

**WHY EXAMINE DIVISION,
AND ED BROADUS' THIRD BOOK,
WHY THE DISCIPLES DIVIDED IN ONTARIO AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY**

---Geoffrey Ellis

In the late 19th century the Disciples in Ontario divided. This schism was duplicated around the world--where the Restoration movement had spread, in other parts of Canada, the USA, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and Africa. While the general pattern of division was the same, each region where it occurred experienced its unique, local features.

Why examine division? Would not our energies be better spent in examining the unity emphasis of the Scriptures? Were not the Disciples' unity appeals discredited by this rupture? Surely, religious division dishonours God, injures believers, and hamstring believers in their quest to "disciple the nations." Were not the Disciples' unity claims invalidated—that Scriptural truth can be understood, obeyed, and all believers can be united thereby?

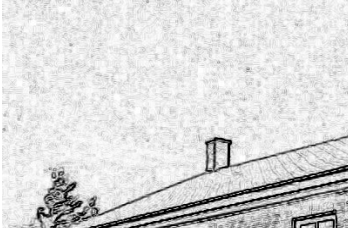
Well, it's not so simple!

Frequent separations down through the centuries have been prompted by determinations to right religious wrongs and return to the truth and unity advocated by the Scriptures. The concern about religious division and the right practice of the Christian faith, i.e. "Restorationism," was not unique to the 19th century. An aspect of the many separations experienced over the two millennia from the days of our Saviour has been the intent to correct the course and persuade the followers. The lessons from history are instructive.

And religious division is not all bad! Ontario Disciples pulled back from each other because of the sincere conviction that the other was wrong. Surely, division resulted because of the desire to protect the truth! There may well have been wrong on both sides, but each side was determined to uphold the truth and walk by it. Ed Broadus' book is not a tract that supports one position or another; it is a historian's neutral attempt to lay out the facts of the historical development so that readers might determine for him or herself the proper course. The greater tragedy of religious failure in the past is the failure of the present to learn from the earlier experience.

Indeed, the competition of truth and error is a major theme of the New Testament. Every book of the NT, with the one exception of Philemon, refers to this challenge. The apostles were "Restorationists" in their own time. Up to 50 significant passages in the New Testament deal with the truth and error challenge. Jesus spoke against "the of teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:12). The universality of the Gospel is the main concern of the early church, as related in Acts 15:5: "...some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees..." Paul warned the elders of Ephesus, *"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them"* (Acts 20:29-30). Peter warned, *"But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false prophets among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord..."* (2 Pet. 2:1). And John observed, *"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, have gone out into the world"* (2 John 7). Earth's major conflict is ongoing: the war between truth and error!

And this is not surprising—the pollution of earth has flowed from the beginning through the machinations of rebellious spirits in the heavenly realms, cf. the lying serpent



in the garden—“...that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray” (Rev. 12:9). Thus Paul encourages, “...take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Eph. 6:16).

For the concerned Christian, the study of division in times past, while painful, can be an endeavor of great value.

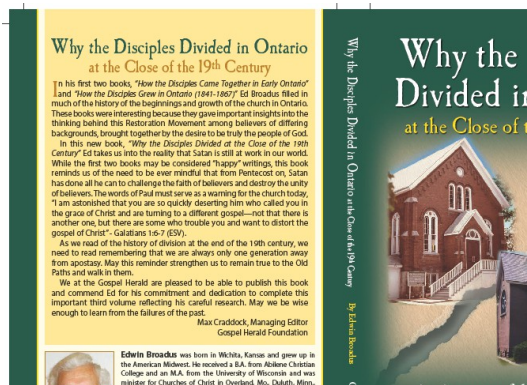
Broadus' approach in his three books on the Disciples of Ontario in the 19th century has been to be factual, reporting as accurately as he was able from the resources available to him, with a careful neutrality. His research has been exhaustive; his writing clear and thoughtful; his analysis reserved. The reader is presented an insight into the activities and convictions of a people determined to walk in the way of the Lord, even if their convictions led them into the sadness of separation.

Having devoted ten years of his life to this record, Edwin Broadus now releases his third work

Why the Disciples Divided in Ontario at the Close of the 19th Century: An Account of the Division in the Restoration Movement in Ontario

This record of the 19th century will inform in the 21st century.

Edwin Broadus' two previous works are: **How the Disciples Came Together in Early Ontario: An Account of the Origins of the Restoration Movement in Ontario** (2009), and **How the Disciples Grew in Ontario (1841-1867): An Account of the Early Growth of the Restoration Movement in Ontario** (2014).)



Henry Bonebrake Sherman

---Edwin Broadus

The following is from the beginning of Chapter Three of **How the Disciples Divided in Ontario**, by Edwin Broadus. The book is being published this spring by the Gospel Herald Foundation.

Disciples in the Georgian Bay area had not forgotten the imperative of evangelism, and a decade after their short-lived attempt in 1870-71 to form a co-operation and to support Charles J. Lister as their evangelist, they decided to try again. This time they reached outside the country for a preacher from south-eastern Indiana, a few miles from Cincinnati. How they knew about him or who, if any, recommended him, we do not know, but he was unlike any who had come before. Although he stayed in Ontario less than five years, his imprint was indelible, usually for good but sometimes for ill. The man was Henry Bonebrake Sherman, a thirty-three-year-old native of Indiana, who had begun preaching about six years earlier. He was an engaging speaker, an indefatigable worker, and a promoter *par excellence*. His father was a Methodist circuit rider, and the son was brought up in that faith before becoming a Disciple. As a teenager he served in the Grand Army of the Republic and then, after the American Civil War, he attended National Normal School in Lebanon, Ohio for two terms, where he studied law. In 1868 he married Rebecca Jane Billington, and they eventually had thirteen children. He was preaching in Lawrenceburg, Indiana prior to his arrival in Ontario, and after leaving the Province he served as state evangelist for the Pennsylvania Disciples before returning to Indiana, where he served in the State Legislature from 1902-1904. He lived in Indiana most of the remainder of his life before moving to Pasadena, California in 1912, where he died in 1915.

The Georgian Bay Co-operation was made up of ten churches: Meaford, Owen Sound, Wiarton, Collingwood, Collingwood Township, Stayner, Glencairn, Cape Rich, Euphrasia, and Kilsyth. Sherman had visited in Meaford in the summer of 1881 when these churches decided to employ him and Duncan Stirling of Ontario as evangelists. He and Rebecca moved to Meaford October 4, 1881 with their four children, Martha (Mattie), Mary (Mollie), Maggie, and Errett, and a fifth child, Henry Garfield was born in Meaford less than three months after their arrival in Canada. Upon arriving Sherman began immediately to work toward planting a church in Collingwood and to publish a paper, which he called the *Christian Worker*, a periodical designed primarily to promote the work of the Co-operation, although it soon helped make Sherman well-known across the province.

The fullest contemporary description that we have of Henry Sherman was written by H. A. MacDonald of Cobourg in December 1882 when he was promoting the hiring of Sherman as provincial evangelist to conduct evangelistic meetings and to be a soliciting agent for the Ontario Co-operation. MacDonald said,

I believe him to be eminently fitted for the work laid upon him. If you do not think he holds good meetings, just try him. If he does not put you in good humor and make you feel that it is a glorious thing to work for Christ and God, I pity you. And if he does not get a pledge for at least fifty dollars, payable in five or ten annual installments out of you, I pity him and you too. He goes to this work with a heart loyal to Christ; sacrificing the peace and comforts of his own home and a salary as good as he will receive as an evangelist, all because he hopes thus to stir the brethren of Ontario into more united efforts and to do greater things for the church of God.

Sherman was soon in high demand as a preacher on special occasions and in protracted meetings. While keeping

readers of his paper informed of his own activities, he was also quick to recognize and praise the work of others. He had a self-deprecating humor, and because he was portly he referred to himself as "the biggest preacher" in the province. His doctrinal beliefs coincided with mainstream Disciple views of the time, and the only area of serious controversy concerned church cooperation. He was not a controversialist, and his almost sole interest was spreading the gospel throughout the province and building up churches, but he sometimes was so absorbed in this that he was insensitive to differences between Canadian and American culture and naive about how this might explain a lower rate of church growth in Ontario than in the part of the United States he came from.

While he entered new work with unbounded enthusiasm, his interests were often soon drawn elsewhere, and during his relatively short time in Canada he worked with three different co-operations. Whether these frequent changes were occasioned by discouragement or by the allure of new challenges is not entirely clear. But despite this, he had a major impact during his relatively short stay, conducting an influential religious journal that lasted past his time in the province, establishing churches in Collingwood and Welland, persuading the Lakeshore church to move into Beamsville, thereby helping make it one of the largest Disciple congregations in Ontario, and visiting most of the eighty or so churches in the province and conducting protracted evangelistic meetings for many of them. But he also sorely agitated the cooperation controversy, perhaps unwittingly, but to the detriment of a fellowship that was already fragile.

Take a Look at the CCCHS Web Page

...Submitted by Murray Hibbard

"We would invite everyone to visit our web site - <http://ccchs.ca/index.htm> as it has received considerable updating recently. On the home page, you will see highlighted the addition of three papers by Geoff Ellis, which can be found by going into the Archive tab and clicking on Papers.

Also in the Archive section, clicking on Newsletters will display a list of all newsletter articles ever published as well as a link to the newsletter in which each appeared.

Other pages have been updated as well. We owe a huge debt of thanks to our webmaster, Dave McWalter, for making all of this possible. We hope that you will enjoy this new, updated site."

Shelly Jacobs-Featured Speaker For 2018 Annual Meeting

Shelley L. Jacobs is the archivist for the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and comes from an affiliation with Churches of Christ in Saskatchewan, Canada. Previously, she was the Library Director for Western Christian College. When the school closed in 2012, she transitioned the archives collection to the Saskatchewan Archives Board. She holds a Master of Arts degree in Church History from Harding School of Theology with a focus on Restoration Studies. Her research interests are the Restoration Movement in Western Canada and pacifism in Canadian Churches of Christ. In 2010 she was named Historian of the Year by the Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society.

Make Plans Now to Attend

CCCHS Annual Meeting

**Saturday, August 18, 2018
Stoney Creek Church of Christ**

105 King St. Stoney Creek, On

Schedule:

9:30 a.m.	Registration
10:00 a.m.	Shelley Jacobs <i>"Ways of Preserving the Past for the Benefit of the Future" (pt. 1)</i>
11:15 a.m.	Business Meeting
12:00	Lunch (brown bag)
1:00 p.m.	Murray Hibbard <i>"The Culley Collection"</i>
1:30 p.m.	Shelly Jacobs <i>"Ways of Preserving the Past for the Benefit of the Future" (pt. 2)</i>
2:30 p.m.	Question/Answer
2:45 p.m.	Dismissal
3:00 p.m.	Board Meeting

Membership Fees

***Membership fees are \$25.00 per person. Please note that only paid up members are eligible to vote.**