

## Christian Churches and Churches of Christ

1. An undenominational fellowship that emerged from a **Restorationist Movement**:
  - a. On American frontier, at end of 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - b. A Christian unity movement, reacting against the divisive sectarianism and authoritarianism of that time
  - c. Prominent leaders:
    - i. Barton Stone (KY);
    - ii. Thomas & Alexander Campbell (PA);
    - iii. Walter Scott (PA & OH)
  
2. Doctrinal Principles:
  - a. Careful adherence to New Testament teachings as supreme authority
  - b. Preference to follow examples of 1<sup>st</sup> century church practices, as approved by NT, rather than subsequent church traditions
    - i. Allow considerable liberty and diversity in matters not essential to the faith (e.g., non-political)
    - ii. Autonomous congregations (no denominational hierarchy)
    - iii. Congregation led by Elders and served by Deacons (not a sole-pastor leader)
  - c. Key consequent teachings and practices:
    - i. Acceptance to membership solely on basis of a confession of Christ, and baptism (e.g., no “creed”, no panel review)
    - ii. Baptism is the immersion of an individual who has confessed faith in Christ (Romans 6:1-6)
    - iii. Observance of the Lord’s Supper is central to worship, and should thus be practiced every Lord’s Day (Acts 2:42)
  - d. Some distinguishing doctrines, relative to other “Evangelical” Christians:
    - i. Gifts of the Spirit are for service, to edify the church, and are not indicative of higher spirituality; fullness of the Spirit is rather indicated by the fruit (Gal 5:22)
    - ii. We are saved by grace, not by works (Eph 2:8-10)
    - iii. Salvation is, however, contingent upon abiding “in Christ”, and we must take seriously the warnings to not fall away from Him (John 15, Matt 7:21-23, Heb 6:4-6, etc)
    - iv. “Predestination” applies corporately, to the body of Christ; therefore individually to those who have united with Him and His body. Salvation is therefore available for any individual, and depends upon a free decision of faith and repentance.

## **Key Principles of the Movement:**

- Christianity should not be divided, Christ intended the creation of one church (John 17).
- Creeds divide, but Christians should be able to find agreement by standing on the Bible itself (from which they believe all creeds are but human expansions or constrictions).
- Ecclesiastical traditions divide, but Christians should be able to find common ground by following the practice (as best as it can be determined) of the early church.
- Names of human origin divide, but Christians should be able to find common ground by using biblical names for the church (i.e., "Christian Church", "Church of God" or "Church of Christ" as opposed to "Methodist" or "Lutheran", etc.).

## **Slogans of the Restoration Movement**

- "The church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one."
- "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."
- "We are Christians only, but not the only Christians."
- "In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things love."
- "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine."