

A Message from Pastor Dr. John Leffler



WHO ARE WE?

The sign out front says “*Castle Rock Christian Church*” ... “I thought all churches were Christian” someone might say. Another might challenge, “Are you trying to say that you are Christian and no one else is?” Another person might query, “I’ve never really heard of you people before. What is a Christian Church all about?” These are frequent comments made by those who either drive by or have just wondered about Christian Churches. It is important to remember where one comes from.

As I get older and as the generations ahead of me begin to disappear, it becomes more important and fascinating to hear stories of my ancestors — I want to know where I came from.

Introduction

The stories of my ancestors explain what is necessary for my life. They tell me why I look the way I do, why I was born in a certain state, how my parents met, and other things that I consider to be important. This information helps me to know what I might be able to expect in the future.

Living in the United States we are constantly reminded of those who gave their lives so that we might have freedom. We hear about great men such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, John Adams, and others who contributed to what we now enjoy. We all need to know the struggle that took place to begin and preserve this great country. The “Restoration Movement” (as it is known) or congregations that are called “Christian Churches or Churches of Christ¹” are no different.

Discovering our past will give us direction for the future. Learning of noble people such as Barton Stone, Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott and others will aid us in determining the heritage and possibly the future of the Castle Rock Christian Church.

Since the establishment of the Church on the Day of Pentecost, the Lord has always had those who were, and are, true to Him, although we realize that through time, the gospel has been altered, watered down, and even taken to totally unbiblical proportions by many kinds of churches who themselves have been deceived. The words of Matthew 16:18 were not spoken in vain by our Lord. The “*gates of Hades*” had not in the late 1700’s, and have not yet, “*prevailed against it* [the Church].”

It was out of a time of religious confusion that what we call the Restoration Movement had its beginnings. Our pioneers saw that the Church that the Lord built was supposed to be one. They also realized that Christians had been splintered into many different denominations. As one of the founding fathers of the Restoration Movement, Thomas Campbell, said their aim was to “unite the Christians in all the sects [churches].” Their aim was to get people to accept the Bible as the only true guide and to leave behind their man-made creeds, practices and traditions that were not of the Scripture.

¹ Not A-cappella Churches of Christ

Introduction

Some years ago, Dr. J. B. Phillips translated the New Testament for his young people. When the Epistles (letters to the churches) were first published, he wrote a preface, and in it he said: “The great difference between present-day Christianity and that of which we read in the letters is that to us it is primarily a performance, to them it was a real experience.... We are practically driven to accept their own explanation, which is that their little human lives had, through Christ, been linked up with the very Life of God... They still speak to us across the centuries. Perhaps if we believed what they believed, we might achieve what they achieved.” (*Letters to Young Churches*, p. XIV)

Later on, Will Durant wrote, “If Christianity would go back to its origins, cleanse itself resolutely from the silt of time, and take its stand with fresh sincerity upon the personality and ideals of its founder, who could resist it?” (“The Crisis in Christianity” in the *Saturday Evening Post*, August 5, 1939).

I believe that there is still a great hunger for this kind of Christianity. There are hundreds of thousands who are sick of the narrowness of “churchiness,” and the nominal Christianity we see represented in the media. People today hunger for a long breath of fresh air of the New Testament. What the Christian Churches, the Restoration Movement provides today is a call to come back to days of Pentecost and to fill the hunger, quench the thirst of the certainty of God and reveal the freedom and power of the newborn Church.

Those of the Christian Churches would say there is a recognizable “pattern” for the Church described in the Scriptures if we are careful to define “pattern” in terms of life rather than pure logic.

“Pattern” is not to be thought of as rigid impositions or set of understandings but rather is the order of which is found in a life-relationship that the Father and the Son share with believers. It is an experience of an exhibiting the Gospel, in real life.

I like what the old, revered professor, Dr. Dean E. Walker, said: “Restoration involves radical measures to recover whatever has been distorted or lost.”

As a movement, our ultimate purpose is to win the world to Christ. Our immediate purpose is the unity of the Church (John 17). Our pressing purpose is to return to the original New Testament Christianity pattern.

This is what the Christian Churches are about. Will you join me and the many pastors, teachers, leaders, and founders in the mission we have believed in and lived for throughout the years? Will you join me in this worthy venture?

Pastor John Leffler
2003 – Castle Rock, WA

The Purpose of This Book

Anything worthwhile has a purpose that it seeks to accomplish. The purpose of this book is to remind us and to promote and exalt Christ. It is to remind us of the past accomplishments attained by godly men and women – by the Hand of God. These accomplishments are nothing in and of themselves, but when coupled with God’s hand they have become miracles.

This book is also to promote – not those who are in leadership or in the “spotlight” of the church - but to promote the good name of Christ by reminding all of us that it took men and women **of faith** to set aside their personal wants and desires and strain forward toward a long and fruitful ministry.

And finally this book is written to exalt our awesome God who forever has made us strong and fortifies our every move. Without the leadership of the Holy Spirit over the many years, this church might have followed the path of so many others, a path of decline, decay and death. We must absolutely never stray from the truth of the Gospel of Christ. We must also never become cemented into the culture of the past and of our own childhoods, but press forward into the culture of the day so that the Gospel of Christ may always be relevant to those who hear it fresh for the first time.

As you read about the lives and ministries of these men and women, I believe you will catch the sense of excitement that they had toward the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. You’ll learn about men like William Huntington who traveled across the United States to finally settle in Castle Rock and share the gospel of Jesus Christ, and about couples like E. R. and Bessie Moon who became our first missionaries after hearing just one sermon at the Turner Convention (which is now the Oregon Christian Convention). You’ll meet great men who gave their lives to the work of Christ, teaching, preaching, and persuading others to know and accept the love of the Father into their lives.

Foreword

It is my hope that we can resonate with the Hebrews writer when he says....

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1

Welcome to a wonderful heritage of believers. I count it a great honor and privilege to be a part of such a history and I hope you will begin to appreciate the ones who have gone before us and have marked out the race.

Pastor John Leffler
Serving CRCC from 2000-present

A Message from Previous Pastor Ed Miller Concerning our 150 Years of History

The contributing writers of this book are to be commended for the tremendous contribution this record makes to all of our lives. For some this may seem like musty old history, but this book tells of sacrifice and courage for a 150-year time span. This is a story of linking generation to generation, a stepping stone to what we are today. It is God standing with His church through good, bad, indifferent and even horrible times. It's about a long-standing congregation struggling with the battles of establishing and maintaining a link to God through many generations.

We cannot ignore the past any more than we can ignore the future. If we understand how we have become what we are, it gives us strength and courage to face the struggles coming to this and future generations.

A secret unfolds of tremendous self and corporate worth in these pages. It is a story of pastors and buildings; but it is most of all, a story of a congregation with beginnings back to the settlement of the Western United States of America. These men and women were truly endowed with brave hearts and a strong faith in Jesus Christ. The Castle Rock Christian Church has come from covered wagons and hostile Indians to space exploration and is still here. Not many churches can tell such a story.

Work is not in vain, in the Lord Jesus Christ. This unfolds in dramatic terms as we read and consider the ministry and influence here and abroad of this old church. From a covered wagon, the ministry has reached around the entire world. You cannot miss what this history offers you. Read it—and a powerful look at the past will bring great hope to what we do today.

Pastor Ed Miller
January 2003

Constructing the History of Castle Rock Christian Church

This is a story of how the Gospel of Jesus Christ was planted in the community of Castle Rock through the Castle Rock Christian Church and how it became the first church in town and the first (restoration) Christian Church in the State of Washington. This is very much a story of God's keeping power over this small group of deeply committed believers over the past 150 years.

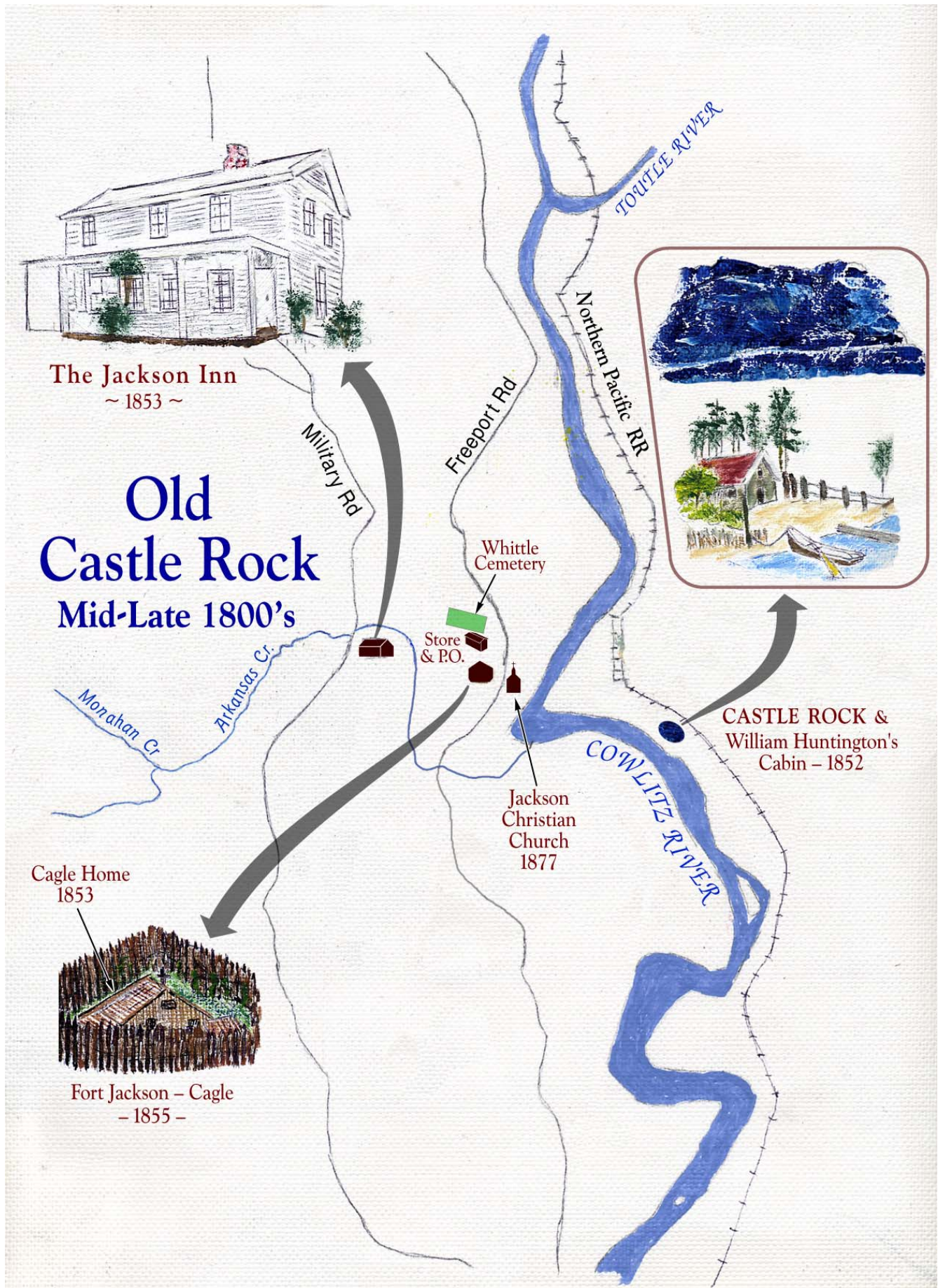
During this time the church has been proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ to Castle Rock and sending out members as missionaries to many countries in the world.

FINDING INFORMATION

Many of the records of our early history were lost due to fires and floods in the earlier years of the church. A good share of the information included in this history is the result of the computer age. It and the internet have allowed us the exciting ability to access information from almost anywhere in the world. We have found many nuggets of information that have long been hidden in forgotten files in some of the most surprising places. An example of this is the great discovery of several pictures of the old church that was located on 1st and C Street for so many years. Larry Morley sent them to the National Historical Society (Disciples of Christ), and we had no idea they even existed. For such a treasure we are thankful.

These newly discovered facts along with the existing historical information and personal interviews with the descendants of William Huntington and others have been compiled into this historical document you are reading. So look back and remember, as you embark on this literary and pictorial journey through the past 150 years of the Castle Rock Christian Church.

Lenard Hovde
October, 2003



The Jackson Inn
~ 1853 ~

**Old
Castle Rock**
Mid-Late 1800's



CASTLE ROCK &
William Huntington's
Cabin - 1852

Cagle Home
1853



Fort Jackson - Cagle
- 1855 -