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**“Come, Let Us Reason Together About the Church”**  
**What Is the Church of the New Testament?**  
**Bible Study Series**

*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”—(Matthew 16:18)*

**LESSON TEN — How Do Churches Compare to the New Testament Church?**

**Part 3. Non-Denominational Churches**

*Estimated Reading Time: 30 - 35 minutes*

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**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
**Churches of Christ**  
**Independent “Non-Denominational” Churches**  
**“New Age” Churches**  
**“Cowboy Churches”**

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**The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) emerged from the same Restoration Movement that gave rise to the churches of Christ. However, over time, it has adopted doctrines and practices that deviate from the original New Testament pattern. While some congregations remain closer to biblical principles, many have embraced modern theological and cultural shifts that move away from the doctrine of Christ.

**Origin and Development**

The Disciples of Christ officially formed in 1968 as a denomination, though its roots go back to the early 1800s with leaders like Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone. These men called for the restoration of New Testament Christianity, rejecting creeds and denominationalism.

However, over time the Disciples of Christ embraced theological liberalism, open fellowship with denominations, and denominational structure—practices not found in the New Testament.

 *Contrast:* The church Jesus established began in Acts 2, with no denominational label or headquarters (Acts 2:47; Philippians 1:1).

**Key Distinctive Doctrines and Practices**

**1. Denominational Structure and Ecumenism**

The Christian Church (DoC) now functions as a mainline Protestant denomination with a General Assembly, national leadership, and structured bureaucracy. It actively participates in ecumenical

movements and encourages open communion with all professing Christians, regardless of doctrinal differences.

▼ *Departure:* The New Testament church was autonomous, with each congregation led by local elders—not a national or global council (Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1–2).

## 2. Instrumental Music in Worship

Most Disciples of Christ churches use instrumental music, a practice absent from the New Testament church. Singing is the only musical form of worship authorized in the early church (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

▼ *Departure:* The use of instruments in worship introduces human innovation where God has not spoken (1 Corinthians 4:6).

## 3. Women in Leadership

DoC congregations commonly ordain women as elders, pastors, and even denominational leaders. This stands in contrast to the apostolic instruction regarding the roles of men and women in the assembly.

▼ *Departure:* Paul taught that leadership in the church is limited to qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12; Titus 1:5–9).

## 4. Open Fellowship and Doctrinal Compromise

The Disciples of Christ encourage unity with all denominations, even where significant doctrinal disagreements exist (e.g., baptism, authority of Scripture, moral issues). This unity is based on shared belief in Christ rather than full obedience to the gospel.

▼ *Departure:* New Testament unity was based on common doctrine and obedience to the faith (1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 John 9–11).

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## Conclusion: A Movement That Drifted from Its Restorative Goal

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) began with a noble desire to restore biblical Christianity. But over time, it embraced cultural and doctrinal shifts that have compromised its faithfulness to New Testament teaching.

“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?” (Galatians 5:7)

While some Disciples congregations may retain closer ties to Scripture, the denominational body no longer mirrors the church Jesus established in Acts 2.

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## Churches of Christ

The **Churches of Christ** claim to be the restoration of the church that Christ established in the first century, as described in the New Testament. Their goal is to return to the teachings and practices of the early church by rejecting man-made traditions and creeds and adhering strictly to the authority of the Scriptures. But how does this modern-day fellowship compare to the **church described in the New Testament**?

Let us look at several key areas of comparison:


### 1. Name and Identity

#### New Testament Church:

The church in the New Testament was referred to by names that gave glory to God and Christ. These included “the church of God” (1 Corinthians 1:2), “churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16), and “the body of Christ” (Ephesians 1:22-23). The church was never identified by the name of a human founder or a man-made doctrine.

#### Churches of Christ:

Congregations today that identify as “Churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16) do so believing it is a scriptural designation that honors Christ, the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). This name is used not as a denominational label, but as a description of who the church belongs to—Christ Himself.

 **Conclusion:** The name “Church of Christ” is consistent with the New Testament pattern.


### 2. Origin and Establishment

#### New Testament Church:

The church was established on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus, in Jerusalem, around A.D. 33 (Acts 2:1-47). Peter preached the first gospel sermon, and about 3,000 souls were added to the Lord’s church (Acts 2:41, 47).

#### Churches of Christ:

The Churches of Christ did not originate with a human founder in recent centuries, though historically they emerged from the **Restoration Movement** in the early 19th century. Leaders like **Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone**, and others sought to abandon denominational creeds and return to the Bible alone. The goal was not to start a new church, but to **restore** the original New Testament church in doctrine and practice.

 **Conclusion:** While the visible re-emergence of the Churches of Christ as a distinct group occurred in the 1800s, their aim has been to replicate the church that began in Acts 2.

### 3. Organization and Leadership

### **New Testament Church:**

Each congregation in the New Testament was autonomous (independent), overseen by a plurality of elders (also called bishops or pastors) and served by deacons (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9). There was no earthly headquarters or hierarchy beyond the local congregation.

### **Churches of Christ:**

Congregations of the Churches of Christ follow this same pattern. Each church is independently governed by elders when qualified men are present, with deacons serving under them. There is no denominational headquarters. Christ is recognized as the only head of the church (Ephesians 5:23).

✔ **Conclusion:** The Churches of Christ follow the same organizational pattern as the New Testament church.

## **4. Doctrine and Authority**

### **New Testament Church:**

The early church continued “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” (Acts 2:42). They rejected additions to the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9) and were warned not to go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6). Scripture was the sole authority in matters of faith and practice.

### **Churches of Christ:**

Churches of Christ teach that the Bible is the final authority in all matters of doctrine. They do not follow any human creed, catechism, or denominational manual. They emphasize the need to speak “where the Bible speaks” and be silent “where the Bible is silent” (cf. 1 Peter 4:11; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

✔ **Conclusion:** Churches of Christ align with the New Testament principle of Bible-only authority.

## **5. Worship Practices**

### **New Testament Church:**

The New Testament church met on the first day of the week (Sunday) to worship (Acts 20:7). Their worship included teaching, prayer, giving, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, and singing (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19).

### **Churches of Christ:**

In worship, Churches of Christ follow the New Testament pattern. On Sundays, they partake of the Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7), give as prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2), pray (Acts 2:42), teach God’s word (Acts 20:7), and sing without the use of mechanical instruments (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), as no such instruments are authorized in New Testament worship.

✔ **Conclusion:** The worship practices of the Churches of Christ closely follow the New Testament example.

## 6. Plan of Salvation

### New Testament Church:

In the book of Acts, people were taught the gospel (Romans 10:17), believed in Jesus (Mark 16:16), repented of their sins (Acts 2:38), confessed Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). Baptism was immersion (Romans 6:4) and necessary for salvation (1 Peter 3:21).

### Churches of Christ:

Churches of Christ teach the same plan of salvation. They emphasize that one must **hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized** in order to be saved—exactly as outlined in the New Testament. Baptism is taught as essential and not merely symbolic (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).

✔ **Conclusion:** The plan of salvation taught by the Churches of Christ mirrors that of the New Testament church.

## 7. Christian Living and Faithfulness

### New Testament Church:

Christians were exhorted to remain faithful, live holy lives, and grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18; Revelation 2:10). The church was composed of those who continued to walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

### Churches of Christ:

Members of the Churches of Christ are taught to live faithfully and remain obedient to the Lord throughout life. Restoration of fallen Christians is pursued (Galatians 6:1), and continued fellowship with God is promised to those who walk in His truth (1 John 1:6-9).

✔ **Conclusion:** Churches of Christ maintain the New Testament emphasis on faithful Christian living.

### Final Thoughts

The **Churches of Christ** do not claim to be a new denomination or merely one among many valid expressions of Christianity. Rather, they seek to be **the church of the New Testament in practice, teaching, worship, and organization**. While human shortcomings exist, the goal remains to restore the simplicity and purity of the first-century church, giving Christ alone the preeminence (Colossians 1:18).

Just as the Lord added the saved to His church in Acts 2:47, Churches of Christ today invite all to come to Christ through obedience to the gospel and be part of His body—the church that belongs to Him.

## Independent “Non-Denominational” Churches

In recent decades, many churches have begun identifying as “**non-denominational**,” distancing themselves from traditional labels like Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian. This movement is often driven by a sincere desire to **follow the Bible** rather than human traditions. And in some cases, it reflects a growing dissatisfaction with denominational bureaucracy, creeds, or institutional compromise.

On the surface, these churches may seem very similar to the New Testament church—but as we look closer, many of them **still fall short of restoring the pattern** laid out in Scripture. What begins as a movement toward biblical Christianity can often result in **man-made variation** when the New Testament is not fully followed.

Let’s take a closer look at this growing trend and compare it to the church revealed in the Bible.

### Overview and Philosophy

Non-denominational churches typically:

- Emphasize **personal faith in Jesus Christ**
- Downplay or reject **creeds and denominational hierarchies**
- Seek to be known simply as “Christians” or “a Bible-believing church”
- Often appeal to the unchurched or religiously disillusioned

These are good instincts. After all, the early church wore **no denominational name**, followed **no human creeds**, and sought unity in **Christ alone**:

“Now I plead with you, brethren... that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together...” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

However, the desire to avoid denominationalism does **not guarantee** faithfulness to the Word. In fact, many independent churches still depart from the New Testament pattern in **organization, worship, and doctrine**.

### Common Departures from New Testament Teaching

#### 1. Instrumental Music in Worship

One of the most common differences is the use of **instrumental music** in worship—bands, sound systems, praise teams, or full orchestras.

Yet, in the New Testament, **worship music was vocal and spiritual**, not mechanical or performative. Every passage that discusses music in Christian worship refers only to **singing**:

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

There is **no command, example, or inference** of instrumental music being used by the church in the New Testament. Its introduction centuries later came through human innovation, not divine instruction. God seeks **worship in spirit and truth** (John 4:24)—not entertainment or performance.

## 2. Women Serving as Preachers or Elders

Many non-denominational churches allow **women to preach publicly**, lead worship, or even serve as **elders and pastors**. This change is often presented as culturally progressive or spiritually inclusive—but it **directly contradicts New Testament teaching**.

Paul wrote:

“And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.” (1 Timothy 2:12)

“Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak...” (1 Corinthians 14:34)

This is not about cultural roles or inequality—Paul based it on the **created order** (1 Timothy 2:13) and God's design for **male spiritual leadership**. Furthermore, the **qualifications for elders** include being “the husband of one wife” (Titus 1:6)—which inherently excludes women from that role.

Churches that ignore these guidelines—even with good intentions—step outside the authority of Christ.

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## 3. Emotionally Driven or Entertainment-Based Worship

Many independent churches build services around **high-energy music, dynamic lighting, emotional storytelling, and theatrical presentations**. The aim is often to create an “experience” that keeps people coming back.

But biblical worship is not about **emotional manipulation** or **stage production**—it is about reverent devotion, truth, and submission to God’s will. The early church “continued steadfastly” in:

“...the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

Worship was not designed to impress the senses but to **transform the heart** through truth and participation.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (1 Corinthians 14:40)

The danger of emotionalism is that it can **feel spiritual** while moving people away from the **actual commands of God**.

### **Structure and Authority**

While many independent churches reject denominational structures, they often replace them with **pastor-centered leadership**, where one man (or woman) functions as the central authority figure. This is also inconsistent with the New Testament, which presents each congregation as being overseen by a **plurality of elders**:

“So when they had appointed elders in every church...” (Acts 14:23)

“The elders who are among you I exhort... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers...” (1 Peter 5:1–2)

Without scriptural leadership, churches tend to be shaped by personalities, cultural trends, or popular preferences—rather than by the Word of God.

### **Conclusion: Close, But Still Falling Short**

Many non-denominational churches start with a desire to be **just Christians**, to return to the Bible, and to leave denominational divisions behind. That’s a noble beginning. But unless they also restore the **pattern of worship, scriptural leadership, sound doctrine**, and **God’s plan of salvation**, they remain outside the fellowship of the New Testament church.

The answer to denominational confusion is not **freestyle Christianity**, but **restoration**—a return to the revealed Word of God in every area of faith and practice.

“Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me...” (2 Timothy 1:13)

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...” (Colossians 3:17)

We must not settle for “close” when God has given us a **clear pattern**. Let us be the church of Christ—nothing more, nothing less.

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### **“New Age” Churches**

The term **“New Age”** refers to a broad, often loosely defined collection of spiritual movements that emerged in the 1960s and 70s, combining elements of **Eastern mysticism, self-help psychology**,

**meditation, positive thinking, and personal enlightenment.** Some of these movements have evolved into what many today call “**spiritual but not religious” churches** or “**progressive spiritual communities.**”

Unlike more structured denominations, New Age churches and gatherings often appear flexible, inclusive, and non-dogmatic. But this freedom from doctrine comes at a cost—because it replaces **God’s truth** with **man’s opinions.**

Examine how these movements compare to the church that Jesus built, and why the **New Testament must remain our only standard.**

### **Overview and Characteristics**

New Age churches often emphasize:

- **Personal spiritual experiences** over biblical doctrine
- **Self-actualization** and inner enlightenment
- A belief in **divine energy, the “god within,”** or **cosmic consciousness**
- Syncretism—blending elements from Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, psychology, and science fiction

They frequently avoid traditional Christian language like **sin, repentance, or hell,** and instead promote a vision of universal harmony where everyone finds their own spiritual truth.

But in doing so, they reject the **exclusive truth claims of Jesus Christ,** who said:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

That statement alone makes New Age philosophy incompatible with Christianity. If all paths lead to God, then Jesus lied—or at least was mistaken. But if Jesus is Lord, **then no other path can save.**

### **Doctrinal Errors and Departures from Scripture**

#### **1. Rejection of Absolute Truth and the Authority of Scripture**

At the heart of New Age religion is a rejection of objective, divine truth. Scripture is often viewed as one source of wisdom among many, no more authoritative than a yoga manual or a self-help bestseller.

But Jesus said:

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

The apostles taught that **Scripture alone** is the standard by which all teaching must be measured:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God... that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.” (1 Peter 4:11)

God’s Word is not just “one perspective”—it is **the revelation of God’s mind and will** (1 Corinthians 2:10–13). When churches ignore or minimize Scripture, they are no longer following Jesus.

## 2. Universalism – “All Paths Lead to God”

New Age churches commonly teach that **every sincere person will be saved**, regardless of their religion, morality, or belief. This sounds compassionate—but it **contradicts the gospel**.

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

The gospel is **inherently exclusive**. It is a message of salvation available to all—but **only through Christ**. Any doctrine that denies this **destroys the very purpose of the cross**.

## 3. Devaluation of Sin, Repentance, and the Cross

Many New Age philosophies speak of personal “blockages” or “negative energy” instead of **sin**. They suggest you need healing or balance—not repentance. The **cross of Christ**, when mentioned at all, is treated as a metaphor for personal growth rather than a literal sacrifice for sins.

But the New Testament is clear:

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins...” (Ephesians 1:7)

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

“God now commands all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30)

Sin is not a vague concept—it is rebellion against God’s law (1 John 3:4). And salvation comes not from looking within, but from trusting in the **blood of Christ** and submitting to **His gospel**.

## Worship and Church Practice

In many New Age-style churches:

- Worship is often replaced with **guided meditation, chakra alignment, or nature walks**
- “Sermons” are motivational talks or philosophical discussions
- There is no set doctrine on baptism, communion, or the church

This is nothing like the worship of the early church, which was marked by:

- **Singing** from the heart (Ephesians 5:19)
- **Prayer** and **teaching of the Word** (Acts 2:42)
- Weekly observance of the **Lord's Supper** (Acts 20:7)
- Fellowship grounded in **truth**, not vague spirituality

Paul warned the Colossians about man-made spiritual practices:

“These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom... but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:23)

True worship is not about finding your inner light—it’s about bowing before the **light of the world** (John 8:12).

### **Conclusion: Spiritual, But Not Biblical**

New Age churches offer spirituality **without accountability**, emotion **without truth**, and unity **without Christ**. They may sound appealing and feel peaceful—but they are built on **sand, not the solid rock of God's Word**.

“Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.” (Matthew 7:26)

To be the true church of Christ, we must:

- Accept the **authority of Scripture**
- Submit to the **Lordship of Jesus**
- Acknowledge and repent of **sin**
- Obey the **gospel of Christ**—not follow our own path

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)

Let us not be satisfied with being “spiritual.” Let us be **faithful, biblical**, and wholly **devoted to Christ**.

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### **“Cowboy Churches”**

**Cowboy Churches** are a relatively recent phenomenon, primarily found in rural and Southern areas of the United States. These congregations are designed to appeal to ranchers, farmers, rodeo participants, and country-western culture enthusiasts. Their worship style is often casual, informal, and intentionally rustic—with sermons delivered in jeans and boots, music featuring country gospel bands, and fellowship centered around horses, rodeo events, and outdoor living.

While the desire to reach a specific cultural group with the gospel is commendable, many Cowboy Churches tend to **compromise scriptural patterns** in favor of cultural comfort. In doing so, they often depart from the example and doctrine of the church revealed in the New Testament.

Explore how Cowboy Churches align—or misalign—with the biblical pattern for the church Jesus established.

### **Cultural Relevance vs. Scriptural Reverence**

Cowboy Churches often emphasize “**come as you are**” attitudes and promote **inclusivity through informality**. This includes:

- Worship in barns, arenas, or outdoor spaces
- Country music bands with **instrumental accompaniment**
- Preachers wearing Western wear, often avoiding formal titles or training
- Events like “**cowboy rodeo outreach**,” trail rides, and campfire devotionals

While there’s nothing inherently wrong with dressing casually or worshiping in a barn, the **problem arises when culture becomes the standard**, instead of the **New Testament pattern**. The apostle Paul wrote:

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...” (Colossians 3:17)

The New Testament church did not shape its identity around cultural branding but around **Christ, His Word, and apostolic teaching**.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

### **Common Deviations from New Testament Teaching**

#### **1. Instrumental Music in Worship**

Most Cowboy Churches employ full **instrumental bands**, including guitars, drums, and harmonicas, to accompany country-style gospel songs. While this is culturally familiar and emotionally engaging, it contradicts the clear biblical pattern.

New Testament worship involved **vocal music only**—singing from the heart:

“Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:19)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

There is **no record** of the early church using mechanical instruments in worship. Adding them today is going beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6) and inserting **human will** into **divine instruction**.

## 2. Informal Leadership Without Scriptural Qualification

Many Cowboy Churches are led by men with no formal Bible training or examination of spiritual qualifications. In some cases, leadership is based more on **popularity, availability, or cultural fit** than on scriptural criteria.

Yet the New Testament gives clear qualifications for church leaders:

- Elders must be men of character, experience, and sound doctrine (Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:1–7)
- Deacons also have specific moral and doctrinal qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8–13)

Informality does not excuse **non-biblical leadership**. The early church appointed elders in every congregation (Acts 14:23) and was overseen by men who could teach and defend the truth (Titus 1:9).

## 3. Lack of Emphasis on Biblical Worship and Doctrine

While Cowboy Churches often aim to make visitors feel welcome, they sometimes **avoid teaching hard truths**, including:

- The necessity of baptism for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16)
- The call to repentance and holy living (Luke 13:3; 1 Peter 1:15–16)
- The exclusive nature of salvation in Christ and His church (Acts 4:12; Ephesians 4:4–6)

Worship may center more on **storytelling, testimonies, and country music** than on teaching the whole counsel of God. But Jesus said:

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

And Paul warned:

“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine... but according to their own desires... they will turn their ears away from the truth...” (2 Timothy 4:3–4)

Culture must **never define doctrine**. The goal should not be to make church “comfortable,” but to make souls **faithful**.

## Conclusion: Cultural Approach, but Not a Scriptural Model

Cowboy Churches are popular, engaging, and culturally relatable—but these qualities **do not make them scriptural**. The true church is not defined by hats, horses, or harmonicas. It is defined by **obedience to the gospel, adherence to apostolic doctrine, and worship that honors Christ—not man**.

“In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matthew 15:9)

All people—cowboys included—are called **to the unchanging pattern of the New Testament church** and not by reshaping the church to fit modern culture.

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.’” (Jeremiah 6:16)

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## Conclusion: The New Testament Pattern Still Matters

Jesus built one church (Matthew 16:18), purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28), and revealed its doctrine through the apostles (Ephesians 2:20). That church still exists today—not in a denomination or modern invention, but wherever people follow the New Testament in teaching, practice, and purpose.

“Now I plead with you, brethren... that there be no divisions among you” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

One is not to follow churches built by men—but return to the church built by Christ. Speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where it is silent, and call Bible things by Bible names.

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### Questions to Test Understanding

*Estimated Time to Answer the Questions: 3 – 4 minutes; With Scripture Lookup: 11 - 15 minutes*

**Answer the following questions by circling True / False and Yes / No. Look up the scripture references given to determine the answers, or refer back to the discussion. An answer key with explanations of the correct answers is provided below.**

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#### Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

1. Did the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) begin as a mainline denomination in Acts 2? (Acts 2:47) — **Yes | No**
2. Is it scriptural for the church to be governed by a denominational headquarters and national assembly? (1 Peter 5:1–2) — **True | False**
3. Does the New Testament authorize the use of instrumental music in Christian worship? (Ephesians 5:19) — **Yes | No**

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#### Churches of Christ

4. Do the Churches of Christ strive to restore the church described in the New Testament? (Romans 16:16) — **Yes | No**

5. Are Churches of Christ organized with local elders and deacons, without denominational headquarters? (Philippians 1:1) — **True | False**
  6. Do the Churches of Christ teach that baptism is essential for salvation? (Acts 2:38) — **Yes | No**
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### **Independent “Non-Denominational” Churches**

7. Is the use of instrumental music in worship supported by New Testament authority? (Colossians 3:16) — **Yes | No**
  8. Are women permitted by Scripture to preach or serve as elders in the assembly? (1 Timothy 2:12) — **True | False**
  9. Should church leadership be centered around one main pastor instead of a plurality of elders? (Acts 14:23) — **Yes | No**
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### **New Age Churches**

10. Do New Age churches commonly reject the authority and exclusivity of Scripture? (2 Timothy 3:16–17) — **Yes | No**
  11. Is it biblical to believe that all sincere religious paths lead to God? (Acts 4:12) — **True | False**
  12. Does the Bible teach that repentance and the blood of Christ are essential for salvation? (Ephesians 1:7) — **Yes | No**
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### **Cowboy Churches**

13. Is it acceptable to structure church leadership based on cultural fit rather than scriptural qualifications? (Titus 1:5–9) — **True | False**
  14. Does New Testament worship authorize the use of guitars, drums, and country gospel bands? (Ephesians 5:19) — **Yes | No**
  15. Should teaching about baptism, repentance, and holy living be avoided to make church more comfortable? (2 Timothy 4:2–4) — **Yes | No**
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### **Answer Key**

*Estimated Time to Read the Answers: 4 - 5 minutes; With Reflection and Contemplation: 6 - 9 minutes*

### **Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**

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“Come, Let Us Reason Together” About the Bible  
What Is the Church of the New Testament?

**LESSON TEN – Compare Churches to the New  
Testament Church --Part 3 – Non-Denominational  
Churches**  
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1. Did the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) begin as a mainline denomination in Acts 2? (Acts 2:47) — **No**  
*“And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:47)  
 The Christian Church (DoC) began centuries later, not in Acts 2.
2. Is it scriptural for the church to be governed by a denominational headquarters and national assembly? (1 Peter 5:1–2) — **False**  
*“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you...”* (1 Peter 5:2)  
 Scriptural leadership is local and congregational, not national or hierarchical.
3. Does the New Testament authorize the use of instrumental music in Christian worship? (Ephesians 5:19) — **No**  
*“...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”* (Ephesians 5:19)  
 The New Testament only authorizes singing in worship.

### Churches of Christ

4. Do the Churches of Christ strive to restore the church described in the New Testament? (Romans 16:16) — **Yes**  
*“The churches of Christ greet you.”* (Romans 16:16)  
 They aim to replicate the first-century church in name, doctrine, and worship.
5. Are Churches of Christ organized with local elders and deacons, without denominational headquarters? (Philippians 1:1) — **True**  
*“...with the bishops and deacons.”* (Philippians 1:1)  
 Each congregation is autonomous, following New Testament structure.
6. Do the Churches of Christ teach that baptism is essential for salvation? (Acts 2:38) — **Yes**  
*“Repent, and be baptized... for the remission of sins...”* (Acts 2:38)  
 Baptism is the point at which sins are forgiven and one enters Christ.

### Independent “Non-Denominational” Churches

7. Is the use of instrumental music in worship supported by New Testament authority? (Colossians 3:16) — **No**  
*“...singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* (Colossians 3:16)  
 New Testament worship includes singing—nothing more.
8. Are women permitted by Scripture to preach or serve as elders in the assembly? (1 Timothy 2:12) — **False**  
*“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...”* (1 Timothy 2:12)  
 Spiritual leadership in the assembly is limited to qualified men.
9. Should church leadership be centered around one main pastor instead of a plurality of elders? (Acts 14:23) — **No**  
*“...appointed elders in every church...”* (Acts 14:23)  
 Leadership is plural and local—not singular or centralized.

### New Age Churches

10. Do New Age churches commonly reject the authority and exclusivity of Scripture? (2 Timothy 3:16–17) — **Yes**  
*“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...”* (2 Timothy 3:16–17)  
New Age groups often replace or supplement Scripture with human ideas.
11. Is it biblical to believe that all sincere religious paths lead to God? (Acts 4:12) — **False**  
*“Nor is there salvation in any other...”* (Acts 4:12)  
Salvation is only through Jesus—not through various paths.
12. Does the Bible teach that repentance and the blood of Christ are essential for salvation? (Ephesians 1:7) — **Yes**  
*“In Him we have redemption through His blood...”* (Ephesians 1:7)  
Only Christ’s blood cleanses sin, and repentance is required.

### **Cowboy Churches**

13. Is it acceptable to structure church leadership based on cultural fit rather than scriptural qualifications? (Titus 1:5–9) — **False**  
*“...appoint elders... if a man is blameless...”* (Titus 1:5–9)  
Church leadership must meet biblical standards, not cultural convenience.
14. Does New Testament worship authorize the use of guitars, drums, and country gospel bands? (Ephesians 5:19) — **No**  
*“...singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”* (Ephesians 5:19)  
Worship in the New Testament involves only singing—not instrumental performance.
15. Should teaching about baptism, repentance, and holy living be avoided to make church more comfortable? (2 Timothy 4:2–4) — **No**  
*“Preach the word... reprove, rebuke, exhort...”* (2 Timothy 4:2–4)  
Scripture warns against watering down doctrine to please people.
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