



NEWSLETTER

Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society
Winter/Spring 2026

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J. C. Bailey and the Christian Church

By Shelley Jacobs

The influence of his early years

John Carlos (J.C.) Bailey was born in Ontario in 1903, two years after the division between Churches of Christ and Christian Churches/Disciples of Christ was recognized in the Canadian Census. Bailey was no stranger to the conflict. Entries in his mother’s diary from 1912 state that his father, Thomas, did not completely break fellowship with Disciples following the division. When their congregation didn’t meet for Sunday evening service, Thomas preached at a Disciples church. Another entry says, “Carlos [J.C.] goes up to the digressive Sunday School, then he and his father go to our own meeting.”¹

Thomas also intervened for others when they faced criticism for interacting with Disciples churches. When an article in the *Christian Monthly Review* criticized Charles Petch for accepting an invitation to preach for a Disciples church at Rodney and West Lorne, Thomas Bailey came to his defense. Thomas wrote that he had been with Petch when the invitation to speak at that congregation arrived. Thomas wrote:

It seems to me that they were sincere, and I told Bro. Petch that I thought it would be wrong not to go and that if they were in error and if he would preach the truth firmly and kindly they would do one of two things, they would turn from their wrongs or they would tell him his services were no longer required. And I had full confidence that Bro. Petch would not depart from the “good old way,” but would “declare the whole counsel of God”. Let us not be afraid to go anywhere to preach the Word... ²

J.C. Bailey and the Christian Church

J.C. Bailey’s attitude was similar to that of his father. Although his relationship with the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ is not a theme in his writing, his comments about interactions with them over the years reveal his relationship with them. In his years in Montana (1923-25), Bailey reports to the *Christian Monthly Review* that members of the Christian Church

¹ Edith Bailey Diary, March 9, 1913.

² T.W. Bailey, “Letter to the Editor,” CMR 8 (May 1923): 18-19.

occasionally identified themselves with the Church of Christ.³ He also reports that in both Montana⁴ and Ontario,⁵ he used a building owned by the Christian Church to hold a protracted meeting. On one occasion, he reports that he used the baptistery of a Christian Church to baptize converts from a protracted meeting.⁶

When Bailey moved to Saskatchewan in 1927, he was the only full-time evangelist for Churches of Christ in the province. At that time, there were few congregations in Saskatchewan. The Disciples were slightly ahead of Churches of Christ in evangelizing the West. They established a congregation in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba in 1882 and the first Church of Christ in Manitoba was established in 1889 when the Saunders and Mallory families from Meaford moved to Carman. The earliest Church of Christ congregation in Saskatchewan was at Wishart in 1890. The next congregations to be established were Disciples churches. By 1906 there were Disciples congregations in Milestone and Yellow Grass in Southern Saskatchewan. H. A. Rogers began concentrated efforts to evangelize in Saskatchewan in 1916. By the time Bailey arrived in Saskatchewan there were clusters of small Churches of Christ in Southern Saskatchewan and several Disciples churches.

In the early years in Saskatchewan, Disciples churches and a cappella Churches of Christ interacted with each other. J.C. Bailey (and others) preached on occasion for the Yellow Grass Church of Christ, which was a Disciples congregation.⁷ In 1935, Bailey reported to the *Christian Leader* that he had accepted an invitation to speak at a Christian Church convention.⁸ The Saskatchewan Annual Convention report for 1934 lists "J. Bailey" as a speaker.⁹ When Radville Christian College (RCC) was formed, some students from the Yellow Grass congregation attended RCC.

Despite this attitude of cooperation, Bailey openly opposed the unity meetings in the United States that were organized by James DeForest Murch and Claude Witty. Murch and Witty were members of the Independent Christian Church who encouraged dialogue between the three streams of the movement in an attempt to reconcile differences. In 1946, Bailey expressed his disagreement in the pages of the *Gospel Herald*. There were also heated discussions around the unity meetings in the *Gospel Advocate* and other American periodicals. Ultimately, the attempts to reunite the movement failed.

In 1957, when the Disciples of Christ in Canada discussed a merger with the United Church of Canada, Bailey voiced his concern about the discussions. In the *Gospel Herald*, he reprinted and commented on an article from the *Canadian Disciple*. Bailey wrote:

I am persuaded that there are hundreds of people in Disciples Churches in Canada, in fact some of them wear the name "churches of Christ," that do not agree with the sellout of their leaders to the denominational world. We urge these brethren to study with us a return to simple New Testament Christianity. If you are interested in "unity" based on the Word of God we would be happy to study such a unity with you. So far as I can see you good people can either be swallowed up by the sectarian spirit of your leaders or you can form still another division in the religious world or you can return to the place where we once lived and worshipped together.¹⁰

³ "Letter to the Editor," CMR 9 no. 3 (March 1924), 14; CMR 9 no. 4 (April 1924), 18-19; CMR 10 no. 1 (January 1925), 12.

⁴ "Letter to the Editor," CMR 9 no. 9 (September 1924), 10.

⁵ CMR, Aug 1924

⁶ CMR, Jan 1927.

⁷ "The Master's Vineyard," GH 1 no. 1 (March 1936): 23.

⁸ "Field Reports," *Christian Leader*, Vol. 49 (23 July 1935): 13.

⁹ "Saskatchewan Convention," *Christian Standard*, Vol. 70 (27 July 1935): 14-15.

¹⁰ J.C. Bailey, "Return to the Old Paths," GH 23 (August 1957): 2.

Some would argue that Bailey's attitude toward unity was based on the terms and conditions of the conservative Churches of Christ, and did not reflect a true spirit of unity where people could agree to disagree. In his autobiography *Forty Years a Canadian Preacher* (written in the early 1960s), Bailey writes that he views members of the conservative Christian Church as brothers who teach first principles, but are in error when it comes to the issues of instrumental music and missionary societies.¹¹ The fact that he continues to call them brothers is reflective of the attitude he learned from his father.

The Three Streams of the Restoration Movement

By Shelley Jacobs

People often ask about the three streams of the Restoration Movement and where they fit in the larger picture of the movement. The first major division in the Restoration movement was between the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ and those who became Churches of Christ over the issues of instrumental music in worship and missionary societies (cooperatives in Canada). Although the areas of conflict and disagreement were broader and more complex than these two issues, these were issues that were at the forefront. In Canada a division was recognized in the 1901 Canadian census, and in the USA a division was recognized in the 1906 USA census.

The first group of Independent Christian Churches (Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, also called the 4Cs) left the Disciples of Christ in the 1920s and 1930s over disagreement about how missionaries should be supported. Independent Christian Churches believed that missionaries should be supported by individuals and congregations (direct support) and the Disciples supported missionaries through the Missionary Society. In addition, Disciples were moving in an ecumenical direction and this caused friction, both at home and on the mission field.

A second group of Independent Christian Churches left the Disciples in the late 1960s. At the 1968 General Convention of the Disciples of Christ, the vote to become a full-fledged Christian denomination was passed. Those who disagreed with this move separated from the Disciples and became Independent congregations. The marker that indicated that a congregation was no longer affiliated with the Disciples of Christ was the disappearance of the congregation's listing from the Disciples annual yearbook.

The first division between the Disciples and Independents was not apparent in the Canadian churches, but the second division was more apparent. Based on the Disciples yearbook entries for the late 1960s and early 1970s, many of the Ontario Disciples remained affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, while the majority of the congregations in Western Canada discontinued their affiliation with the Disciples.

RECOMMENDED READS

Recommended Historical Reads from Murray Hibbard:

- Reuben Butchart, *The Disciples of Christ in Canada since 1830* (Toronto: Canadian Headquarters' Publications Churches of Christ (Disciples) 1949). This book contains a wealth of information regarding the Restoration Movement in Canada, including our shared history in the nineteenth century.

¹¹ JCB, *Forty*, 116.

Recommended Historical Reads from David Ford:

- James K. A. Smith, *How to Inhabit Time: Understanding the Past, Facing the Future, Living Faithfully Now* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2022). Smith is a Canadian-American philosopher, who is currently Professor of Philosophy at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I highly recommend this book, especially the first two chapters, where Smith addresses humanity's relationship with the past. In these chapters Smith carefully orients human-being, from a Christian perspective, regarding the common challenges of ignorance of the past, contingency, and nostalgia.
- David Hackett Fischer, *Historians Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1970). Although this work is now fifty-six years old, Hackett Fischer's critical evaluation of the logical fallacies commonly committed by historians remains an essential read for anyone who wants to do history well. With stinging wit, and a complete lack of fear to name names and quote examples, Hackett Fischer (a Pulitzer Prize winning historian) guides both historians and those who read history through the process of recognizing logical fallacies.
- Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (New York: Penguin, 2000). This book was made into a movie by the same name. Philbrick, who lives on Nantucket Island, recounts the true story behind Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. He offers insight into the lives of those who, for a relatively short piece of history, braved both the seas and the cetacean dwellers of the deep.

2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Saturday, August 15, 2026

Our annual meeting will take place on Sat., Aug. 15, 2026, from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm on the campus of Great Lakes Christian High School in Beamsville, Ontario. Coffee and snacks will be provided. Bring your own lunch.

This year's theme centers around the history of Christian camps in Canada. We are in the process of finalizing the presenters at the annual meeting, we may possibly have five presenters from both Churches of Christ and Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ.

WHAT SORT OF DOCUMENTS SHOULD MINISTERS SAVE FOR POSTERITY (FOR THE ARCHIVE)?

Preserving Ministerial Papers Guideline Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society Fall 2025

The following guideline will help congregations collect, sort, and retain minister's papers/documents useful for archival and historical research purposes:

- Biographical information
- Documents recording degrees, honors, awards, appreciation
- Newspaper clippings and magazine articles re: minister's life and career

- Journals/Daybooks/Calendars
- Publications (journal articles, books, etc.)
- Text (either paper or digital format) of lectures, speeches and addresses
- Text (either paper or digital format) of sermons and sermon outlines
- Text (either paper or digital format) of Sunday school lessons and lesson outlines
- Correspondence (substantive)
- Reports (documents recording work with boards, elders, deacons, committees, etc.)
- Scrapbooks
- Photos
- Records of other aspects of ministry such as community outreach

The above list is representative of the type of materials congregations, ministers, or minister's estates should consider sending to the Canadian Churches of Christ Historical Society. If you have questions about items that are not on this list, please contact us to discuss the items in question.

The CCCHS is grateful to the Disciples of Christ Historical Society for sharing their "DCHS Guidelines for Organizing Congregational Records," on which this Guideline is based.

BOARD NEWS

Murray Hibbard has agreed to preach every Sunday for his home congregation in Guelph, Ontario. That responsibility, in addition to his full-time work responsibilities, means that he has had to step down from his role as the Chairperson of the CCCHS board. Shelley Jacobs has stepped into the role of Chairperson temporarily, until the annual meeting in August.

The CCCHS board is always ready to welcome new members to the CCCHS. If you know someone who might either benefit from participating in the CCCHS, or who might have some valuable historical insight to share, please pass along their contact information to one of the board members. We welcome members from all three streams of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement.

The CCCHS board also would like to hear from anyone interested in serving on the board. Several of our current board members have served for extended periods of time and multiple terms. We would love to have new board members! Again, if you are interested in serving on the board, please reach out to one of the board members.

Board Members for the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year

Chair: Murray Hibbard
(Terms 1 & 2 Aug 20/16 expired 2022)
(Appointed Aug 20/22 - expired 2023)
(Term 1 Aug 19/23 expires 2026)

Vice-Chair: Shelley Jacobs
(Term 1 Aug 20/22 - expires 2025)
(Term 2 Aug 16/26 – expires 2028)

Secretary / Treasurer: Margaret Hibbard
(Terms 1 & 2 Aug 18/12 - expired 2018)
(Appointed Financial Officer Aug 18/18 - expired 2020)
(Appointed Aug 31/20 - expired 2021)
(Term 1 Aug 21/21 expired 2024)
(Term 2 Aug 17/24 expires 2027)

Paul Moore
(Appointed Aug 19/23 expired 2024)
(Term 1 Aug 17/24 expires 2027)

David Ford
(Appointed Feb 6/23 - expired 2023)
(Term 1 Aug 19/23 expires 2026)

Correspondence

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Welland, ON L3C 7G1
Email: ccchs1@gmail.com

Archives Repository

4875 King Street, Beamsville, ON L3J 2J1

Archives Consultant

Shelley Jacobs
shelley.jacobs@gmail.com

Membership

\$25.00 per year is due on July 1st.
Dues may be paid by cheque to
CCCHS, c/o Margaret Hibbard,
47 Madison Crt W, Welland, ON L3C 7G1
Or by E-transfer to donations.ccchs1@gmail.com.
Please provide password under separate cover.

CANADIAN CHURCHES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION	
Name:	Phone:
Mailing Address:	Dues 2025/2026:
Email:	Donation:
I am an active member of the () congregation.	Cash ☐ Cheque ☐ E-transfer ☐ Total Amount Paid _____
Membership dues are \$25.00 per year. The membership year is July 1 st to June 30 th . Registration & membership can be mailed to CCCHS c/o Margaret Hibbard, 47 Madison Crt W, Welland, ON L3C 7G1	