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## Editor's Notes

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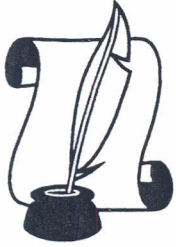
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## *Editor's Note*

Wendell Willis has done us a favor by collecting and editing these essays on *The Restoration Ideal*. Many of them were first read at the Christian Scholar's Conference held at David Lipscomb University in honor of Alexander Campbell's 200th birthday. It is perhaps fitting that Campbell's celebrated birthday should find us in the midst of transition as a people. By all accounts, old formulations are being scrutinized and new vistas are being charted.

In this process several questions concerning the nature, and even legitimacy, of restoration have been raised. Have we misread the biblical testimony concerning the heart and nature of the New Testament faith? How has a plea of "Christians Only" mutated into a self-understanding of the "Only Christians"? Can we be non-exclusive and still believe anything? Will we lose anything vital if we move toward a stance that is decidedly less sectarian? In the vacuum of identity we are now experiencing, what voices are being listened to, what voices should be listened to? Are we becoming so diverse as to lose the recognizable bonds that have held "the brotherhood" together for so long? How has restoration influenced our perceptions of ministry, and how are these perceptions being challenged or affirmed?

All of these questions, and countless others, deserve to be asked. But while we ask, and cast about, and inspect, and ponder meanings and forms, the work of the kingdom goes on.

Preaching the gospel, serving the poor, nurturing our children in the faith, continue to confront us as urgent tasks. Certainly the questions listed above have a bearing on these tasks. Preach what gospel? Teach our children what? and how? But the fact remains that we must be careful not only with what we ask, but also with how we ask lest we lose our ability to be involved in kingdom work.

The teacher who is trained for the Kingdom of Heaven brings from his treasure house things which are both old and new. As we unravel the shawl of our tradition, it behooves us to do it slowly and with care so that we do not find ourselves cold and exposed. While the faith of our children seldom survives a stifling traditionalism, it is equally true that faith is most effectively passed on through a vital, definable, living tradition.

It is **Leaven's** hope that these essays will aid our thinking concerning the *Restoration Ideal* in a manner that is responsible and in keeping with the best lights of our tradition.