

Work and Worship of the Church

Eph 4:11-13 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

for the edifying of the body of Christ – KJV, NKJV
Thayer -- the act of one who promotes another's
growth

Thus, spreading the gospel is clearly the work of the
church and its members

Mat 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of
all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the
Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20)
teaching them to observe all that I commanded
you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end
of the age."

Church growth, in every respect, is the responsibility of the church.

648 “Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today. He has no feet but our feet to lead men in his way.”

Within the U.S., membership in the Churches of Christ has grown by approximately 2% over the period from 1980 through 2007. Membership grew in 33 states and declined in 17. The current retention rate of young adults graduating from high school appears to be approximately 60%. The percentage of members attending services appears to be high relative to that of other Christian groups. Membership is concentrated, with 70% of the U.S. membership in 13 states. - Wikipedia

Freshman enrollment trends at Christian universities

Christian is used in the sense of universities accepting contributions from churches of Christ

Year	Total freshmen	Church of Christ freshmen	Percentage of total
2000	6,643	4,411	66.4%
2003	6,164	4,034	65.4%
2006	6,331	4,029	63.6%
2009	5,361	2,858	53.3%
2011	5,564	2,796	50.3%
2012	5,524	2,651	48.0%
2013	5,689	2,540	44.6%
2014	5,576	2,565	46.0%
2015	5,533	2,277	41.2%
2016	5,616	2,405	42.8%
2017	5,603	2,177	38.9%

SOURCE: Lipscomb researcher Trace S. Hebert's study reports on freshman enrollment trends in 14 universities associated with Churches of Christ. The universities supply the figures to Hebert on the condition that he not release individual institutions' figures.

Three quarters of the congregations and 87% of the membership are described by The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement as "mainstream", sharing a general consensus on practice and theology - Wikipedia

There are 4 subcategories

The largest of these four categories is the "non-institutional" Churches of Christ. This group is notable for opposing congregational support of institutions such as orphans homes and Bible colleges. Similarly, non-institutional congregations also oppose the use of church facilities for non-church activities (such as fellowship dinners or recreation); as such, they oppose the construction of "fellowship halls", gymnasiums, and similar structures. In both cases, opposition is based on the belief that support of institutions and non-church activities are not proper functions of the local congregation. Approximately 2,055 congregations fall in this category - Wikipedia

A recent front page article in a “Christian Church” publication lamented the fact that the number of converts was dropping precipitously. (1/19)

In 2007 the Disciples of Christ reported a 29% drop from 1997 and in 2017, the number had dropped to 48% of the 1997 number – to 411,140, however only 139,936 actually attended on Sunday

"The Disciples have lost about 77 percent of their membership since their high point in —1964 a higher percentage than any other mainline denomination,"

Why?

The writer of the article in the “Christian Church” publication thought it was because of a lack of knowledge of the Bible and the ability to teach someone else what to do to be saved.

I think it goes beyond that.

The number of people in the church who believe that the Bible is not inerrant and infallible has risen.

The denominations around us teach this unceasingly.

Think about questions such as baptism, salvation by the sinner's prayer, instrumental music, once saved always saved.

2Pe 3:15-17 and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, (16) as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. (17) You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,

	Baptist Church	Methodist Church	Catholic Church	Presbyterian Church
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baptism	no	no	yes	no
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salvation by the sinner's prayer	yes	yes	no	yes
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instrumental music	yes	yes	yes	yes
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once saved always saved	yes	yes	maybe	maybe
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women preachers	maybe	yes	no	maybe
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women pastors	yes	yes	no	yes
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	Bible	
baptism	1Pet 3.21	saves
salvation by the sinner's prayer	Acts 9.9, 11; 22.16	still in sin
instrumental music once saved	Eph 5.19; Col 3.16	sing
always saved	1Jn 1.6 Rev 2.10	faithful til death
women preachers	1Tim 2.12	can't teach in church
women pastors	1Tim 3.2	husband of one wife

All of these churches in official statements of doctrine claim to believe the Bible to be inerrant and infallible, but none of these churches practice what they claim to believe!

The doctrines of the Baptists, Methodists, Catholics and Presbyterians all contradict each other and the Bible!

What are we to conclude? They don't believe the Bible!

They are all nice people (with a few exceptions).

They all believe they are going to heaven!

Few of them want to change – they like their church!

Many of them are our relatives!

The root cause of our young people falling away – they haven't learned that unless you do God's will, you are going to be lost!

Does that mean that members of the church of Christ are the only ones who are going to be saved?

Not if you think of it like a denomination.

Only those who obey God are going to be saved!

Mat 16:16-18 Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (17) And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. (18) And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus will build His church – not on Peter (the little pebble Gr *petros* masculine) but on his confession “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (the big rock Gr *petra* feminine)

Luk 6:46 "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,'
and do not do what I say?"

Jesus is finishing a parable and he speaks of how it
will be in his kingdom – his church!

Mat 13:33 He spoke another parable to them, "The
kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman
took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all
leavened." (34) All these things Jesus spoke to the
multitudes in parables, and He did not speak to
them without a parable,

Act 2:38-41 ... "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) "For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself." ... (41) So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Act 2:47 praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

KJV -- church

Jesus said He would build “his church.”

Only one church – and wherever the local church disagrees with the Bible, it is not “His church.”

That might seem harsh to some of you, but there is only one true church.

It belongs to Jesus Christ and none of its doctrines are from men!

1Co 1:10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Eph 4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

It appears to me that the reason for the decrease among the non-institutional brethren is they are so worried about doctrinal purity (and they should be) that they have forgotten to “go into all the world and preach the gospel.”

On the other hand, “mainline churches of Christ” have not only forgotten to “go into all the world”, they are so busy entertaining their children and each other, they have forgotten the purity of their doctrine.

non-institutional congregations also oppose the use of church facilities for non-church activities (such as fellowship dinners or recreation); as such, they oppose the construction of "fellowship halls", gymnasiums, and similar structures. In both cases, opposition is based on the belief that support of institutions and non-church activities are not proper functions of the local congregation. -- Wikipedia

Where is the authority for these things being done in “mainline churches” – there isn’t any, but the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Catholics all have them – so the cry is if we don’t do these things the denominations will steal our children!

Remember the slide on members of the church attending the colleges these brethren support from their treasuries. Between 2000 and 2017, the number of members entering the freshman class dropped 50% -- only 2,000 out of 6,600 places are occupied by those who are members of the church.

What sets the church of Christ apart from the denominations is the appeal Thomas Campbell made, “We speak where the Bible speaks and we are silent where the Bible is silent.”

Col 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Do you want to be a part of the church Jesus
established?

The one built on God's word only?

Jesus will add you to His church if you are willing to
obey Him – but not if you want to follow men.

Act 22:16 'And now why do you delay? Arise, and
be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on
His name.'