a congregation that would become a leading Disciples church, at Everton.

Transitioning into the Disciples Movement

The decade of the 1830s saw the transitioning of the Canadian restorationist Baptists to that of the more “nondenominational” Disciples of Christ through the spreading influence of the writings of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone.

W. W. Eaton, born in Nova Scotia in 1811, educated in a Wesleyan Seminary in Maine, began preaching at age 20. He helped establish, with the support of the Eastport, Maine “Church of Christ,” a fellowship in St. John, New Brunswick, in about 1835. He taught English in Campbell's Bethany College in its early years, 1842-44. In 1839 he began publishing, *The Christian* for the Maritime “Disciples.”

John Doyle, serving the Rawdon Baptist church in Hants County, Nova Scotia, during 1833-37, was introduced to Alexander Campbell's work, *Christianity Restored*. For adopting the principles that Campbell promoted, he was excluded from that congregation. He subsequently assisted in beginning a Disciples congregation in West Gore, NS.

Joseph Ash of Cobourg, Upper Canada, accepted baptism in 1830 as a 22 year-old under the influence of the Christian Connection. Desirous of improving himself, he began reading Barton W. Stone's *Christian Messenger* and Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*. In 1834, Ash served as Clerk for the annual meeting of the Christian Connection's Upper Canada Conference at Whitby. His objective was to encourage the merger of the Christian Connection and the Disciples of Christ in Canada, even as the American “Disciples” and “Christians” had united over a handshake in Lexington, Kentucky in 1832. The Conference failed by one vote to agree. Ash then turned to devote the rest of his life to serving as a member of the Disciples of Christ.

When Daniel Wiers of Beamsville in the Niagara district, functioning as a minister of the Free Will Baptists, in 1832 baptized 15 and “constituted a church upon the New Testament alone, of about 16 members...,” he reported this advance to Barton W. Stone's paper, the *Christian Messenger*. This congregation in Clinton Township is identified as the first Disciples congregation in Ontario.

In 1833-35, Benjamin Howard and Zephen F. Green, two defrocked Christian Connection preachers from Rochester, New York, crossed Lake Ontario to preach Restorationist doctrine in Prince

Edward County and at Cobourg, Ontario. Benjamin went on to the Maritimes where he was an effective preacher for the Disciples. And Green developed an influence in the Niagara district where he advanced the teachings of Campbell.

In Toronto in 1834, James Beaty Sr. and James Lesslie and others withdrew from the Baptist congregation there and began meeting on Shuter Street as a “Church of Christ.”

David Oliphant's son, David Jr. attended Campbell's new Bethany College in West Virginia in 1842. He returned to Canada West (Ontario) in 1845, to Picton, Prince Edward County, where he launched what would become a 20 year stint as editor of various periodicals under five titles that served the growing Disciples of Christ in Ontario, beginning with the *Witness of Truth* and concluding with the *Message of Good-Will to Men*. Oliphant in his writings that led the fellowship in Canada would become a conduit for American restorationist views. However, he was also an independent thinker, and, as well, was fully cognizant of Scottish thought through the influence of his father and of James Black, who may well have been his school-hood teacher in Eramosa.

During the summer of 1855, Alexander Campbell toured southern Ontario. Included in his visits, he fellow-shipped with Dugald Sinclair of southwestern Ontario. From that time Sinclair and the four congregations that he served in Ontario identified with the Disciples.

Progress and Problems in the Late 19th Century

Two contrasting visions consciously and unconsciously drove the century fellowship that became the Church of Christ (congregationally)/Disciples of Christ (individually) in 19th Canada . These were gained from the two concepts of church order inherited from the Scotch and the Scottish Baptists respectively. The former stressed evangelistic activity through congregational leadership; the latter looked to collectives for the congregations for evangelism. The former considered that evangelists being sent directly by congregations was according to the Biblical pattern; the latter considered that collective arrangements for the support and direction of evangelists was permitted by the freedom of the Scriptures. The former experienced how difficult it was for congregations in early settlement stages when cash flows were limited to accomplish their evangelistic goals. The latter discovered how difficult it was to restrain the evangelistic committees from growing into controlling councils of the churches. These differences came to be so heated that by 1900 the movement, now a world-wide fellowship, had divided into two fellowships in Canada, the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. These differences, along with the incursion of liberalism, resulted in a further separation by the mid-twentieth century between the Disciples of Christ and the “independent” Christian Churches.

The first gathering to arrange for a co-operative meeting took place in Norval, Ontario in 1843. It was viewed as a legitimate extension of the churches of which 16 had gathered for the first time. The

churches in Wellington County made fresh attempts in co-operative effort beginning in 1846 and continued until 1883 with varying degrees of success.

In the meantime, the American Disciples established the American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS) in 1849. As this was an arrangement for individuals and not for congregations, many in both the United States and Canada thought this “society” arrangement was out of order. Editor David Oliphant Jr. began opposing this arrangement, even debating with Benjamin Franklin, editor of the American periodical, the *American Christian Review*, of the correctness of his position, in their respective papers—and convincing him. (Franklin later championed this position among American conservative Churches of Christ.) The supporters of the Ontario co-operations, in the meantime, perceived that Oliphant was targeting them and their efforts in his writings, and discord grew. In spite of his efforts to reconcile, cf. his *Message of Good-Will to Men* (1864-65), estrangement increased.

Following the unsettling times of the American Civil War (1861-65), the excitement of Canada's Confederation (1867), and the westward attraction when were added to the Confederation the provinces of Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), and Prince Edward Island (1873), Restoration churches in Canada settled into a period of growth and, initially, peace. A new periodical appeared in Ontario, the *Bible Index* (1872-93), edited by James Beaty's nephews, James Jr. and Robert Beaty. Multiple “June Meetings” and “Big Meetings” were scheduled. Aided by the proliferation of railway systems, a number of recognized American preachers visited. Progress was made, and the number of congregations doubled in the last third of the century.

However, the editorially position of the Beatys strongly promoted the non-clerical position of the evangelist at a time when growing churches were calling for trained and ordained preachers. A second, competing paper appeared briefly, in the Meaford area, the *Christian Worker* (1861-1866). Then in 1883 in Acton, Ontario, an evangelistic “society” (for individuals) was set up. The conservative leaders were greatly upset over this action. The resulting estrangement grew so that little fellowship was enjoyed then for the rest of the century. The two sides were permanently separated by the turn of the century. The 1901 Canadian Census identified “Disciples of Christ,” (reporting “67 churches, 4,711 members”) and “Churches of Christ” (“11 churches, 750 members”). (The American Census recognized a similar separation in 1906. It is noted that census reports are not an accurate source of church statistics.)

During the 19th century, 47* Restorationist congregations had been established in the Maritimes: 11 Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ congregations in Prince Edward Island, 21 in Nova Scotia, and 15 in New Brunswick. The roots of these congregations include: one Sandemanian,

two Scotch Baptists, four Haldanian, four English Baptists, and 36 Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ. (*Not all of these congregations remained in 1900.)

By 1900, a total of 150 Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ had been planted in Central Canada (Ontario): in the period of Upper Canada (1820-1841), 17; of Canada West (1841-1867), 47; and of Ontario (1867-1899), 86. By the end of the century, of the 150 planted, 80 congregations remained, including some 5,000 members, of which 68% opted for the Disciples of Christ and 32% for the Churches of Christ when separation took place.

The Three Bodies of the 20th Century:

The Disciples

Immigration into the opening West drew large numbers from Central Canada and the Maritimes as well as from overseas. Only three congregations of the Restoration order, however, were established there before 1900: with separation already in place, Disciples of Christ, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba (1881); Churches of Christ, Carman, Manitoba (1888), and Perryville, Saskatchewan (1890).

Bruised by the experience of separation, each of the two bodies committed to being viable witnesses to the Christian faith in the coming 20th century.

The Canadian Disciples of Christ structured itself for action in the 20th century, drawing upon late 19th century developments in Ontario: its first Convention, Erin Centre, 1880; an evangelistic "Society," Acton, 1883; a Co-operation Convention, Aurora, 1884; Wellington County and Ontario Co-operations merger, 1886; Christian Women's Board of Missions (CWBM), 1887; the expansion of the Co-operation's role, with a Constitution, 1889; the establishment of other organizations, the Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor (YPSCE), Ontario Childcare's Mission Bands, and ties with the International Sunday School Organization. An independent board established the College of the Disciples in St. Thomas (1895).

During the period, 1900-1920, 21 Disciples of Christ congregations were planted in Western Canada: five in Manitoba, six in Saskatchewan, nine in Alberta, and one in British Columbia. Interest in Ontario in mission work in the west was strong. American mission societies targeted the West. And western provincial mission societies were quick to spring up: Manitoba Christian Mission Society, 1904; Saskatchewan Christian Mission Society, 1909; Alberta Christian Missionary Society, 1909; the Alberta Christian Women's Board of Missions, 1920. The provincial Women's Missionary Societies formed a federal organization of Christian Women's Board of Missions in 1927. (Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces in 1905).

In 1922, the Disciples formed the All-Canada Committee to provide co-ordination for nationwide action. "The effort was an association of provinces, not of churches or individuals...The financial

system of All-Canada is based upon voluntary budgeted year contributions to the plan by the provincial organizations.”

Papers serving the interests of the Canadian Disciples included: in the Maritimes, *The Christian*, beginning in 1883; in Central Canada, *The Ontario Evangelist*, that took over from the *Christian Worker* in 1886, became *The Canadian Evangelist* in 1889, and *The Disciple of Christ and Canadian Evangelist* in 1895, and closed in 1896. *The Christian Messenger* replaced these papers in 1897 and served the Disciples in the central part of the country until the formation of the All-Canada Committee, when it was merged 1924 with *The Christian*, to become a national paper, *The Canadian Disciple*, that continues to the present.

The Disciples' school in St. Thomas, Ontario, that had been renamed Sinclair College (in tribute to Dugald Sinclair), closed in 1910. The All-Canada Conference in its meeting in Winnipeg in 1923 made plans for an All-Canada Bible college. They settled on providing a course of lectures on Disciples principles to an approved theological college. McMaster University, then in Toronto, was chosen. In 1927 property was purchased and incorporated as the All-Canada College. When McMaster moved to Hamilton in 1930, Victoria University was chosen. From 1932 to 1939 the college was closed because of insufficient funds and students. A broader plan followed in 1958 with scholarships provided for any accredited seminary of the student's choosing provided there was a commitment to serve a Disciples church for five years upon graduation.

From 1974 to 1986 Canadian Disciples of Christ engaged in union discussions with the Anglican Church and the United Church of Canada. A study document was produced, but when it developed that there was little interest in the initiative among the churches, the conversations were ended by mutual consent.

During this period large numbers of Canadian Disciples and congregations identified with the independent Christian Churches. Membership among the Disciples in Canada in 1980 stood at about 5,000 in 40 congregations. Today it is estimated that there are about 1,000 members in some 25 Disciples of Christ congregations across Canada.

Churches of Christ

The conservative Churches of Christ, distinguished for their a cappella music in worship, worked to strengthen their reduced fellowship. They prepared their workers through training in Bible colleges in Canada and Christian universities in the US: in earlier years, Carman Bible School (Manitoba, 1899-1902); Beamsville Bible School (Ontario, 1902-1916), and Maritime Bible and Literary College (Nova Scotia, 1909-15); and later in the century, Western Christian College—begun in 1945 in Radville and moved to Weyburn, both in Saskatchewan, then to Dauphin, Manitoba, finally

to Regina, Saskatchewan, and closing in 2012. Great Lakes Christian College, high school and Bible department, was opened in 1952, in Beamsville, Ontario; its Bible Department became a provincially chartered Bible college, Great Lakes Bible College, in 1987, moving to Waterloo, Ontario in 1996.

With some gaps, periodicals have been published throughout. The *Gospel Messenger* (1894-96) replaced the *Bible Index*. The *Bible Student* (1904-1913) followed after an absence of publishing for seven and a half years. Briefly, there followed *The Gleaner* (1914), and the *Christian Quarterly* (1916-17). The *Christian Monthly Review* (1919-1933) was published for 16 years, followed by the *Gospel Herald*, beginning in 1936, and continuing through to today.

During the period, 1900-1920, 13 congregations of Churches of Christ were established in Western Canada: one in Winnipeg, Manitoba, five in Saskatchewan, three in Alberta, and four in British Columbia.

During the latter half of the 20th century, Churches of Christ were active in foreign missions, particularly in India, Japan, and Papua New Guinea

In 2011, Churches of Christ in Canada numbered 6,780 in 139 congregations. This was a reduction of 12 congregations from 2001, although membership remained virtually unchanged during the ten year period.

Christian Churches

Meanwhile, within the Disciples of Christ, movement toward a more liberal theology, ecumenical involvement, and “open membership” was creating concern among more conservative members. Influence in Canada from the United Christian Missionary Society in America where these values were growing was considerable. (Conservative Disciples there had established a separate North American Christian Convention in 1926, which became an annual gathering in 1950; finally, after the Disciples’ “Restructure” in 1968, in 1971 a Yearbook for the independent Christian Churches in America was published that identified their separate existence,) In Canada, mounting tensions over these matters resulted. In August 1948 at the Prince Edward Island session of the Maritime Convention of the Disciples at New Glasgow, nine leaders declared their intention to withdraw from “All-Canada.” An ensuing debate continued for several years with the result that the third Restoration branch in Canada, the Churches of Christ/Christian Churches came into being.

The presence of this fellowship is strong in Western Canada where Alberta Bible College was established in 1932, and in the Maritimes where Maritime Christian College was established in Charlottetown in 1960. Also supported by this group was the Ontario Bible College (1939-43), that became the Toronto Christian Seminary (1958-64), and the Ontario Christian Seminary (1972-98). The periodical, *The Canadian Christian Harbinger*, was published during 1962-1989 by the Toronto

Christian Mission, an outreach effort of Christian Churches in Indiana.

The doctrinal position of the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches is similar. Christian Churches favour the use of the instrument in worship. It is estimated that there are some 9,000 members in 65 congregations of independent Christian Churches in Canada today.

The doctrinal statement of Alberta Bible College well defines the goal of the contemporary Restorationist: “The Bible is a full, final and infallible revelation of the Divine Will. The New Testament is the divine constitution for the worship, discipline and government of the churches of Christ. The actual unity of all believers in Christ on the basis set forth in the New Testament is an obligation laid on all Christians and its realization essential to the evangelization of the world.”

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It is recognized that the “Restoration of New Testament Christianity” is not the special preserve of the American “Stone-Campbell movement,” for “Restoration” has been a conscious goal of many movements over the centuries where the desire for a purer faith with a deeper Biblical perception has stirred believers. As well, those who have pursued “non-denominational Christianity” have experienced how difficult its accomplishment can be.

This Encyclopedia lists along with the three Canadian Restorationist groups examined above, the Churches of Christ, Church of Christ (Disciples of Christ), and Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, five other groups that have ties at some point with the history that has been explored:

The Christadelphians. Dr. John Thomas, Richmond Virginia, was a contemporary of Alexander Campbell and shared his Restorationist values. Differences regarding doctrines of the immortal soul, the deity of Christ, and the nature of Satan, resulted in a parting of their ways. His followers were named “Christadelphians” (“Brethren in Christ”) in 1861 so that they could be identified as a religious body for the requirements of the American Civil War. The 1991 Canadian Census reported 3,375 followers in Canada in this fellowship. Today there are 51 congregations across Canada.

The Evangelical Christian Church in Canada. This group identifies with the “Christians” formally organized by Barton W. Stone in Kentucky in 1804, with the first Canadian “Christian” fellowship at “Crossroads” in Prince Edward Island in 1810, and with the “Christian Connection” fellowship in Ontario meeting in 1832. The movement also embraced values of the Holiness movement of the late 19th century. In the mid-nineties there were 30 churches and 3,500 members in Canada. Its headquarters today is in Waterloo, Ontario.

The Congregational Christian Church in Canada. When a group of conservative minded congregations of the United Church of Canada determined to go their own way in 1988, they found a

small group of congregationally organized believers who referred to themselves as “Christians.” These in fact were the remnant of the “Christian Connection” fellowship of Upper Canada days. Merging, they formed the Congregational Christian Church in Canada. There are some 60 congregations in Canada today.

The International Church of Christ. The International Church of Christ (ICOC) shares the historical Restorationist position of Churches of Christ in general. However, a church that organized in Boston in 1979, determined to become more effective in evangelization, and with highly disciplined methods, grew to a world-wide fellowship of over 100,000 believers. In 1993, the Canadian followers of this movement officially separated from Churches of Christ in Canada. There are ten ICOC churches from Vancouver to Halifax in Canada today,

The International Christian Church (Toronto). A new fellowship began in Toronto in 2014, the International Christian Church (ICC). It endorses the world-wide activities described as “sold out discipling movement churches,” currently being led by Kip McKeen, the former director of the ICOC.