

How When Where did the 2x2 church start?

Stories About The Beginning

How When Where did the Two by Two Church start?

Revised April 14, 2026

If you've ever asked the questions when and where did the Two by Two church start, you might have heard some of the following:

HOW? It was started by Wm. Irvine

Who did Irvine hear from?

It was started by a Group of Men

OTHER EXPLANATIONS:

Evasive Explanations: Analogies (wheat, stump, etc.), Diversions, Minimizing, Denials & Omissions

This White Horse Theory

The History isn't Traceable

We don't have a genealogy

WHERE?

It started in Galilee

It started in the Garden of Eden

It was Started In Ireland, British Isles, America

It started in Ireland

It started in the New Testament days — Jesus is our Founder

WHEN?

It started in 1897 – at the turn of the 20th century

It is from "The Beginning"

It was started by God in Heaven, planned from the Foundation of the World.

THE RESTORATION THEORY

It was restored, restarted, revived, reborn, raised up again

The Stump Theory

The Restoration Age

You might also have heard various stories, explanations, analogies or even denials of the stories of others.

Workers often emphasize how their method and doctrine are the same the world over. So it is surprising when they do not all give the same answers to these questions—far from it. The Questioner is given a wide variety of answers—even answers that conflict with other workers' statements. To the question **WHO STARTED THIS WAY?** you may be told it was God, Jesus, Wm. Irvine, a group of men; it doesn't matter; or I don't know.

As to **WHEN WAS IT STARTED? Or what was the startup date?** Some answers have been: from before world began; when Jesus sent out the disciples 2 and 2; in the New Testament; around 1900; it was planned by God before the foundation of the world; it doesn't matter; or I don't know.

For a location for **WHERE DID IT START?** you may be told in Heaven, in Ireland, in Scotland, in Galilee, Armenia, Switzerland, Italy, in the heart of God, in the Garden of Eden; it doesn't matter or I don't know.

Perhaps the question that generates the most variety of answers is **WHO WAS WILLIAM IRVINE?** You maybe told that he was just a worker; a man used of God; a prophet; a man highly favored of God; a man God "raised up," or I never heard of him.

In attempting to discover **WHAT BECAME OF WILLIAM IRVINE?** you may hear that he lost his anointing, became mentally unbalanced; had the misfortune to lose his mind; was a womanizer; became too proud and lifted up in himself; or that he had to be eliminated, removed, ousted, dispelled, excommunicated, etc.

As to **HOW WAS IT STARTED?** some say it was by a man's revelation; others say it was restarted or restored by a man or some men; while others maintain that Jesus started it in the New Testament; or I don't know.

Regarding WHO WM. IRVINE HEARD IT FROM? the answers given may be: from Willie Gill's family; through Irvine's sister; from the underground remnant; by revelation from God; it doesn't matter; or I don't know.

The following quotes are by workers and friends from all over the world. One would expect their statements to be similar and certainly not to oppose each other. Notice how the answers vary considerably...while coming from followers claiming their church is "the same the world over." These two hymns are sometimes quoted to support the idea that the Two by Two church is the same worldwide: 335 – No East or West; and No. 11 – Jesus is the same.

HOW...?

"It Was started by Wm. Irvine"

"...my remembrance of how for several years at Special meeting time, I remember a favorite subject of Wm. Jamieson (when the Workers would be gathered in the home) was to tell us that as far back as we could trace this fellowship was unto Wm. Irvine. He spoke openly and freely of all which he knew of Wm. Irvine, etc. What he told us was unto enough people that it would be common knowledge statewide." (Donald Fisher letter to Fred Miller, circa 1982)

1995: New Brunswick worker: Wm. Irvine was the man who "brought order to this way."

"Our mission was started by William Irwin, a Scotchman, seven or eight years ago. Others followed him. I myself was a Civil Servant in Dublin. I resigned my post, sold all that I had and gave to the poor, and went out to preach." Wilson McClung, Overseer of New Zealand, Feb. 16, 1905 Impartial Reporter)

"Since early workers followed a Scottish preacher in Ireland before the turn of the 20th century, they have spent their lives traveling from home to home with little more than their clothes." William Lewis, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Minnesota 11/2/86

"With regard to your question about William Irvine, there is no need for us to be 'brave and honest enough' to acknowledge the part he had in this Fellowship in the early part of this century, as there is no secret about it. He was not alone, of course, as there were other good and faithful men there also, but he no doubt had the leading part. However, when it comes to acknowledging him as being the 'Founder' the answer is definitely 'No', for the simple reason that he was not. The Truth of God has been from the beginning – Psalm 119:89 tells us 'For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in Heaven.'... We are glad that in our day and age God can revive His work and is still sending forth those who will go as Jesus commanded to carry the same Gospel into the world. But our only 'Founder' is Christ, He is the cornerstone, the only rock on which we seek to build and we do not need or believe in anything else." Ken Pagington Letter to Kathleen Overby, 5/25/95

John Long's Journal confirms that Wm. Irvine was the founder of the Two by Two sect.

"Irvine's founding role is of little consequence, for we alone follow the true pattern of the original apostles, and the early church." Gordon McNabb (in "*The Secret Sect*")

The narrative was that Wm. Irvine. went to Switzerland to be treated for Miner's Lung and heard the gospel through a nurse. He then brought back the "seed" to the British Isles where it propagated from there. (Brother Worker)

"All that God begins is right. And over and over again in considering the Truth of God, it is a great help to know that things began with God. So how did God begin to manifest his church in these latter days? I think of how God gave Adam a wife (Adam is a type of Christ). God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam. Out of Adam's side he took a rib, and out of that rib he builded a woman. What was the deep sleep? It was typical of surrender. How did God always get his church? Surrender of the Christ to God. **God got a rib out of Christ. William Irvine was part of that rib**, and others were part of that rib too. I believe I was part of it and Tom Betty and others also. And out of that rib God builded his church, and so we became (part of) the Bride of Christ in the early days. Why I like that is it gives no glory to man. The bride and the Bridegroom become one and become a reality." (quote of Edward Cooney in ***Life & Ministry of Edward Cooney*** by Patricia Roberts, p23)

Verification by workers that *The Secret Sect* contains the true story:

TTT Editor's Note: *The Secret Sect* is a book written by Doug & Helen Parker, published in 1982. The forerunner of *The Secret Sect* was a pamphlet titled *A Spiritual Fraud*, which was mailed out to numerous workers all over the world. Parker's book gives the details surrounding the group's beginning and evidence showing that Wm. Irvine was their Founder. The following friends and workers endorse Parker's book as being true.

A brother worker who read ***The Secret Sect***, stated that it's factually sound from what he already knew, except for a few minor details; his knowledge came from older workers who personally knew William Irvine.

An ex-worker said when he was first in the work, he received a long document (probably *A Spiritual Fraud* by Doug Parker) containing information about the beginning of this fellowship. When he asked his older companion Fred Kinglake whether or not it was true, Fred said, "I can't say that it's not true."

In the August 18, 1983, Skagit Valley Herald, serving NW Washington, reporters asked Therald Sylvester (**deceased Western USA Overseer**) if he denied the historical account of the group's origins found in the book ***The Secret Sect***, and he replied, "We don't deny that."

It was started by a group of men (rather than ONE man)

"As we all understand, there were many Centuries without a Ministry and meeting together. During the late 1800's God was able to find **seeking men** in whose hearts he placed the seed of His Eternal Truth. The Holy Spirit brought them together and began to teach them how to assemble together to fulfill the instructions of Jesus, and others throughout the New Testament. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come as the Spirit of Truth and would become their teacher. This remains the same today. **No one person has exclusive rights to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The men who help to lead in our day** do not take any responsibility of having exclusive rights to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, but rather are working together as brothers in Christ." (Bruce Shaw, Letter May 2, 2025)

"At the end of the 19 century, there were men and women that were searching for truth and crying out to God to show them His way. And God answered that request. One of the notable things about that generation was that they feared God. One person asked George Walker, "George, who really got the revelation from God?" George responded that several got it at the same time. It was like Acts 2 when God poured out His Spirit on several at the same time. Our day has mirrored the Acts of the apostles. Those men and women, freshly anointed with God's Spirit, went forth in all directions of the world preaching the word of God, all with the same revelation. It is true that some got off, but the vast majority received a revelation whereby they would have fellowship first with God, and then with each other." (Ray Hoffman, Overseer Eastern US, Oct. 4, 2023)

"...not by William Irvine, but rather **by many men** getting together and deciding to really follow the New Testament teaching of Jesus" (William Peterson, Deceased Kansas & Oklahoma Worker Overseer).

"We know that it began with **a group of men** in the British Isles around the turn of the century. That's as far as we have been able to trace it" (Walter Pollock, Worker, Spokesman Review, June 5, 1983).

"The church was formed at the turn of the century in Great Britain. **A number of people** in England, Scotland, and Ireland discovered they were missing something spiritually...the Lord brought them together, and they found they saw eye to eye on the ministry" (Walter Pollock, Worker in 1984 Coeur d'Alene Press, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho).

"Irvine and others received revelation from God and then were subsequently used as instruments to preach the message of the Lord Jesus. As they reached various parts of the world, they encountered others who received the same revelation—some prior to their arrival, some upon hearing their message—and fellowship was created between them."

1942 Statement by George Walker to U.A. Selective Service (**FIRST Eastern USA Overseer, deceased**): "We take this opportunity to state that during the closing years of the last century and the first years of this century **a number of people in the British Isles and in America** were exercised in heart and mind, through their study of the Scriptures, in regard to the methods of preaching and worship in the several churches of which they were then members. They were deeply concerned about spiritual things, and became fully convinced that there should be a return to the methods and purposes taught and carried out by Christ and His first disciples. This conviction led to frequent earnest conversations and studies on the subject, which in turn led to religious meetings, and in due time a number of these people went forth to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel".

" Mr. Walker said that he thinks some Christians have believed as his people do since the days of Christ. About twenty-two years ago, he said, church members in England and north Ireland became interested in the doctrines, and out of this has come the spread of the faith into this country, Canada, Australia and New Zealand...William Irvine, a Scotchman, one of the original leaders, is not now affiliated with this group because of a difference over the prophecies of the Revelations, Mr. Walker said." [1921 minus 22 years = 1898 start date per George Walker] (**September 26, 1921**, page 11 – Indianapolis News, Indiana, USA)

GAP EXPLANATIONS – White Horse Analogy:

Some cling to the slim hope and possibility that the fellowship was a continuation of the churches in Paul's day because it went "underground", or "into the woods." Imagine that you are reading a diary you found in your attic of one of your ancestors. They write about driving along a highway by a certain forest that is 2000 miles long and 2000 miles wide. They mentioned they saw a beautiful white horse in a pasture beside the road, and as they watched, he trotted off and disappeared in the nearby forest. Now, 2000 years later, you read this account in their diary. That evening you are driving on this same road, at the other end of the forest mentioned in the diary (2000 miles away from where your ancestors watched the horse enter the forest) and you see a white horse come out of the forest! Is it the same identical white horse? Can you be absolutely certain it is even a descendant of the white horse who entered the forest 2000 miles back down the road and 2,000 years earlier??? The two horses have one thing in common – they were both white. The churches in Paul's day and the Two by Two meetings today have only one thing in common – they meet in homes. There are thousands of white horses in this world. There are thousands of groups who have and do meet in homes. Being white or meeting in homes does not PROVE anything. Certainly not that the Two by Two church meetings are a continuation of churches of the New

Testament.

An analogy cannot disprove historical facts. Since white horses and belief systems are NOT in the same class, the value of this analogy is for illustration purposes only. It shows a far-fetched, remote possibility, but provides nothing more. There is no evidence of the existence of the Two by Two ministers and church in the home fellowship before William Irvine. Furthermore, there is much evidence to the contrary which proves it started in 1897-1901. Some believe if something has not been proven true, that proves it is false. Some reason the converse of this, in this way: "You can't prove it's not true, so I have good reason to believe it IS true." As "good" reasons go, this one is poor and the chances of it being true are pretty slim. It's practically wishful thinking, or self deception. If something cannot be proven true, all that is known is just that: it has not yet been proven true or false. It is unknown, and no (valid) inferences can be made from it. What other alternatives can you think of besides a temporary disappearance (gap) for no fathomable reason??

GAP EXPLANATIONS

The History isn't Traceable...

"As near as I can figure, since there are no church records in recent times, the truth came from England at the turn of the century." Jill Christiansen, Worker, Santee conv. 1980.

"We cannot trace this back through the ages! And that is good, for if we could, that would destroy our faith." Iowa gospel meeting, 1995

"Lewis (William) says there is no one founder or group of founders that this church...can trace its lineage to. 'Not to my knowledge,' Lewis says. 'We don't treat genealogical records as being purposeful. What would it mean to me if I could prove I'm a descendant of Abraham?'" quote of William Lewis, (deceased Southern USA Overseer) The Sunday Sun, Georgetown, Texas, July 14, 1991

Contracting his above statement, Lewis also told reporter of Minneapolis Star Tribune in 1986:

*Since early workers followed a **Scottish preacher in Ireland before the turn of the 20th century**, they have spent their lives traveling from home to home with little more than their clothes*

Western Sr. Worker, Walter Pollock, told a Spokane, Washington reporter in 1983:

*"We know that it began **with a group of men** in the British Isles around the turn of the century. That's as far as we've been able to trace it."*

The following year, 1984, Walter Pollock told a Coeur d'Alene, Idaho reporter:

*"The church was formed at the turn of the century in Great Britain. **A number of people** in England, Scotland, and Ireland discovered they were missing something spiritually...the Lord brought them together, and they found they saw eye to eye on the ministry" (Walter Pollock, 1984 Coeur d'Alene Press, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho).*

"Don't worry about tracing the truth back. The Jews could trace to Abraham and it didn't mean a thing. God can raise up people from stones...we don't need to trace it back. When we see God's work in people, we know it is from him." **Arnold Brown**, Sept., 1988 York, NE conv.

We don't have a genealogy...

"We don't have any genealogy. We don't have to have...God could raise up people if there had been a thousand years of no one professing. Titus and Timothy speak about old wives fables, etc. We don't have to trace people back to Christ, etc., today. Those that are God's children don't have to trace their genealogy back to Abraham. The faith that Abraham had makes us children of Abraham." (Arnold Brown, 1989 York Convention #2)

"About 125 years ago there was a cry amongst the population of the world. You may say how do I know that? Because God answered the cry of the perishing souls. And when they went forth, there were many, many people who responded. And in ten years a good portion of the world's surface had been covered by the ministry that Jesus sent forth to *the end of the world*. By 20 years, basically the whole world had been touched by the Ministry, and I do not mean every town, but every country, because there was a cry and God raised up Ministers to go forth into the Ministry that was established by Jesus when he said *go into all the world and I am with you till the end of the world*.

"We don't have a genealogy. There has never been a list of _____ continuously, that has never been declared. Sometimes people think it has been applied, and it has never been declared as there is not any. The ministry that Jesus declared was *from the beginning*. Just because we don't have a lineage, it does not mean it was not from the beginning. When Jesus used the parable of the sower and the seed that illustrates very vividly the fact you do not have to have a continuous planting of seed from season to season. You can skip five years without planting and then you plant the seed again, and you will get the same crop again, if you plant the same seed. When God raises up men and women, it is his work and his miracle, we can see that which is *from the beginning* and that it will continue till the end of the world." (George Peterson, 2024 Perry, Oklahoma Conv.)

GAP EXPLANATION...before 1897

A 20th century start-up date leaves a 1900 year GAP between Jesus sending out the disciples 2 and 2 and the year 1897 when Wm. Irvine started his ministry. Beginning today and traveling BACK in the time and history of the Two by Two fellowship, the trail leads back to 1897-99, Ireland, and a man named William Irvine. On the other hand, if we start at the beginning of humanity, with Adam and Eve, and continue to follow God's way, we arrive at the current year. The two roads do not meet. If the two were one and the same road or way, they should meet. However, there is a GAP between the road of God's way traced forward from "the beginning" and Irvine's fellowship traced backward from the present. There are some standard explanations given for the gap.

"Also we are sometimes asked about the period between...the first century and the present twentieth century. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. We have no written records on earth of God's work in the world during this period. God's records are written in heaven, Malachi 3:16, Luke 10:20, Rev. 20:12. Any who would suggest a written genealogy record is necessary between the first and twentieth century would fall into the category of 1 Tim. 1:3-4: 'that thou might charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.'" [Click here to read entire sermon: Dan Hilton](#), Worker, 1/1/84 Burlington, WA Sp. Mtg. [Note: The history of a fellowship that is approx. 100 years old, hardly qualifies as "endless genealogy."]

"It's not God's way to record such things."

"Some say that God's truth was revived or started over or began in the early 1900's. This serpent raises its ugly head periodically." Sherlene Oldham, Ex-worker, Letter 1991 to Cherie Kropp.

WHERE did it Start?

It started in Galilee: A question arises: When did your faith start?...When people ask us about this, we are grateful to know we know when it started. In Acts 10:35: "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached." It began from Galilee. Isn't that a wonderful little story? This Gospel, this Truth, this Word of Jesus, began in Galilee. That is where Jesus was raised and spent many of His days...and began His ministry in Galilee...the earthly fulfillment of the heavenly plan...and continues right down to the present day. It is a wonderful thing we don't keep a history of the kingdom. We have an accountant that keeps a history of every person and does it better than we could...the Lamb's Book of Life. We can be satisfied this was planned in eternity, and Jesus came down and established it in Galilee. Right down to our age today... 1996...this same truth which Jesus lived and taught...from place to place, and area to area...(Gordon Winkler, Pulaski, Virginia Convention – Sept. 1, 1996)

"If anyone asks you where this way started, **it wasn't in Ireland**. It came from here..." Then he quoted scripture from Acts about after the baptism of John and the shores of Galilee (Wilson Green, Conv. 1990s)

"William Irvine began to think HE started the truth. He was instrumental, but what was born in our hearts was of God. Some began to call us Cooneyites which wasn't the truth either. We preach that **our faith began on the shores of Galilee**" (Older worker from southern USA).

"This way started in Galilee." Ned Manning, worker-Irish descent

It Started in the British Isles & America:

According to the **1942 Statement by George Walker** to U.A. Selective Service (FIRST Eastern USA Overseer, deceased): "We take this opportunity to state that during the closing years of the last century and the first years of this century a number of people in the British Isles and in America .. became fully convinced that there should be a return to the methods and purposes taught and carried out by Christ and His first disciples...and in due time a number of these people went forth to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel".

It Started in IRELAND:

In 1976, **Therald Sylvester** personally arranged for **Joshua Gamble from Ireland** to make the whole round of conventions on the West Coast in America, including Walla Walla, WA, Gilroy, CA and Casa Grande, AZ conventions, and asked Joshua to publicly mention the subject at each convention, with the purpose of trying to dispel the "continuous unbroken chain" myth. Evidently Therald thought that the word of someone from "where it all happened" would have more weight. He mentioned William Irvine's name along with the names of several other early workers. Joshua made it clear that there was no continuous ministry going out in this fashion and no recognizable fellowship of this type before the late 1890s. Several have reported hearing Joshua Gamble mention this from the platform. [Joshua Gamble is the uncle of Thomas Gamble, current Ireland Overseer]

"Since early workers followed a Scottish preacher in Ireland before the turn of the 20th century, they have spent their lives traveling from home to home with little more than their clothes, Lewis said." William Lewis, (**Southern USA Overseer**) quote from in the Minneapolis Star Tribune 11/2/86.

"The light of the truth has been kept burning over the ages and then ignited into flame **in Ireland about 100 years ago.**"

It was started in **Ireland and Scotland**: Los Angeles Times 9/13/82: "Richard Wulf, 27, a Two-by-Two worker in Mexico for two years, was asked about this apparent suppression of the sect's origins. 'Near the turn of the century God raised up Godly men in **Ireland and Scotland**,' Wulf acknowledged. 'We respect them and what they established. But we don't hold to that history and line of succession.' Added Kennedy, a worker spokesman, 'Now we're not following these men, but the New Testament fellowship.'"

"**Ireland** is the only country where workers weren't imported, but rather exported." Letter of Sydney Holt, California Worker, June 27, 1985 ([Click Here to read Sydney Holt's Letters](#))

"I could not help but thank God for those who came to us from the **British Isles** and gave us so much. Over and over, I was reminded that we are debtors to that land—and that people." Helen Montgomery, Aug. 1997.

"Some have asked about the beginning of this way. In 1897, there were two workers that came to **Ireland**." Dan Sherick, Worker, Boyden, IA Conv, Sept 8-11, 1995.

"Ninety years ago, a letter came from Ireland. We heard about those with no home, no name, etc. Forty people made their choice. Sixteen went out in the work—that was the beginning... There is not a country not open to the gospel now. It is the most marvelous thing ever to happen." **["Ninety years ago" = 1987 Minus 90 years = 1897]** Funeral Service for Erling Omdal, Oct. 6, 1987, Eagle Bend, Minnesota, spoken by **Garrett Hughes** (deceased USA Worker Overseer)

"I was in S.A. about 30 years ago and there were only 4 of the S.A. countries that had workers having mtgs then. Every country there is doing real well for the Gospel now and it's surely a way of what is going around the world over now in our day. **It surely speaks of what began 90 years ago** and has gone the world around." Letter of Garrett Hughes, August 1, 1988

Garrett Hughes also made numerous references from convention platforms in his last years relative to "the beginning of days," first workers, first conventions, etc. One in particular was at Hunter, North Dakota in 1988, 1989 or 1990. And Garrett would know about these things since his Grandparents were some of the very first to profess in Ireland, in the mission where 40 professed and 16 went in the work. His mother's brother, Willie Gill, became Overseer of England and her two sisters, Emma and Jennie Gill, were the very first sister workers to go out preaching in Irvine's new movement. All three of her siblings went in the work in 1900 and are shown on the 1905 Workers List. Garrett's parents Fred & Mary Ann (Gill) Hughes professed through Wm. Irvine in North Dakota.

"It has also been very encouraging to be in a number of the homes of the saints. We are constantly reminded that it was **from this cradle that many of our early workers came to us**, and so many of these older saints remember them well and have been able to give me interesting details of their early days. Most of the older ones are gone now. Like in our field, a new generation is carrying on the work." Howard Mooney from Oregon USA visiting Fermanagh, Ireland Convention in June 24-27, 1970(?)

"Some people are saying that this fellowship began in Ireland 100 years ago. Well, that's true, but what's important is OUR beginning – when WE (personally) first found Jesus." Dellas Linnaman at W. Aust conv.

It Started in the New Testament Days; Jesus is the Founder

"The origin of the Church, if there ever was an identifiable time, place or person has been lost to time. There hasn't been any time of founding. There's no year or names of founders. Stephen said, The only foundation is the teaching of Christ. The message is the foundation and that has always been to get back to Christ."* *spoken by Charles Steffen [deceased Overseer of New York & New England States] The Milford (N.H.) Cabinet and Wilton Journal, Milford, New Hampshire, 8/5/1982.

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"We believe we have existed since Jesus sent forth the 70 disciples Two by Two." Richard Sullivan, 1943

"Some preach a lineage back to Christ, but that's ludicrous." Randy Satterfield, 1996, Texas & Arkansas Worker

"We are often asked who started this church? Heb. 12:2 'Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...' Jesus gave us God's eternal plan of salvation in its fullness. He is both the author and finisher." **Dan Hilton**, deceased Worker, 1/1/84 Burlington, WA Sp. Mtg.

"Jesus Himself set us up. Whether it was planted in the first century, the 10th century, or the 20th century, the message is the same, it produces the same thing." Therald Sylvester, (**deceased Western USA Overseer**) The Bellingham, WA Herald 8/20/83.

"We are not following some way founded in the early 1900's, but it goes clear back to Christ." Therald Sylvester (**deceased Western Overseer**) 11/16/83

"You can tell whether a church is a false church or not if it was started by a man or woman. We are the only church on earth that was started by Christ." Jack Carroll, deceased Western USA Overseer and one of the original workers.

"We aren't believing in a religion. We are believing in a life. The life of God and His Son... Everything that is false has a definite origin—a man who started it. Wesley started the Methodist; Joseph Smith started the Mormons; Mary Baker Eddy started the Christian

Scientist. This is the only way that was started by Christ." Willie Jamieson, deceased Western USA Overseer and one of the original workers, Post Falls Conv., 1957.

"I consider that we are the most privileged people in all the world for the simple reason that what we believe and stand for and teach doesn't have its origin with man. You don't go back into the history of the world to find it. You have to go back to the beginning and to God. God had this plan in His heart and mind before the foundations of the world were laid. " (Arthur Boyce, Silverdale B.C. Conv. 8/6/61)

"I never met Wm. Irvine at any time and believe he was used of God, but was never the origin of what we believe. I understand he became too big in himself and left the fellowship we love. Workers I know and respect preach only what Jesus lived and taught with no mention at all of Wm. Irvine or any other man save only real appreciation for those who retell in our day things taught in Jesus day. **This faith began in New Testament days, not in Ireland nor in the U.K.**" Roddy MacLean (Scotland Worker) Letter dated June 1, 1995

"It started in the Garden of Eden," Adam Hutchinson would say, "and tell him or her no more." (*Secret Sect* by Doug & Helen Parker, p. 94).

WHEN...?

It started in 1897 to 1900 – or at the turn of the 20th century

"The church was formed at the turn of the century in Great Britain. A number of people in England, Scotland, and Ireland discovered they were missing something spiritually...the Lord brought them together, and they found they saw eye to eye on the ministry" (Walter Pollock, Worker in 1984 Coeur d'Alene Press, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho).

"Our fellowship was founded around the turn of the century. Well, actually just before the turn of the Century. But it was not found then." She was referring to Jesus, who was found long before then. (Shirley Doolittle, Buttonwillow I, California Convention).

1942 Statement by George Walker to U.A. Selective Service (FIRST Eastern USA Overseer, deceased): "We take this opportunity to state that **during the closing years of the last century and the first years of this century a number of people** in the British Isles and in America...and in due time a number of these people went forth to devote their lives to the preaching of the Gospel".

10/96: Dellas Linaman stated at an Australian convention: "Some people are saying that this fellowship began in Ireland **100 years ago. Well, that's true**, but what's important is OUR beginning—when we (personally) first found Jesus."

In 1988, Merlin Howlett, brother worker, stated at Milltown convention, "In just the past 88 years we have had the privilege of convention. **88 years ago there wasn't one convention on earth.** Now there are 126 conventions. (1988 minus 88 years = 1900 start date)

It is from the BEGINNING...It started with Jesus/God. God Planned it.

"Your statement that our movement was started by W. Irvine & E. Cooney is not correct & very far from the truth. We believe & always will that it is something that was from the beginning. There is a verse that is very real to me & helps me to understand that we are in GOD'S true & only way. Some are wondering as to what happened from the beginning until the 18 & 19th century. The verse I mention says '*As He (GOD) spake by the mouth of His Holy Prophets that have been **since the world began.***' That makes it very clear to me & gives me strong confidence that I am in something that has been from the beginning, nothing can shake that nor can the gates of hell prevail against it." (Worker, 2013)

"It is a Way that is in this world, but it isn't of the world. It is supported by heaven. People ask, "Who is at the bottom of this?" "Who is the founder?" It is the same God that is at the top and it is supported by heaven" (Clarence Anderson, 1974 Freedom, NY Conv.)

We are often glad when we would speak forth the gospel to others that we are not presenting some thought or theory that would go back a few hundred years. It isn't something that was put together by a group of men, but it is that which is from everlasting to everlasting. I John 1:1 "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life*" (Rolin Mader, 1968 Newry Conv.)

"Sometimes people ask the question, **"When did this way start?"** I hope you do not say, "A hundred years ago or so." I hope you would not say, "Two thousand years ago," for the answer is in this chapter and I will read you the answer when this way of God that we are teaching started. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God." **This is where it all began, it began with God in the beginning** and as far as we know it was before this world and its society started. It was the Word, which we believe is Jesus. It is nice that John referred to Jesus as the Word, because Jesus did everything that God asked Him to do, so He was the living manifestation of His word; the Word was the expression of His will. When we see Jesus walking in this earth, we have a little picture of Him, and getting to know God's will and His plan, so God and His Son had a plan before man ever came on this world, that there would be a family in Heaven one day that would be bought by the blood of Jesus, and Jesus was willing for that in the eternity that has gone. **So that was the beginning of the way; it was in eternity and it was in God's heart, then Jesus came and lived it.** He just asked people to follow, He did not want

people's ideas, He did not need our improvements, all His salutation was, "Just follow me." Then was the beginning of our days, and that is another thing." **Truth Archive** – Ray Hoffman – Maroota, NSW Australia, January, 2013.

"We are asked by people who have observed **our fellowship**, 'What is it that makes this fellowship work?' They know it works but how does it work without elected officers? The answer to this question is found in the Bible. We might add there is an answer in the Bible to every vital question. If someone should ask you how your faith works, take them to Galatians 5:6 – *for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love*. **We tell people in gospel meetings that this is a wonderful Way that is from eternity to eternity. Jesus said this fellowship was planned in heaven in love before the world began.** It was established on the cross by love and since then it has been held together in a fellowship of love." **Truth Archive** – Undated sermon by Howard Mooney – *First line: John 13, I Corinthians 13, and Hebrew 13 are all love chapters.*

"And then what you're believing is about 100 (one hundred) years old. But what we're believing in, especially those from the Jews and other people, who are believing in something a lot older than that. I tell you what we believe in goes back further than that. Well, the people who have got a revelation of the Truth that is in Jesus, never tried to find comfort or have no reason to try to find comfort in **trying to trace its beginning in the earth. Because it's not where it began.** But we're rather fortunate, we've lived a few years and we've known some that lived quite a few years before they passed from time into eternity, they had a part in preaching the gospel. They could tell us a lot of that experience, sometimes we call 'em the earlier days of their experience. God put it into their hearts to feel after Him, and to seek after Him, and to find and began to believe **in a Way like Jesus taught. But I never heard one of them say, "That was when it began."** It was just during that period of time, and wonderfully so, God has probably done that in a lot of different days and ages. But we're fortunate to live in one of those when He has been able to raise up people to feel after Him and to find Him, and to find faith to believe in the Son. And the revelation that God gave them didn't go back to just their day, or the day of someone else, it just went back to one that was with the Father—the eternal Father from the beginning. And if we have the unction that these people had in that day, when John said, "You have an unction, you have an anointing," and if you just read about where that understanding of revelation comes, about **the foundation of our belief, and that it had its foundation in the earth or, it had its first beginning with the Father, I think it's there, in heaven, back before the world began, then back before man ever came into the earth. It began before man ever sinned, began before the Devil made a decision not to abide in him, became a liar. And that is the beginning of it!**" Irving Ross, Overseer of Ohio & West Virginia, Sunday A.M. meeting, October 26, 1997 – from **Truth Archive**.

"Some have been inclined to wonder about God's continuity of His plan on earth. Let us get this clear, for there is no question of His continuity or plan in heaven, none at all, and neither do we speak about it from the platform. That continuity is left to only poor and feeble human beings. **The continuity of God's plan is from the foundation of the world** and dwells in the heart of God. It was there in Abel's day and in Moses' day — that rock which has followed us was with Christ right through the New Testament to our day. Let's get that clear. Some of us might be inclined to believe there is a human link, but let us say, our father shook hands with our grandfather; and our grandfather shook hands with our great-grandfather, and then our great-grandfather shook hands with someone else, right back to the day of Peter the apostle. Now doesn't that sound weak to think our God would leave His continuity in the hands of poor, sinful men? Yes it is! It has been left in God's heart Himself — in the Father, His Son, and in the Holy Spirit. When God saw fit that the conditions were right, **like in the last century, He brought about the other part of His plan** so that ordinary souls like you and me could hear of His wonderful plan that came from heaven — the place where it has been preserved. It was brought down from heaven — not out of any storage. God uses human vessels and we know that His continuity has been kept safe in heaven...There may have been times when this Work hasn't been as active, but in God's good time He raises up men and women to take the gospel into the entire world. **It was not something that began in this century** but was always in God's heart, His plan of, 'Will you go forth?' There is no need to ever be concerned about human continuity, or whatever expression you want to call it, for we have this continuity of heaven, with heaven revealing its plan as it's always done." **Truth Archive** – Bill Macourt – Williams Conv., Western Australia, 2003.

"The Truth can't be started because it is from the beginning."

"We go back to the beginning." Calvin Casselman, Worker, Boring conv. 1988

"It's from the beginning, planned in God's mind before creation." Walter Nelson, Worker, Post Falls Conv. 1967

"People ask us often times, 'Where did this doctrine start?' It first came to us over 60 years ago. I thought it started in Canada, because the one that brought the gospel to us was from Canada. We had never heard of it before, and we enquired of him, 'Where did you hear this?' He said, 'We heard it from someone that came from Ireland or Scotland.' We listened to that Gospel. 'Where did it start?' **It started in Heaven**, and we are thankful that this Truth came from Heaven that we have accepted today." Clarence Anderson, deceased Worker, Pukekohe Conv., New Zealand, 1986.

"The teachings of the New Testament were started in the first century when God's dear Son was here on earth; that is, those truths were established in a group of believers then...These truths make very clear that what...God's true ministers and Christians believed in, was planned in the heart and mind of God **before the world began**, and we believe the same today. So it is 100% false for anyone to say that what we believe was started in some recent year. Letter by Dan Hilton, deceased Worker, 11/21/89

"Some people ask me, when did our church begin. I tell them, 'From the foundation of the world.' " Overseer from one of the

Southwest states at Marion Wisconsin Conv. about 2000

"Oh no, this way didn't start 95 years ago. It started in the very heart of God." David Leonhardt, Summer 1996

William Cleland who entered the work in 1900, stated: *"It might be a good question to ask those who say they are from the beginning: **Who was ahead of William Irvine?** William Irvine was **entirely** responsible for the creation of this movement. He gathered a few converts around him in Ireland, and he had the idea that he could facilitate the spreading of the gospel by having a few men and women join themselves to him. His ideas of preaching were entirely on his ideas of Matthew 10. And yet, they have the hide to tell one that it went back to time immemorial. It went back to exactly 1899 when the first workers gathered around Bill Irvine"* (**The Secret Sect** by Parker, page 96, Fn 32).

EVASIVE EXPLANATIONS:

Analogies: Seed & Wheat

TTT Editor's NOTE: A comparison of two items is called an *"analogy."* The Bible is full of analogies—a parable is an analogy. Comparisons are extremely useful tools that help illustrate points about a previously unknown idea or concept. The two items being compared must be in the same class; otherwise, the value of an analogy is for illustration purposes only. An analogy cannot disprove historical facts. **Click Here** to learn more about Analogies.

Dan Hilton: "We shall consider three illustrations. First, Gen. 1:12...wheat seed. Wheat has always been wheat. If you were a wheat farmer, and I was a wheat seed merchant and you came to me to obtain a truckload of wheat seed, it would not be necessary for me to put into your hand a historical brochure with a written record of when and where that wheat has been grown in past years in several states and countries of Europe and the near East and **back to the garden of Eden**, for that wheat seed to grow wheat. Every wheat seed is a living historical brochure of wheat clear back to Gen. 1:12.

"And so the spiritual lesson is: Jesus said in Luke 8:11, "The seed is the word of God." The word of God has always been the same seed. Whether anyone believes and receives the seed of the word of God makes no difference in this respect, for God's truth is God's truth if no body believes and receives it or a few do or many do. As with wheat seed, there could have been times in the centuries of time there may have been no wheat seed planted. but it was still wheat seed. And if farmers took wheat out of the granary and planted it again there would be wheat growing and harvested again in the world.

"So it may have been there were times in centuries past if there was no one in the earth believing and receiving the seed of the word of God for a time and then God was able to raise up true ministers like Jesus established to sow the seed of the word of God, then there would be the godly harvest in the world again. It is just that simple certain." **Dan Hilton**, West Coast USA Worker, deceased

* * * * *

"We can't prove that it goes all the way back, but we can't know for sure that it doesn't."

"Look at it like this. I have no idea who my great-great-grandfather was, but I know that he had to exist, because here I am today. We know how life begets life and it is the same spiritually. I do not believe in some form of apostolic succession—that would be like the Catholic church. People might build their faith on that, but I would like to believe that the friends and ministry did come down through history that way." [Eldon Kendrew, Canadian Worker, in personal visit w/John & Shawna Mitchell 6/4/95]

"It's like a seed. No, better yet, it's like your great-grandmother's recipe. You are looking through your great-grandmother's recipe box and you find a recipe for what you think is a cake that she used to always make that was just wonderful and you wonder, "Is this the one?" So you make it and YES! It tastes just exactly the same. It doesn't matter if the recipe has been lost in the box for years and years; you know that it is the recipe for the same cake because it tastes the same." [Eldon Kendrew, Canadian Worker in personal visit w/John & Shawna Mitchell 6/4/95]

"The scripture teaches that God's way began in eternity. The Lord possessed me, speaking of Jesus, in the beginning of His way before His works were. That's what's began, Dale. One of the simplest answers that I can give is that it began when 2 and 2 became 4...That's right. It began with God and it has always been, 2 and 2 have always been 4. And I could go back in my experience, maybe for when I first knew that 2 and 2 was 4, but that's not when 2 and 2 became 4. And I could go back in my mother's experience when it likely first became aware to her that 2 and 2 was 4, but that wasn't when it became 4. So we can go back and we don't have to trace it generation to generation back to the beginning. The fact that we find 2 and 2, 4 today helps me to appreciate that it was in the beginning." [Willis Propp, Alberta, Canada Overseer, April, 1992, visit with Dale & Joyce Wesenberg.]

"It's true that we can trace the fellowship in this land back to the old country, we can go back that far, but I can't go farther back in my memory or the memory of others beyond the twentieth century. I can't go back, but I'm not worried about that at all. We often use this illustration: when we see wheat today that compares with the wheat that is found in the tombs of the Egyptian pharaohs, and it's basically the same though it varies slightly but basically it's wheat the same as it was then. Because it's wheat we don't have to worry about all the generations that brought it to our generation. It's wheat that compares with the original. And this truth produces what this

bible tells us. And you see that everywhere. [Willis Propp, Alberta, Canadian Overseer, April 12, 1992 spoken to Dale and Joyce Wesenberg in Alberta, Canada]

Diversions:

"I am not answering these questions, because I don't believe to do so would profit you. 80 years ago I decided to go forth and preach as Jesus sent the Apostles...I find it more profitable to exercise my mind to seek to abide in Jesus, as said in John 15, rather than tracing the origin of the little streams that made up the river which we have enjoyed travelling on." Letter by George Walker, dated November 27, 1979, deceased Eastern USA Overseer who pioneered the group in America.

"It was before my time, (Ben) Klepzig says, "No one here claims to have started it." Owner of Georgetown, Texas, convention grounds, **The Sunday Sun**, Georgetown, Texas July 14, 1991.

"Personally, I have never been taken up with endless genealogies or other things that Paul warned against in I Tim. 1:3-4. My satisfaction is in the fact that the Lord has given to me all that he has promised." Howard Mooney, Oregon Overseer

"I always say don't criticize unless you have something better to offer. I haven't heard that they have anything better to offer." Mary Hasper, deceased Worker, Bellingham Herald.

"I don't regard it as hidden information. I've known about it for years—what makes you think it has been hidden?" Jim Price, 1990, Texas & SD Worker

"Some friends have asked me about our history. There is no profit in that. That's not what our faith and foundation should be in. The rock of our foundation, the beginning of our faith, is in the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ." Overseer from Michigan, at Hunter North Dakota Conv. about 1998.

It's Not Important (Minimizing Significance):

"It all happened over 100 years ago, how could it matter now?"

"The history of this fellowship isn't doctrine."

"What difference does it make?"

"It isn't relevant today."

"Now why are you worrying about that? You don't need to concern yourself about that at all."

"Well, everything has to begin sometime...."

"So what if the truth came from Greece, Italy or Macedonia to England. What does it matter, the fact is it came, and we are ever so grateful. Why would I waste precious time pondering where they came from and how?"

"There was no reason to tell you! Why would we tell you something like that. It is a matter of faith." Eldon Kendrew to Mitchells 6/4/95

"You sound rather disturbed about something to do with a man called William Irvine. I do believe he served God in sincerity and truth at one time. What happened I've never asked because our life doesn't really revolve round any person but around Jesus...I'm sure your faith isn't built on the rights or wrongs of men but the simple right or truth in Jesus...Don't worry needlessly about things really that don't come into this matter of our salvation." Helen Phimister ([Scotland Worker](#)), Letter dated June 15, 1995

"It doesn't really matter. All that matters is that we are building on the same foundation as Christ, and we know we are." Lorraine Lerwick, Worker

"Irvine's founding role is of little consequence, for we alone follow the true pattern of the original apostles, and the early church." Gordon McNabb (**The Secret Sect**)

Denials & Omissions:

"Some people are saying that some man started our religion. If some man would have started our religion, it would have fallen apart a long time ago. This is NOT made by a man! So get that out of your head!" Frank Porter, 1995

"Oh no, this way didn't start 95 years ago. It started in the very heart of God." David Leonhardt, 1996

"Many men have started many different religions, but this faith that we believe in—we don't know who started it. But keep yourselves sanctified so that if anyone should question you concerning this faith, that you can give them the right answers." Gilbert Richter, Worker Overseer, 1990 Seneca, IL conv.

"I advise you to drop your investigation." Edward Blair to Jim Vail

Q: "How did the first worker get saved? "

A: "That's a good question."

Woman asked one of the older brother workers if he had heard of Wm. Irvine.

The worker: "Well, I don't think I can talk about him..."

The woman: "Well, have you heard of him or haven't you?"

The worker: "I can't hear you very well, my hearing is getting so bad."

"Some have asked when this way first got started. I don't know the answer to that. All I know is that in MY family it started in 1904, when Irvine Weir came to California." Harry Brownlee, Hunter, ND conv., 1995. TTT Editor's Note: **Harry Brownlee's parents, Clyde & Grace**, were the first to profess in the Western USA. His father even went to preach temporarily with Irvine Weir who was in CA without a companion.)

"Q: Would you kindly give me the origin and history of your organisation?"

Ans:. The religious world has passed through many stages of apostasy and reformation, since Christ and His apostles established Christianity upon the earth, but we have no reason to think, nor right to say that God has not at all times been able to preserve a true seed in the world, a seed or people who have always looked beyond form or schism and creed back to the Way and Truth of Christ. Back to Christianity in its purity and simplicity, back to the living Christianity which was very much more than a creed, back to the Christlike humble sacrificing ministry as exemplified in the New Testament apostles, back to a Christianity which refused all conformity to the world.

But (perhaps as a sign that the world is nearing the return of the Lord to the earth) there has in recent years been a very real and distinct turning of the minds and hearts of men and women towards its simplicity and purity of early Christianity. This is undoubtedly attributable to what we may call the modernisation of Christianity, the lack of clear unequivocal preaching of the Gospel of Christ, the tendency of holding only a head belief in Christ, instead of a faith which leads to true discipleship, questionable ways of raising money for religious work, flirtation with the world in its pleasures, sins and fashions, and other things which the Bible says would prevail in the last days.

The foundation and authorship of this movement cannot be attributed to any one man or number of men but is the result of reaching after Truth, during a number of years, of many men. Many no doubt have been unwilling for the sacrifice, when their minds were turned back to the lowly way of Christ, but others have been willing to sacrifice everything in their desire to get back to the simplicity and sincerity of the early Christianity and to lead others to do likewise.

This is our aim—it is heartily welcomed by some but hated by others. This is as simply as I can put the case although our desire to follow the one Lord and to preach his Gospel binds us into a very real fellowship, we have neither any headquarters on earth nor a Headman. Our preachers are all on the same level (as Christ said they should be) and so we desire to be known only as Christians or followers of Christ." [37 Questions & Answers by Overseer of South Australia & New Zealand, **Willie Hughes, April 23, 1931**]

THE RESTORATION THEORY

It was restored, regenerated, restarted, revived, reborn, resurrected, resurfaced, jump-started, raised up again, all of which mean to bring back after an interval or decline.

Irvine's experiment to "restore" or "revive" or "jumpstart" God's true way to earth wasn't a novel or unique approach. During the early 19th century, many other religious leaders embraced the same ideal and goal to restore the primitive New Testament church and return to the faith and practices of the Apostolic Age. This time period in religious history is even known as "**The Restoration Movement**" because of the great number of movements to commence in the 19th century which emphasized the common goal of restoring New Testament Christianity. History books about Christianity recording events in this time period reveal that, far from being unique, Irvine's restoration idea were not uncommon at that time.

STATEMENTS BY WORKERS supporting The Restoration Theory:

Feb, 94: Sharon Williamson, Illinois sister worker, stated in Rockport, IL gospel meeting: "Yes, William Irvine started this way; it was a divine revelation from God. **He was raised up to revive** the truth just like the Word of God was for 400 years..."

Dec 3, 2012 Letter by Lecil Sullivan, MI worker. "You may have heard that this fellowship we cherish so highly was started by certain men in the last 1800s. Let me say assuredly that this fellowship we love so dearly was not started by any man. It is not the work of man. God planned this before He laid the foundation of the world, and in His faithfulness He has kept it the same throughout the ages. It could be disheartening to read some of the Scriptures about times when God's people rebelled against Him, and about how they strayed so far, far from His righteous commandments, times when God's lamp of truth burned very low. However, it is encouraging to find that when they turned to the Lord, and cried to Him in their distress, **he heard them and raised up someone** (He worked through faithful men and women) to deliver them and get them back on the right track. Time and time again this has happened." **Read entire letter.**

1979: Elder worker preached at Olympia convention that "ever so often the 'truth' dies out, and God seeks for another man to **bring it back** into the world."

In 1984 Donald Karnes, Worker, wrote from Germany: "Two outstanding events mark the 20th century: 2 rebirths. First, **the rebirth of the Truth**. God pouring out His spirit upon all flesh. The **resurgence** of His work in the world...Second: the rebirth of the Jewish

nation out of the ruin heaps of Europe. These two events are going on at the same time. "

"I believe it was started from God back **in the very beginning of time**. And between Malachi and Matthew there is no record of God's people, you might say, but I don't feel God's Way was ever done away with. I feel that God has had a way on the earth since before the foundation of the earth. I don't believe William Irvine is the beginner of it."

"Do you know of anyone prior to him?"

"No, I don't." (*Visit with Bea Moonkini, Worker, 1985*)

"In the last writings of John, 60 years after Christ, (when John was 90 years of age, the Gospel, three Epistles and Revelation were all written on the Isle of Patmos just before he died) he gave us a wonderful glimpse into the future. From that time until our day and generation we believe there was a terrible falling away. You wonder if there were many people serving God when Christ came. When He came there was a revival. We are glad in our day and generation there has been **a revival of God's truth in our day**. If there is anything to be thankful for, it's that I am living in this present day and generation in this 20th Century, when God's Way and Truth are established on the earth, and for the most part I think there are more people serving God in His true and living Way today than since Adam and Eve....If He had come in the Dark Ages, there would have been nobody to welcome Him. (**Arnold Brown 1989 York Convention #2**)

"The church had no beginning other than Jesus; and those who follow God can do so by taking up His word again. **The turning back** of the friends and workers to the way of Jesus in the early 1900's was like **the turning back** of Israel to the law of God again."

June, 2002, Paul Sharp spoke of the origins at Walla Walla Convention, calling it a **"regeneration."**

"Wm. Irvine was allowed to **rediscover** what was lost."

"We do not have to prove the fact that this has been in the world since the time of Christ. More of a mistake as I see to try to do so, to prove something that we can't and don't need to. Jesus said, *'By their fruits ye shall know them.'* When you go to a seed shop to buy a packet of seed we don't ask, **'Is this the same as was in the garden of Eden?'** We know that it has to be because seed brings forth after its own kind only. **We have an example of a break, from Malachi to the time of Christ, about 400 years we have no written record of anyone...serving God, no prophet**, but when Christ was to come, then the seed was in the hearts of (4) people needed to **start it again**. For the record, Uncle Willie (Jamieson) was really my Dad's uncle, so my grandfather was his brother. Grandfather told us of the Early Days as would John Hardie tell and also Uncle Willie—but not in mtgs. John in his letters told us of that which was **from the beginning** and he did not try to prove it, as we have to have faith to believe. Hope this is clear and perhaps some little help on the subject." (Ray Jamieson to Paul Abenroth, Sept 3, 1994)

"Just as in the Old Testament times, so in the centuries since, there have been times of seemingly **dormant periods** when "Truth," for different reasons was not there on the surface to be seen. However, the seeds that Jesus has sown have never died out and there are documented [I believe, from reliable sources] of instances through the centuries from different areas of the world, that the way that Jesus planned has never died out."

"Wm. Irvine, George Walker and Irvine Weir were the first to come over to the USA, but they certainly did not "start" what we know as "the truth." They were **"seed bearers"** and that seed came from God, NOT man. Possibly the "good seed" was "in the barn" for a period of time, but we don't really know. There is a record, but it is kept in Heaven, and not in earthly journals.

"Meetings in their current form started somewhere around the turn of the century and are a **rebirth** of the early New Testament church meeting in homes."

"First of all, I will tell you what I teach. I tell people that the Faith is a **continuation of New Testament days**. The word continuation means two things. It can mean there is no break and it also means a break in time no matter how long the break is, if you return to the same thing. We have what was in existence 2,000 years ago. I believe there was a break between N.T. times & today, but the same word & work has been **revived**. A wheat seed can remain on the shelf for 1,000 years and then be planted & grow & it will produce wheat. If someone said there was a continual apostolic succession I doubt if that is accurate, but their statement does not change my salvation and relationship with God. Even if a person lied, that would have nothing to do with the Truth or our salvation. Truth does not have to be in people (although hopefully it always is) because it is in God & in Christ & in his eternal word. In Ps 11:3, if foundations are destroyed, the righteous would have nothing to build on. The temple of Solomon had huge foundation stones laid under the surface and the temple was later burned but likely the foundation stones were still there when the temple was rebuilt in the book of Ezra. We know where to build today because Christ laid the foundation stones & they are still there. **Everett Swanson**, Canadian Worker, communication w/Cindy Brown 1995

Dialogue from a play titled **Outline of the History of a Peculiar People** From 1900-1931 by **Alfred Magowan**:

First Visitor: "They speak of him as **a man raised up**."

Second Visitor: "They trace their spiritual genealogy to him."

First Visitor: "I hear they are doing it now, and many have already given up what they call their old profession, and refer to him as

the beginning of a new order, as Adam was the beginning of human descent.

Second Visitor: *"What fools these mortals be!"*

THE STUMP EXPLANATION

"There has NOT been a continuity from Jesus time until now, but we feel there was a stump left somewhere—but today, there is a tree. God's work may have to go underground again, but there is a tree of fellowship today." **Willie Pollock**, Worker, 1988 Glenn Valley, British Columbia convention.

"I don't want to drop a bombshell on you by saying this—but **there has not always been a tree—not even in the Bible. But we believe that somewhere there has always been a root, a stump of Truth.** We can't explain it. By faith, we accept it. If we need too much explanation, we don't have faith. During the time of the captivity, there was no tree—no true worship and sacrifice. But Daniel prayed toward Jerusalem like a stump. We don't read of any tree during the period of time between the Old and New Testaments, but when Jesus came, we read of six people. It sprouted again. In our day, there is a tree that is flourishing." **Click here to read entire sermon: Willie Pollock**, Worker, 1988 Gilroy #1 CA Conv.

It's like tree roots. They are part of the tree, but are not always visible. The ministry starting up in Ireland was the roots coming above ground that are now visible. The true church started in Jesus' time, but there were periods where there wasn't enough faithful people to be a visible church.

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Various Christian men yearned to restore the church to its original state, and to return to the simple teaching of the Bible alone for the Christians' guide and rule. They believed the church needed more than reform or repair. Various men began working independently of each other toward their goal for the church to return to the essential marks of the primitive New Testament church of the Apostolic Age. They abandoned all man-made creeds, traditions, confessions, teachings and doctrines. They called themselves "*Christians*" only, but did not believe they were the only Christians. They took no name for their teachings, and considered this return to primitive Christianity a movement, not a new denomination or sect.

They were committed to the restoration principle and the maintenance of New Testament Christianity. They were committed to the inspiration and authority of Scripture and their ambition was "*to do Bible things in Bible ways.*" One of their more familiar mottoes was: "*Where the Scripture speaks, we speak; where the scripture is silent, we are silent.*"

The names of some of these men were Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Warren Stone. Their restoration work was the beginning of the three churches known today as The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, and The Church of Christ. For some pioneers, and others who have been prominent in the Restoration Movement, see the Encyclopedia Britannica or <http://www.gotquestions.org/Restoration-movement.html>

The movement started by Wm. Irvine included many of these same principles. Many others began moves back to the basics of Christianity which evolved into churches. The churches differ in their perspective of what particulars in the New Testament church and ministry they chose to emphasize. Like the Two by Two Church, several other religious movements also hold the belief that no one on earth for eighteen centuries has understood the Bible until their particular self-proclaimed leader was "**raised up to restore**" the correct or true interpretation of God's truth, will and way to mankind through his/her personal "revelations."

Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science, claimed the Bible had been so badly distorted by human error and mortal mind that she alone had been inspired by God to "*restore*" its correct interpretation to mankind.

Charles T. Russell, founder of Jehovah's Witnesses, launched an attack against the teachings of Christianity, proclaiming all evangelists, pastors and teachers to be dead wrong; that he alone correctly understood God's will, the long-lost truths of the Bible, and he "*restored*" God's real intent in the Bible to mankind.

Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, claimed to have received one-man "revelations" in which God "*restored*" through him the true gospel of Christ which was not taught for nineteen and a half centuries, making the Worldwide Church of God the one and only true church of God.

Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of The Way International, claimed in the early 1950's that God spoke directly to him and gave him the first accurate knowledge of the Bible since the first century; that true Christianity was lost early in church history, and God gave him the job of "*restoring*" the gospel message today.

Joseph Smith, founder of Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints (Mormons), claimed that every church was corrupt, their creeds an abomination to God, and that he alone had been chosen to "*restore*" Christ's kingdom on earth. Smith claimed God and Jesus both appeared to him, gave him divine revelation, continued to give him progressive revelation, and appointed him as His "prophet." Some of his "revelations" were preserved in books to which the Mormons religiously adhere, along with the Bible.

All these religious leaders claimed that God broke through hundreds of years of silence to speak through each of them and them only at long last. Could it not be appropriately added to the above list:

William Irvine, founder of the church without a name (or of "Christian Conventions"), believed he alone had been divinely anointed to "*restore*" God's true way to earth, claiming every other way, church, ministry and preacher led to a lost eternity, and that the church he founded was God's ONLY true way on earth.

Why is Irvine's self-proclaimed "*revelation*," or experiment more reliable or superior than those of the others? ALL these individuals claimed that they too received a "*revelation*." What makes Irvine's "*revelation*" true and the others supposedly "*false*?"

For the truth about the beginnings, read: **When Did the Two by Two Church Really Begin?**

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