

### *His Love, His Church*

From the book of Genesis to the birth of Christ, 3,959 years go by. From the book of Genesis to the establishment of the church, 3,992 years go by. According to His own perfect schedule, God unfolded His redemptive plan (Galatians 4:4). What a God! What salvation! What a beautiful plan! What love! What a precious church! Yet, how many of us truly appreciate God's place of safety (salvation) that is found in the blood-bought church (Acts 20:28)?

The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John cover thirty-three years and reveal the birth, life, death, and the resurrection of Christ. The book of Acts records the establishment of the church and the spread of Christianity. It covers a period of twenty-nine years. The books of Romans through Revelation cover thirty-four years. These books reveal how Christians are to live and keep the church pure. They also proclaim that the church for which our Lord died will always be victorious.

The Old Testament covers a total of 3,959 years and the New Testament covers a total of 96 years, a total of 4,055 years of God's beautiful story of redemption.

### Summation

God purposed, planned, and designed the church before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3–4; 3:9–12; Galatians 4:4). He allowed His servants, the prophets, to tell of its coming (Daniel 2:44). Jesus promised it was coming (Matthew 16:18). God selected men to prepare for its coming (Matthew 3:1–3). It became a reality in Acts 2:37–47.

The church that our heavenly Father purposed began in AD 33 in the city of Jerusalem, and Jesus was its founder. The church of Christ is called the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:1–2; Ephesians 5:22–32). There is but one church (Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4–6). Jesus is its head (Colossians 1:18) and its savior (Ephesians 5:23).

We will now answer some often-asked questions about the church that was the central subject of God's beautiful story of the Bible, the church of Christ.

# 1

## Founder

### ***Who Established the Church of Christ?***

---

---

*Dear Mr. Butterworth:*

*I went to church with my girlfriend last Sunday night, and her preacher spoke on “The Origin of the Church of Christ.” He believes his church was the one established by Jesus. I spoke to my pastor, and he said that Alexander Campbell started my girlfriend’s church. Joanie gave me your email address, so I’m hoping you can help me understand this. I like her very much, but she is not willing to go to my church.*

*Answer:*

*Thank you for your question. From your study of history, you will recall that Martin Luther, a seventeenth-century priest in the Roman Catholic Church, began to protest some of the church’s doctrines. He set out to clean up that church but, without intending to do so, he formed a group of followers who called themselves “Lutherans.” That was the beginning of what we now call the*

*His Love, His Church*

Reformation Movement. *Many denominations resulted: Methodist, John Wesley in England; Presbyterian, John Knox in Scotland; Baptist, John Smyth in Amsterdam; and many others. So instead of promoting Christian unity, as he intended, Luther generated division. Good men who sought refuge in the movement were disappointed. Some began to say, "Let us go back to the Bible. Let us speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent." So another movement, the Restoration Movement, began almost simultaneously in Scotland, England, America, and other parts of the world. Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander were Presbyterians at the time. Some two decades passed before they saw the wisdom of using only the Bible for guidance in religious matters.*

*The movement to return to the Bible continues today, separate from denominational dogmas and affiliations. I have attached some notes for your review.*

## **Chapter 1: Founder**

### *Who Established the Church of Christ?*

---

#### Purpose

To show that Christ's church began in the first century and has been sustained by those who believe the Bible is our only guide in matters of religion. To show further that neither the Campbells nor any other man founded the church of Christ (Matthew 15:13; 16:18).

#### Scriptures

Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; 4:12  
Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:4; Romans 16:16

#### Challenging Thought

Many people have no direct knowledge of the church of Christ, so they believe what they have been told. Much of that “information” is derived from biased sources.

---

#### What Does the Bible Say About The Founding of the Church of Christ?

- God determined from the beginning that the church would become a reality (Ephesians 1:3–4; 3:9–11).
- God put His words into the mouths of inspired men, prophets who told of the coming of the church (Jeremiah 1:9; Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 2:1–4).
- Jesus promised that He would build that very church (Matthew 16:18).
- God chose John to prepare people for the coming of that church (Matthew 3:1–3).

### *His Love, His Church*

- The church of Christ was purchased by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28).
- Christ's church became a reality on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, in the year AD 33 (Acts 20:28; 2:37–47).
- That one church is the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:9; Ephesians 5:22–32), and she wears His name (Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26).

### Who Started the Church of Christ?

It is not unusual when referencing “Church of Christ” on the internet to find some who attribute its origin to Alexander Campbell. At one time, many people believed and taught that. However, the unfolding of historical events has shed light on the matter. Religious teachers now know that Alexander Campbell did not come to America until September 1809. Churches of Christ were already in existence in America by then. Besides that, Campbell was not affiliated with churches of Christ for more than two decades after coming to America. He began his ministry in the Presbyterian church. He left that denomination in 1812 and became affiliated with the Baptists. In 1829, seventeen years after his transition to the Baptist church, Campbell became a member of the church of Christ.

### Not “Campbellites”

In 1850 Alexander Campbell addressed a joint session of Congress on “Divine Philosophy.” His text was John 3:16. Because of Campbell's political genius, scholarly ability, and prominence in religious circles, some began to refer to members of the church of Christ as *Campbellites*. Those who continue that practice today are carrying the baggage of yesteryear. Historians now know that none of the doctrines of the church of Christ originated with Campbell.

God has never authorized any man to start a church, and members of the church of Christ have never claimed

*Founder: Who Established the Church of Christ?*

allegiance to Campbell. Whatever Campbell taught, wrote, or practiced—or did not teach, write, or practice—has absolutely nothing to do with our allegiances. Members of churches of Christ look only to the New Testament for their authority in religious matters (Colossians 3:17). We are Christians, not “Campbellites” (Acts 4:12).

**Jesus Started the Church of Christ**

The one true blood-bought church was established in AD 33 in Jerusalem, and yes, that was done by Jesus Christ. The church of the Bible was purchased by the blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28) and was called the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Those facts are obvious to all Bible believers. Christ’s one church can easily be identified in the Bible by the following characteristics:

1. The place of its beginning: Jerusalem (Acts 2).
2. The time of its beginning: in the days of the Roman kings (Daniel 2:44; Luke 2:1; Acts 2).
3. The terms of admission: faith that leads to repentance and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37–47).
4. The God-given organization: congregationally organized with bishops and deacons (Philippians 1:1).
5. The way it worships: in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24; Revelation 22:9).
6. Its allegiance to Christ by the way it is referenced in God’s word: Church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

These six things prove beyond dispute that the church of Christ became a reality more than 1700 years before Alexander Campbell was born. The truth is, Jesus established the church of Christ!

Consider the following questions.

1. Since the church of Christ existed in the first century, how could Campbell have started it (Romans 16:16)?

*His Love, His Church*

2. Since the Bible teaches that Jesus is the head of His church, how could Campbell have started it (Colossians 1:18)?
3. Since saved people, 1700 years before Campbell, were added to the church Jesus established on Pentecost in the first century, how could Campbell have started the church in the nineteenth century (Acts 2:37–47)?
4. Since Jesus is the founder of the church of Christ, how can Campbell be (Matthew 16:18)?
5. Since the church is referred to as the church of Christ, how could Campbell have begun it (Romans 16:16)?
6. Since the church of Christ was fully paid for by the blood of Christ, how did Campbell contribute to its origin (Acts 20:28)?
7. Since the church of Christ is the bride of Christ, how can it also be the bride of Campbell (2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 21:2, 9)?
8. Since Jesus is the savior of the body, which is His church, does it also need Campbell as its savior (Ephesians 5:23)?
9. Since the church was begun by Jesus, and He supplied all the teaching, what doctrinal points were left for Campbell to supply? The origin of no doctrinal matter in the church of Christ can be traced to Campbell (1 Peter 4:11; 2 Timothy 1:13).

Which of the following did Campbell give the church of Christ?

1. Its way to worship God
2. Its organization
3. Its terms of admission
4. Its mission
5. Its purpose
6. Its doctrine

*Founder: Who Established the Church of Christ?*

Not one of them. God authorized these things when Jesus founded His church in Jerusalem in the year AD 33. *Campbell is not the founder of the church of Christ!*

Can we just be logical for a moment? If I were to say, "All the Jack's hamburger restaurants in Alabama salute you," does that include Kentucky Fried Chicken stores and Starbucks coffee shops? Absolutely not! Then why do people believe that Paul said, "All denominations salute you," when he actually said, "All the churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16)?

Does the church of Christ belong to Christ or Campbell (Matthew 16:18)?

### Questions

True or false

- 1.\_\_\_\_ Campbell preached his first sermon in Jerusalem in the year AD 33.
- 2.\_\_\_\_ The church of Christ existed before Campbell was born.
- 3.\_\_\_\_ Romans 16:16 says, "The churches of Alexander Campbell salute you."
- 4.\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the founder of the church of Christ.
- 5.\_\_\_\_ Jesus is the head of the church of Christ.
- 6.\_\_\_\_ The Bible teaches that the church of Christ belongs to Campbell.
- 7.\_\_\_\_ The Bible teaches that the church of Christ existed in the first century.

Fill in the blanks

1. The church of Christ was \_\_\_\_\_ by the blood of Christ.
2. That one church is the bride of \_\_\_\_\_, and she wears His \_\_\_\_\_.



*His Love, His Church*

3. \_\_\_\_\_ did not come to America until September 1809.
4. List three verses that call the church the bride of Christ. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Reference the verse that says Jesus promised to build His church. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Reference the verse in Daniel that prophesied the time the church would be established. \_\_\_\_\_
7. There is not one thing the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ teaches or practices that originated with \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The church of Christ became a reality on the day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Did God determine from the beginning that the church would become a reality? \_\_\_\_ Give scripture reference: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Saved \_\_\_\_\_ were added to the church of Christ in the \_\_\_\_\_ century (Acts 2:37–47).
11. Give the simple and direct answer to the question for this lesson. \_\_\_\_\_

# 2

## Creed

### ***What Is the Creed of the Church of Christ?***

---

---

*Dear Mr. Butterworth:*

*I recently visited a church of Christ for the first time. I was pleasantly surprised by the openness and friendliness of the members. I spoke at length to one of the elders. I asked for a copy of the church creed, but he told me they didn't have one. I failed to ask him when they would replenish their supply. So meanwhile, will you please send me a copy of your creed book?*

*Answer:*

*Thank you for the inquiry. And I am really glad you had an opportunity to attend worship with a church of Christ. Regarding the church creed, the elder didn't mean their supply was exhausted. He meant that churches of Christ do not have a man-made creed. That seems strange to many, but read the material I've attached and you will understand.*