

Answering The Religious Errors Of Our Family, Friends, and Neighbors 1
“Alexander Campbell Started The Church Of Christ!”
Lesson 25

INTRO:

- A. This has been a statement which has been made for years.
1. It use to be heard quite often years ago and those who were members of the church of Christ were referred to as “Campbellites”.
 2. The term is still used today but not as often.
- B. “The early history of this group is identical to that of the Disciples of Christ. They developed from various religious movements in the United States in the early 19th century, especially those led by Barton W. Stone in Kentucky and Thomas Campbell and Alexander Campbell in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.... In 1832 his followers, known as Disciples of Christ, or Christians (nicknamed Campbellites), joined Kentucky “Christians,” followers of Barton W. Stone, to form the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church).” (britannica.com)

“The Disciples of Christ is an American-born religious group formed in 1832 by the merger of the Christian movement led by Barton Stone with the "Reforming Baptists," headed by Thomas and Alexander Campbell....Preaching similar pleas for Christian union and in frequent contact with one another in Kentucky, the Stone and Campbell movements sealed a remarkably successful union in 1832. Alexander Campbell and his followers generally favored the name Disciples of Christ, while the Stone churches continued to use the name Christian Church. Many local congregations were called Churches of Christ. All three names have been used throughout the movement's history....In the census of 1906 the most conservative wing of the movement (which was almost entirely southern) was identified separately and designated the Churches of Christ.” (encyclopedia.com)

“Members of the church of Christ do not conceive of themselves as a new church started near the beginning of the 19th century. Rather, the whole movement is designed to reproduce in contemporary times the church originally established on Pentecost, A.D. 33.” (wikipedia.org)

- C. On the website, christianity.com, is an interesting article entitled: “Churches Of Christ: 10 Things To Know About Their History And Beliefs.
1. The Churches of Christ arose from the Restoration Movement.
 2. The founders believed in adhering solely to the Bible.
 3. The Churches of Christ are autonomous congregations.
 4. There are over 15,000 individual Churches of Christ.
 5. Churches of Christ are governed by a plurality of elders.
 6. Churches of Christ believe in a process of salvation.
 7. Churches of Christ baptize by immersion only.
 8. “A cappella” singing is the only music used in worship.
 9. Churches of Christ have a distinctive plea.
 10. Most members of the Churches of Christ live outside the United States.

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D. Historical Facts:

1. Alexander Campbell was born in Ireland, September 12, 1788.
2. He emigrated to the U.S. with his mother and siblings in 1809 at the age of 21.
3. According to the book **The Eternal Kingdom** by F.W. Mattox, page 326, the Campbell family arrived in Washington, Pennsylvania, September 29, 1809.
4. At a cemetery in Bourbon County, Kentucky can be found a headstone belonging to William Rogers.



- a. This is the epitaph written on the stone:
“BORN IN CAMPBELL CO VA JULY 7, 1784, REMOVED WITH HIS FATHER TO CANE RIDGE BOURBON CO APR 1798. **UNITED WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT CANE RIDGE IN 1807.** DIED FEB 15, 1862 IN THE 78 YEARS OF HIS AGE.”
 - b. This serves as undeniable proof that Alexander Campbell could not have started the church of Christ for there were churches of Christ in existence before Alexander Campbell ever came to this country.
5. By far the most definitive historical fact: There were churches of Christ in existence in the 1st century!
- a. **Romans 16:16** “...*The churches of Christ salute you.*”

I. **WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES HAVE TO SAY CONCERNING ALEXANDER CAMPBELL STARTING THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?**

- A. The church of Christ was founded/built/started by Christ. **Matthew 16:18** “...upon this rock I will build ***my church***...”
1. It is His church by virtue of the fact that He purchased it and the purchase was an extremely high cost. **Acts 20:28** “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd ***the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.***”
 2. The church is His by virtue of the fact that God has made Him the Head of it. **Colossians 1:18** “And ***He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.***”

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- B. The building of the church, as promised by Christ, occurred in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following His resurrection.
1. The first gospel sermon after Christ’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension was preached in **Acts 2:22-36**.
 2. The results of that sermon are read in **Acts 2:37,41,47** “*Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 47 ...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*”
 - a. This is the first time the word “church” is used in the present tense (actually in existence)!
 3. It’s no wonder that nearly 2000 years ago, long before Alexander Campbell, Paul could write, “*The churches of Christ salute you.*”
- C. When Paul told the church at Rome “...*The churches of Christ salute you.*” there were other churches of Christ in existence besides the church in Rome.

CONCLUSION:

- A. No person should belong to a church which has been started by man.
Psalms 127:1 “*Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it;*”
1Timothy 3:15 “*but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*”
Matthew 15:13 “But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.”
- B. Members of the church of Christ are not ‘Cambellites’ but Christians.
Acts 11:26 “...*And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*”
 1. King Agrippa understood what Paul was trying to get him to be: “*Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*” (**Acts 26:28**)