

# The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

## ~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1801 Barton W. Stone, a Presbyterian, was the leader of a revival at Cane Ridge, KY, that attracted thousands of people for 6 or 7 days and nights. He later formed a new group which took the Bible as its only creed and called itself simply the Christian Church.
- 1807 Reverend Thomas Campbell, a minister of the Secession branch of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland came to the United States.
- 1809 Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander Campbell, established an organization called the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania. It issued a "declaration and address."
- 1810 The Campbells and their associates organized the first church of the Christian Association of Washington. They met at Cross Roads and Brush Run, in Washington County, Pennsylvania. In 1812, Alexander Campbell became minister of the church at Brush Run.
- 1830 Alexander Campbell's congregation had joined an association of Particular Baptists but separated from them by 1830, at which time he formed the independent Disciples of Christ, or Reformers.
- 1832 In Lexington, Kentucky, a new organization formed, a sort of merger between the Campbells' group and the one which had been formed by Barton W. Stone.
- 1839 State conventions and societies began to meet.
- 1840 Alexander Campbell founded Bethany College, now in West Virginia.
- 1849 The first national convention of the Disciples was held. They organized their first missionary society.
- 1865 Prior to the Civil War, the movement expanded rapidly in the Middle West, with congregations forming throughout Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. The Civil War brought about general disorganization in these areas which affected the group.
- 1866 The death of Alexander Campbell drained the movement of some of its enthusiasm, but it recovered and went into a period of rapid expansion.

"Among the dozen largest religious groups in the United States, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) might be called the most American; it was born on the nineteenth-century American frontier out of a deep concern for Christian unity."

-- *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 1995.

The four pioneers of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) were all from Presbyterian backgrounds: *Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott*. In 1832, the followers of the Campbells made an effort to unite with Barton Stone's group in Kentucky. When the question arose as to the name to be adopted, the Campbells preferred the name *Disciples* while Mr. Stone favored *Christians*. Since no definite action was taken, both names were used. At the present time, the body is known usually and officially as the *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*.

A whole new design of organization was adopted at Kansas City in 1968. The whole church works under a representative government composed of local, regional, and general. The local church is still the basic unit. Each congregation manages its own affairs and keeps its records.

## ~ Records, Resources ~

Prior to 1880, all records were kept only in the local congregations. Some of these older records have been transferred to church archives. Local congregations are still charged with keeping records.

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## ~ Bibliography ~

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