

The first two McGregor's to come from Scotland to the United States were Archibald and Effy McGregor. They migrated from Scotland and settled near the Southern Pines/Pinehurst area of NC in the early 1800s. Archie and Effy adhered to the old Scottish custom of having a big party at about the time of the New Year. Married children all returned home for the event and many neighbors were invited in to participate in the fun of singing and dancing.

This old custom had once been a type of street dance or festival in Scotland, but the church had objected to the merrymaking and it had been moved into homes. Archie would not accept the Gregorian Calendar because it was Catholic and he continued to celebrate Christmas on January 6<sup>th</sup> and New Year's Day on January 11<sup>th</sup>.

It was this practice during the ministry of Rev. Evander McNair which started Archie to have problems with the Session of Cypress Presbyterian church. I want to share with you what is recorded in the Session minutes of the Cypress Church.

March 1834- Archibald McGregor charged with having dancing at his house. Admits the charge but refuses to make acknowledgement and persists in following it. We have suspended him until he shows some signs of repentance.

Dec. 13, 1835- Archibald McGregor (who had been suspended from church privileges the last Sabbath in March 1834 for having dancing carried on at his house) has submitted to the Session and was again restored as a member.

April 28, 1838- Flora McGregor and Mary Cameron were brought before the Session charged with dancing, acknowledges the conflicts and their sorrow in wounding the church of Christ and promise to abandon the practice entirely hereafter.

June 1, 1839- The Session ordered that Archibald McGregor, Effy McGregor, Catherine McGregor and Samuel Johnson be summoned to appear before said Session on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

June 22, 1839- None of the above named persons who were charged with dancing appeared before the Session but Samuel Johnson who acknowledges the charge and promises to guard against dancing hereafter.

Sometime after 1839- Mr. Godfrey McGregor appeared before the Session and made confession of his guilt in violating the rules of the church by dancing at public parties and professed penitence for so wounding the cause of Christ, and promised to abandon the practice hereafter entirely. He was therefore retained as a member of the church as the Session was satisfied with his confession and penitence.

Mr. Archibald McGregor, being invited appeared before the Session and admitted that he had danced at parties and had it carried on at his own house. But would not agree that it was wrong to do so and said he would not agree to quit the practice. The Session resolved therefore that he be cited by the clerk to appear before the Session at our next regular preaching to abide by the decision of the Session.

Archibald McGregor then appeared before the Session and this is what he said. He said, "dancing is part of my heritage and he would observe it as long as he lived. Ye may Session and ye may Session but when New Year's Night comes McGregor will shake his foot and crook his arm."

A lot of people get nervous when churches members start disagreeing with one another. But you know what, church conflicts can be a good thing. Church conflicts can be an important part of spiritual growth for a church. They can be a good thing if church folks remember what unites them. For if church folks remember what unites us, then we can work through whatever disagreements we may have.

The church that Paul writes to in Corinth had a big disagreement within themselves. It seems that some people connected to a woman named Chloe reported to Paul that the church in Corinth was having a big ole church fight. The church in Corinth was a church that Paul started but he had left them on their own and gone off to other places. When Paul hears about this church fight, he writes back to them to give them instructions about how to handle this church fight that they had gotten themselves into. These letters are what we call First and Second Corinthians.

From what Paul writes, it is clear that the members of that church are choosing up sides against one another. Some of the church members are saying that they are followers of Paul. Others are saying that they came to the church later after Paul started the church and that they were followers of Apollos. We read elsewhere that Apollos was a very eloquent preacher. Others say they are followers of Christ but even saying that Paul says is wrong. I guess we can assume that they were saying that they were the only real Christians among the bunch.

We also read this morning that the church members were taking one another to civil court against one another. They couldn't work out their problems among themselves so they were having to turn to the civil courts to find solutions to their conflicts. Paul says that going to the magistrate to solve church conflicts is not the way to go.

Paul tells them that instead of battling out their disagreements in civil court that they are to instead remember what unites them. And what unites them is their common faith in Jesus Christ. The Jesus who lived, the Jesus who was crucified, and the Jesus who was raised on the third day. This faith in Jesus is stronger than anything that they disagree over.

I've always been taught and I believe it that conflicts in marriage are a good thing. Arguments in marriages are a good thing because they show that there is still passion and that both partners care about the relationship.

When do you know a marriage is in trouble? You know a marriage is in trouble when both partners feel too tired by the conflict to fight anymore. A marriage is doomed when one or both partners gives up and refuses to discuss their differences with their partner.

If we are a vital church, then we are going to have disagreements with one another. Differences over style, differences over ideas, and differences over lifestyle choices are nothing to be afraid of. If we are a vital and healthy church, then we will have open and honest conversations with one another and hold one another accountable. Challenge one another but listen to one another.

Recently someone told me that organizations are made up of all kinds of taters.

Some people never seem motivated to participate, but are just content to watch while others do the work.  
They are called "Spec Taters".

Some people never do anything to help, but are gifted at finding fault with the way others do the work.  
They are called "Common Taters".

Some people are very bossy and like to tell others what to do, but don't want to soil their own hands.  
They are called "Dick Taters".

Some people are always looking to cause problems by asking others to agree with them. It is too hot or too cold, too sour or too sweet.  
They are called "Agie Taters".

There are those who say they will help, but somehow just never get around to actually doing the promised help. They are called "Hezza Taters".

Some people can put up a front and pretend to be someone they are not. They are called "Emma Taters".

Then there are those who love others and do what they say they will. They are always prepared to stop whatever they are doing and lend a helping hand. They bring real solutions to the problems before the group. They are called "Sweet Taters".

Conflicts are not a bad thing to have in a church. Conflicts show that people care. The issue in front of churches is not whether or not we have conflicts. Because we do and we will continue to. The issue is: what is a biblical response to resolve the conflicts? How spiritually mature are we?

To be a member of a Christian church is to share a common faith to following the ways of Jesus. Our common faith in Jesus Christ is greater than anything else we talk about. One faith we share with one another. That commitment is more powerful than any disagreement which may arise in the church.

So when conflicts arise, which of these potatoes are you and I going to be? Agie-taters? Common-taters? Emma-taters?

Hessa-taters? Spec-taters? Dick-taters?

Or are we the ones who seek mature solutions to conflicts that arise? Are we the sweet-taters in the group?

Which tater we become is our choice? AMEN.

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-<http://www.funzug.com/index.php/funzug-mails/did-you-knew-about-tater-people.html>

-McGregor family history compiled by Bill & Catherine Faver, Dec. 2001

-Text: I Corinthians 1: 10-18, 3:1-9, 6:1-8

-Given: Jan 23, 2011 in Allison Creek Presbyterian Church (York, SC)