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BOOK REVIEW

D. Newell Williams, Douglas A. Foster, and Paul M. Blowers, eds. *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History*. St. Louis: Chalice; Nashville: Disciples Historical Society, 2013. 476 pp. Pbk. ISBN 0827235275.

The Stone-Campbell Movement chronicles the origins, union, expansion, and divisions of two separate Christian movements: “‘Christians’ led by Barton W. Stone, and the ‘Reformers’ or ‘disciples of Christ’ led by Alexander Campbell” (1). These two movements united in the United States around 1831 to form the Restoration, or Stone-Campbell, Movement. *The Stone-Campbell Movement* is a corporate product of eleven scholars in addition to the three editors: Scott D. Seay, the managing editor, Carmelo Álvarez, Lawrence A. Q. Burnley, Stanley Granberg, John Mark Hicks, Loretta Long Hunnicutt, Timothy Lee, Edward J. Robinson, David Thompson, Mark Toulouse, and Glenn Zuber. Since this “was a product of their corporate discernment,” chapters are not identified with any specific scholar (viii). It took them five years (2007–2012) to complete the assignment. The project chronicles the global history of the three major Christian fellowships that identify with this movement, i.e. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (Independent Christian Churches), and the Churches of Christ, from the nineteenth-century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The International Churches of Christ (ICOC), formerly the Boston Movement, a nascent branch of this movement, which started around 1970, receives brief attention.

The book is divided into 18 chapters, in addition to a separate introduction and conclusion. In chapters 1–4, the authors chronicle the emergence and development of the movement in the United States, including the treatment of three major divisive

topics: slavery, the role of women in church, and the American Civil War. Although the movement from its genesis was advocating the restoration of the New Testament church using the Bible as its only creed, political, economic, social, and legal conditions prevailing at the time were central in decision-making and church polity formulations. Hence, divisions were inevitable, the subject of chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 treat the origins of the movement in the United Kingdom and its dominions, as well as in other parts of the world, up to 1929, when the economic meltdown resulted in the closure of most overseas mission stations.

The next three chapters document the development and unique features of each of the three major divisions. In chapter 8, the authors argue that the Churches of Christ “reflected the tumultuous social and cultural changes that surrounded them, sometimes accommodating those changes, sometimes resisting them,” resulting in an identity crisis as they enter the twenty-first century (167). The Disciples of Christ (chapter 9) embraced ecumenism, and some of its leaders “identified with liberal Protestant theology,” particularly “‘Evangelical’ or ‘Christocentric’ liberalism,” while others, a minority, immersed themselves in “‘modernistic liberalism’ or ‘scientific modernism’” (182). In addition to these, the ordination of women became part of its church polity. These “liberal doctrines” were not acceptable to some in the Disciples resulting in the emergence of the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, or the Independent Christian Church, as a separate fellowship within the Restoration/Stone-Campbell Movement, the subject of chapter 10.

Since the movement had its genesis in the United States, its response to social changes occurring in that country from the 1960s to 2011 is the subject of chapter 11. Among the subjects dealt with in that chapter are race, war, ethnic diversity, gender equality, sexuality, and finally, religious pluralism. These contentious subjects, as expected, were treated differently in the three movements, causing minor internal fractures. Specific periodicals and theological colleges played a critical role in guiding the three branches towards a particular position. The authors identify three traditions, Indiana, Tennessee, and Texas, as major doctrinal alignments that rocked the movement. Unfortunately,

unanimity was elusive among the three family members. Regrettably, there are divisions even within each of the three fellowships over these subjects resulting in critical identity crisis, a topic that the authors address in chapter 12.

After showing the origins, divisions, and social factors that affected the movement, the authors handle the global history of the movement in the next five chapters, 13–17. They start with the United Kingdom and the British Commonwealth. Australia, New Zealand, and Canada receive extensive coverage. The next chapter chronicles the movement's history in Asia since the 1920s. Nearly every country in Asia (India, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Japan, Thailand, and even the Pacific Islands) receives attention. Chapter 15 treats Latin America and the Caribbean, and chapter 16 is about the movement in Africa. Chapter 17 covers Europe. Although the movement is divided, some leaders, mainly scholars, from the three major fellowships, during the past three decades have been working towards unity, unfortunately an elusive quest. This topic receives adequate treatment in chapter 18, which also concludes the long overdue book.

The Stone-Campbell Movement is a rigorous, scholarly, fascinating, readable, and factual global history of the Stone-Campbell (Restoration) Movement. It is an indispensable "companion" to *The Encyclopaedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Christ and Churches of Christ* (ed. Paul M. Blowers, Douglas A. Foster, and D. Newell Williams; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). These two books furnish to an inquisitive student of church history a balanced bird's eye-view of this movement. Of course, a faithful historical grasp of the origins of this movement is a prerequisite to understanding the doctrinal "wars" within each of the three streams of the Restoration Movement, especially within the Churches of Christ, which for years avowed an ahistorical stance over its origins. This book provides rudimentary answers about the history of schismatic doctrines like the "one cup," which have divided churches, even families, in southern Malawi. The same applies to the recent resurgence of the non-institutional churches in some parts of Zambia and Zimbabwe. There is a history behind these "doctrines," and this book

provides, at least, that pivotal background—these “doctrinal” differences had their genesis, regrettably, where the movement’s roots are: in the United States.

Although the movement, like any other Christian fellowship, has had its fair share of divisions, the authors rightly show that it has a brighter future, but, unfortunately, not in the United States. The authors argue convincingly that the Stone-Campbell Movement is growing in the global South, particularly in Africa, when compared to the Western world, that is, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. On the other hand, the authors maintain that although financially the church in Africa depends upon the United States, “[a]ll parts of the Stone-Campbell Movement participated in the twentieth-century shift of the numerical center of Christianity to the global South, especially to Africa. Churches of Christ in Africa outnumbered those in the United States by the early twenty-first century” (342). However, it is not only the Restoration Movement that is receiving unprecedented growth in membership; Christianity is flourishing in sub-Saharan Africa, concurring with Philip Jenkins’s thesis in his book *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Not only is the Restoration Movement growing in the global South, its citizens have become local and “foreign missionaries.” For example, Ghanaian Christians, according to the authors, “have planted churches in countries such as Togo, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Benin, The Gambia, Senegal, Mali,” to mention only a few (335). In addition to this, they have also started Churches of Christ in Europe and even in the United States. The convert is bringing the message back to the convertor! The Restoration Movement, therefore, has a bright future.

Although Western missionaries started the work in the global South, the indigenous convert bore the brunt of spreading the gospel. Regrettably, he or she does not feature prominently in this book since the “authors . . . relied largely on sources written by missionaries” (7). In order to address this deficiency, the authors “hope that this first attempt at a global history will stimulate the writing of additional indigenous histories” (7). There is a definite need for indigenous histories that will complement the

current scholarly work, while addressing, understandably, minor orthographic errors like “Jack Mzilwa” which should be “Jack Mzirwa” (321). For the non-Western historian interested in the Stone-Campbell Movement, this book’s extensive footnotes (382–436; in double columns) are a gold mine for future scholarly work. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the history of the three, if not four, major fellowships that form the Stone-Campbell (Restoration) Movement.

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