

Restoration Churches: Churches of Christ; Disciples of Christ/Christian Church

The Churches of Christ is a non-denominational Christian movement with a global presence.

- **Origins: The Churches of Christ** emerged from the Restoration Movement of the 19th century, a movement that sought to restore Christianity to its original form as practiced by the early church.
- **Origins: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).** In 1832, several groups merged and adopted the name "Disciples of Christ."
- **Key Figures:** Prominent figures in the Restoration Movement included Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, and Barton W. Stone.
- **Membership:** The Churches of Christ have an estimated global membership of over 2 million. Disciples of Christ have an estimated membership of over 700,000.

More info: <https://church-of-christ.org/>. <https://disciples.org/our-identity/>.

Core Beliefs:

- **Bible as Sole Authority:** The Bible is considered the sole authority for faith and practice.
- **One Church:** They believe that Jesus Christ established one church, and that divisions among Christians are not God's will.
- **Importance of Baptism:** Believers' baptism by immersion is considered essential for salvation.
- **Simplicity in Worship:** Worship services are typically simple and unadorned, with a focus on a cappella singing (Church of Christ), prayer, and the preaching of the Word.

Differences from Other Protestant Churches:

- **Emphasis on Restoration:** The focus on restoring the practices of the early church distinguishes them from many other Protestant denominations.
- **Acapella Worship (Church of Christ):** Most Churches of Christ do not use musical instruments in worship, believing this practice is not supported by the New Testament.
- **Emphasis on Christian Unity:** A strong emphasis on restoring Christian unity and overcoming denominational divisions.
- **Focus on Practical Christianity (Disciples of Christ):** A strong emphasis on living out one's faith through service to others and engagement in social justice issues.

Practices and Rituals:

- **Worship Services:** Services typically include a cappella singing (Church of Christ), prayer, the Lord's Supper (communion), and a sermon.
- **Bible Study:** Bible study is a central part of the life of the church.
- **Evangelism:** Active in sharing their faith with others.
- **Baptism (Disciples of Christ):** Believers' baptism by immersion is practiced.
- **Social Justice Advocacy (Disciples of Christ):** Active involvement in social justice issues through advocacy, volunteer work, and community outreach.

Leadership Structure:

- **Congregational (Church of Christ):** Each congregation is autonomous and led by a group of elders (unpaid leaders).
- **No Central Authority (Church of Christ):** There is no central governing body or hierarchy within the Churches of Christ.
- **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):** A national organization that provides support and resources to local congregations but does not have a hierarchical structure.

Main Symbols:

- **The Cross:** The cross remains a central symbol of Christian faith.
- **The Bible:** As the sole authority for faith and practice, the Bible holds a central place in their beliefs and worship.
- **The Open Bible (Disciples of Christ):** Symbolizing the importance of Scripture in their faith and practice.