

Did Alexander Campbell Start The Church Of Christ?

By Jarrod Jacobs

When discussing the church of Christ with others, we sometimes hear the comment made that the church of Christ was started by Alexander Campbell. Mr. Campbell was a well-known preacher in America in the 1800's; but did he start the church of Christ, or any other church for that matter? The short answer is no. Unfortunately, the teaching that Mr. Campbell established a church is made because people do not know the simple teaching of the New Testament concerning the church.

To begin, please understand that Alexander Campbell could not have started the church of Christ. This is because folks who lived in the first century, like Mary, Peter, James, John, Phoebe, and Paul were among the members of it (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 16:1-16; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 1:9). Saved people have been added to the Lord's church since it began on the Pentecost following the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2:47). To this day, all those who submit to the Lord's plan of salvation continue to be added to it! Alexander Campbell did not live in the first century. Nor did he die to purchase a church (Acts 20:28). Mr. Campbell lived from 1788 to 1866. In other words, he was born almost 1800 years after the Lord's church was established in Acts 2. Therefore, he did not start the Lord's church. Nor did he start the church on this continent. He did not start any church.



Have you been to Paris, Kentucky and visited the Cane Ridge meeting house? If not, you need to go there and look at one of the grave markers in the cemetery. In the cemetery, you will find the grave marker of Mr. William Rogers. Mr. Rogers' headstone looks like many others of that era except for the inscription found upon it. William Rogers' headstone reads as follows: "Born in Campbell Co., Va., July 7, 1784, removed with his father to Cane Ridge, Bourbon Co., April 1793. United with the Church of Christ at Cane Ridge in 1807."

A significant date mentioned on this headstone is 1807. This date is significant because 1807 was two years before Alexander Campbell came to America from Ireland. 1807 is three years before Campbell preached his first sermon in America. How could Alexander Campbell have started the church of Christ if William Rogers was already in it in 1807?



Further, in Celina, TN, there is a church of Christ who can trace the congregation's beginning back to 1805. If Mr. Campbell started the church of Christ, how could this church have already been in existence? Mr. Campbell wasn't even in America at the time! The answer of course is that it is possible because Mr. Campbell didn't

start the church of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The church of Christ began in this country when Christians came here simply preaching and teaching about the church found in the Bible! As was noted above, such things happened long before Alexander Campbell was in this land.

Mr. Campbell did much in his life to spread the gospel, but there is nothing the church of Christ does or practices that had its beginning with Mr. Campbell, or any other man (Gal. 1:6-9). The church of Christ follows what Christ has revealed in the New Testament (Jn. 12:48).