

## The Christian Churches

Edited by Scott Shifferd Jr.

### History:

- In Jacksonville, FL, the Englewood Christian Church states, **“We are not part of a denomination. We are part of an independent church movement derived from a religious revival that took place in frontier America at the beginning of the nineteenth century. That Restoration Movement spawned the group of churches with which we connect, the Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ”** (“What Denomination is ECC?” *Englewood Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <eccjax.com>).
- **“Christian churches and churches of Christ trace their modern origins to the early 19th-century American frontier, a period of militancy among denominations.** America’s pioneers brought their deeply rooted religious convictions to the new land and perpetuated their old animosities. Presbyterian squared off against Anglican who defended himself against Baptist who had no toleration for Lutheran. A reaction to this mutual animosity was inevitable” (Lawson, LeRoy. “What Kind of Church is This?” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/>).
- About its “roots”, the Christian Church states, **“The early leaders of what later came to be called the Restoration Movement believed unity in Christ was — and is — possible. To achieve it required letting go of human traditions and loyalties to dynamic personalities.** Christ alone could be exalted. The ideal of the church that emerges from the pages of the New Testament must be the standard for today’s congregations” (“Our Roots” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com>).
- “Christ’s Church” in Jacksonville, FL states, **“Christ’s Church is a nondenominational, Bible-based Christian church”** (“About Christ’s Church.” *Christ’s Church*. 2 May 2012. <ccontheweb.com/connect/about-christs-church/>).
- **“Mandarin Christian Church officially became Christ’s Church, Mandarin on Jan. 9, and the signs will soon bear that name change at the main campus at 6045 Greenland Road”** (Scanlan, Dan. “Mandarin Church Grows, Changes Name.” *Jacksonville Times-Union*. 19 Jan 2005. <jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/011905/ner\_17711744.shtml>).

### God, Christ, and the Spirit:

- The Mandarin Christian Church, “Christ’s Church”, confesses, **“We believe that there is one God eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1; Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14)”** (“What We Believe: Trinity.” *Christ’s Church*. 2 May 2012. <ccontheweb.com/connect/beliefs-and-values/>).
- The Fort Caroline Christian Church states, **“There is but one God, existing eternally, at work in three unique personalities, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each is fully God, and co-equal with God.** He is eternal, having always existed. He is all-powerful. He is all-present. He is all-knowing. (Genesis 1:1, 26-27, 3:22, Psalm 90:2, Psalm 139, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 1:2)” (“What Does the Fort Caroline Christian Church Believe?” *FCCC*. 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.com>).
- The Crossroad Christian Church refers to **creationist** sites (“Questions.” *Crossroads Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <crossroadschristian.net/questions.shtml>).

**Scriptures:** *God:* Gen. 1:1-2, Psa. 110:1, Isa. 9:6, 48:16, 61:1, Mic. 5:2, Matt. 12:46-47, 13:55-56, 28:19, Luke 3:22, John 1:1, 14, Acts 7:55, 10:38, Rom. 8:9, 9:5, 15:30, 2 Cor. 3:17, 13:14, Phil. 2:5-8, Col. 1:15-20, Heb. 9:14, 1 Pet. 1:2, 3:18, 1 John 4:2; *Creation:* Gen. 1:26-27, Exo. 20:11, Matt. 19:4-5, Mark 10:6-8, Luke 11:50-51, Rom. 1:20.

### Christ's Words and the Scriptures:

- Formerly the Mandarin Christian Church, "Christ's Church" states, "**We believe the Bible is the inspired, written Word of God and the final authority for all matters of faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:14-16)**" ("Beliefs and Values." *Christ's Church*. 2 May 2012. <ccontheweb.com/connect/beliefs-and-values/>).
- The Fort Caroline Christian Church states, "**The Bible is God's Word to us, without error. The authors were guided by the Holy Spirit, without impeding the writer's individual personalities.** This testimony about God could only come from God. God's Word can be trusted. His Word contains answers for living a life of value, worth, and service to Him. **His Word contains all that we need to know for entering into a personal relationship with Him.** (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Hebrews 4:12)" ("What We Believe." 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.com>).
- Christian Church Today says, "**The only way to determine what the church should be and how Christians should behave is to study New Testament documents in which the churches of Christ are presented in splendor – and in shortcomings.** While there is no single church that we should imitate, the ideal of the church as the body of Christ, the household of faith, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the people of God is clearly pictured" (Lawson, LeRoy. "Our Roots." *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/our\_position.asp>).
- Christian Church Today states, "**The church, Ephesians 2:20 states, is 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.' Whatever we know about Christ and the church we learned from Jesus' closest companions, the apostles"** (Lawson, LeRoy. "Our Position." *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/our\_position.asp>).

**Scriptures:** Luke 1:1-3, 1 Cor. 1:1-2, 10, 12:13, 2 Cor. 1:1, Eph. 2:20, 3:3-5, Col. 4:16, 2 Thess. 2:15, 2 Tim. 3:16-17 (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18), 2 Pet. 1:16-21, 3:15-16, 1 John 1:1-4.

### Way of Salvation:

- The Mandarin Christian Church, "Christ's Church", states, "We believe that salvation – the forgiveness of sins – is available only by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ. **This free gift of salvation is offered to all who receive Christ as Lord and Savior** (Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6; John 3:16). [...]  
**Steps After Salvation:** We believe the Bible clearly teaches the pattern to receive Christ is to believe in Jesus as God's Son and Savior of the world, repent of personal sin, confess Christ publicly, and to **be baptized** (Romans 10:9; Acts 2:36-38, Mark 16:16)" ("What We Believe." *Christ's Church*. 2 May 2012. <ccontheweb.com/connect/beliefs-and-values/>).
- The Englewood Christian Church states, "**We believe every human being has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, thus, needing His forgiveness. This forgiveness of sins comes through faith in Jesus Christ by the repentance of sins, confession of faith in Him, and obedience in Christian baptism**" ("What We Believe." *Englewood Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <eccjax.com>).
- Yet, the Fort Caroline Christian Church states, "**Salvation is God's free gift to all of mankind. Just like any gift, it must be accepted.** We will never be 'good enough' to earn it or deserve it. We must accept the sacrifice of Jesus and salvation by God's design, trusting God's promises to forgive us through the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Salvation is past, present and future. (Romans 6:23, 2 Timothy 1:12, Hebrews 7:25, Hebrews 10:10, 1 Peter 1:3-5)" ("What We Believe." 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.com>).

**Scriptures:** Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:16, John 6:53-56, 16:7-13, Acts 2:38, 3:19, 8:38, 22:16, Rom. 6:3-7, Gal. 3:26-27, 5:4, **Col. 2:11-12**, 1 Tim. 2:4, Heb. 6:4-6, 1 Pet. 3:21, 2 Pet. 1:10, 3:9, 1 John 1:5-2:6.

### The Church & Church Government:

- The Christian Church Today states, **“The distinctive about this Christian church is that it has no distinctives. In fact we deliberately seek not to be different, because our goal is unity, not division. Christianity has suffered long enough from deep divisions separating denomination from denomination, Christian from Christian”** (“What Kind of Church is This?” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com>).
- The Christian Church also says about **“A church of *Christ*”**, **“The church belongs to Him. We have no authority to change the teachings, rewrite the rules, alter membership requirements, or usurp His place. The church is not a democracy”** (Lawson, LeRoy. “Our Position.” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/our\_position.asp>).
- The Christian Church states that they are a “free church” saying further, **“We have no bishops or superintendents or national headquarters to determine local church policies. We elect our own leaders, call and support our own ministers, and decide where our mission money will go. We are not isolationists, though. Our congregations freely associate with one another to accomplish tasks too big for one church alone”** (Lawson, LeRoy. “Our Position.” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/our\_position.asp>).
- “North American Christian Convention is an annual gathering of Christians for worship, preaching, teaching, fellowship, and networking. **The convention serves as a ‘connecting place,’ providing ideas, inspiration and identity to New Testament churches, ministries and their leaders. Each of the 6,500 churches in North America that identify themselves as part of the fellowship of ‘Christian churches and churches of Christ’ is independent and autonomously governed. Most of those churches choose to affiliate themselves with the North American Christian Convention”** (“Sponsor Information.” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/sponsor/>).
- **Christian Church Today advertized a scholarship competition of Lipscomb University** (“Win a Lipscomb Scholarship!” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/articles/articles.asp?id=5318>).
- Christian Church Today reports, **“As much as possible, we imitate the New Testament precedents. That is why our baptism is by immersion, our Communion is every Lord’s Day, our leaders are called elders, our preaching is about Christ, and our prayers are in Christ’s name. Even our church name is rooted in the earliest days, when disciples were called Christians and their congregations were often addressed as ‘churches of Christ’”** (“Our Position.” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/who/our\_position.asp>).
- The Longhollow Christian Church in Virginia responds to the question, **“Can women serve as elders and deacons here or be ordained as preachers?”** answering, **“No.** Just as God has given the responsibility of headship in the home to the man (Ephesians 5:22-6:4), He has also given the responsibility for church leadership to men as well. We realize that this isn’t a popular ideology in many circles, nevertheless, it is Biblical. (1Timothy 5)” (“FAQs.” *Long Hollow Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <longhollowchristian.org>).
- The Crossroads Christian Church in Grand Prairie, TX also answer, **“Can women serve as elders and deacons here or be ordained as pastors?”**, saying, **“Not and be Biblical.** Just as God has given the responsibility of headship in the home to the man (Ephesians 5:22-6:4), He has also given the responsibility for church leadership to men as well” (“FAQ.” *Crossroads Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <crossroadschristian.net>).

**Scriptures:** Acts 14:26, 20:28, Eph. 1:22, 4:11-12, Phil. 1:1, Col. 1:18, 2:19, 1 Tim. 2:11-12, 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, **1 Pet. 5:1-4.**

### Worship and Assembly:

- The Fort Caroline Christian Church confesses, **“We celebrate the Lord's Supper (communion) each Sunday. The first-century church set this example for us.** The Lord's death, burial, and resurrection is central to Christianity and deserves to be remembered whenever believers get together for worship. (Acts 20:7, Matthew 26:26-28, 1 Corinthians 11:23-30, Luke 22:19-20)” (“What We Believe.” 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.com>).
- The Mandarin Christian Church, “Christ’s Church”, states, **“Compelling Worship: The church in which the multidimensional worship experience draws people into the presence of God”** (“What We Believe.” *Christ’s Church*. 2 May 2012. <ccontheweb.com/connect/beliefs-and-values/>).
- Englewood Christian Church states, **“At ECC, the music and drama ministries allow everyone to use their talents to praise God, spread his message, and uplift one another. With choirs for ages 2 through seniors, instrumental groups such as worship band and handbells, and a dynamic drama troupe, there are lots of opportunities to share your special gifts or enjoy the gifts of others as we glorify God in our worship”** (“Music & Drama.” *Englewood Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <eccjax.com>).
- Englewood Christian Church also states, **“Music is an exciting part of our worship experiences. All music is planned and prepared to lead worshipers to sing their love and praises to God. Many contribute to the music ministry in a variety of ensembles. Worship Band (auditioned), Worship Orchestra, Choir for all ages (non-auditioned)”** (“Music Ministry.” *Englewood Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <eccjax.com>).
- **“The Acting Up Drama Troupe offers an artistic outlet for actors from elementary age through adults. The troupe shares God’s Word in an exciting, fun, and unique format through skits in Sunday morning worship services and in major programs throughout the year.** Actors are enrolled twice a year, in January and in August. This ministry was created to allow people with acting abilities, from a basic level on up, a place to grow while they also grow in spiritual ways. A commitment to this ministry involves rehearsals with the team and private preparation” (“Drama Ministry.” *Englewood Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <eccjax.com>).
- Christian Church Today presented , **“On Good Friday, men from Greenwood (IN) Christian Church took turns portraying Jesus for a ‘live crucifixion’ on the church’s property. The volunteers, dressed in costume and covered in fake blood, took one-hour shifts standing on the large cross and depicting Jesus’ final hours.** Local news media covered the event and members of the community stopped to get a closer look, take pictures, and pray” (“Good Friday Observance.” *Christian Church Today*. 2 May 2012. <christianchurchtoday.com/articles>).
- The Fort Caroline Christian Church talks about their worship describing, **“We hear the words all the time, ‘contemporary’ or ‘traditional’? We would describe our worship as ‘contemporarily blended.’ We live in a twenty-first century world and we are a twenty-first century church.** Because our family is diverse, we usually have something for everyone in each service. **We strive to teach our family that style is not important, substance (truth) is. We also strive to teach our family that one person's preferences is not necessarily another's. We gently remind our people that when they are uncomfortable with a certain style, ministry is happening in someone else, and vice-versa.** This is an appropriate sacrifice to make in a family that loves one another. **We have a praise band consisting of piano, keyboards, guitars, and drums.** We use a video projection system for the words to the worship songs we sing” (“Authentic Worship.” *Fort Caroline Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.com>).
- Yet, Alexander Campbell stated, “The argument drawn from the Psalms in favor of instrumental music, is exceedingly apposite [suitable] to the Roman Catholic, English Protestant, and Scotch

Presbyterian churches, and even to the Methodist communities. Their churches having all the world in them--that is, all the fleshly progeny of all the communicants, and being founded on the Jewish pattern of things--baptism being given to all born into the world of these politico-ecclesiastic communities--**I wonder not, then, that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else 'hosannahs languish on their tongues, and their devotions die.'** And that **all persons who have no spiritual discernment**, taste, or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts, **should call for such aid**, is but natural. **Pure water from the flinty rock has no attractions for the mere toper or wine-bibber.** A little alcohol, or genuine Cognac brandy, or good old Madeira, is essential to the beverage to make it truly refreshing. **So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think with Mr. G., that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum [a need], but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert"** (*Millennial Harbinger*. Sept. 1851. <mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/acampbell/ac1.html>).

- Also, J.W. McGarvey said, "We cannot, therefore, by any possibility, know that a certain element of worship is acceptable to God in the Christian dispensation, when the Scriptures which speak of that dispensation are silent in reference to it. **To introduce any such element is unscriptural and presumptuous. It is will worship, if any such thing as will worship can exist. On this ground we condemn the burning of incense, the lighting of candles, the wearing of priestly robes, and the reading of printed prayers. On the same ground we condemn instrumental music"** (McGarvey, J.W. *The Millennial Harbinger*. 1864. P.511-513).
- David Lipscomb said, "**Neither he [Paul] nor any other apostle, nor the Lord Jesus, nor any of the disciples for five hundred years, used instruments.** This too, in the face of the fact that the Jews had used instruments in the days of their prosperity and that the Greeks and heathen nations all used them in their worship. They were dropped out with such emphasis that they were not taken up till the middle of the Dark Ages, and came in as part of the order of the Roman Catholic Church. It seems there cannot be doubt but that **the use of instrumental music in connection with the worship of God, whether used as a part of the worship or as an attraction accompaniment, is unauthorized by God and violates the oft-repeated prohibition to add nothing to, take nothing from, the commandments of the Lord.** It destroys the difference between the clean and the unclean, the holy and unholy, counts the blood of the Son of God unclean, and tramples under foot the authority of the Son of God. **They have not been authorized by God or sanctified with the blood of his Son"** (Lipscomb, David. *Queries and Answers*. 1899. P.226-227).

**Scriptures: Matt. 6:1-18, 15:1-9, 23, John 4:21-24; Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 4:17, 11:2, 17-34; 14, 16:1-3; Eph. 5:19; Col. 2:18-23, 3:16; 1 Tm. 2:11-12, Heb. 2:12, 10:24-25, 13:15-16.**

#### **Morality:**

- From the Crossroads Christian Church website, Barry Cameron addressing **homosexuality** writing, "What Does The Bible Say? 1. Genesis 1:27, 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.' 2. Genesis 2:18-25. 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' 3. Matthew 19:4-6. Jesus affirms God's plan for one man for one woman for one lifetime. 4. Leviticus 18:22. 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.' 5. Leviticus 20:13. If a man lies with a man, as one lies with a woman, they are to be put to death. 6. Romans 1:26-27. Homosexual acts are unnatural, to God's divine plan. 7. I Corinthians 6:9-11. Homosexual offenders will not inherit the kingdom of God"

(Cameron, Barry L. "What the Bible Says about Homosexuality." *Crossroads Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <crossroadschristian.net/resources\_bible/homosexuality.shtml>).

- The Crossroad Christian Church refers to **prolife** sites ("Questions." *Crossroads Christian Church*. 2 May 2012. <crossroadschristian.net/questions.shtml.>).

**Scriptures:** Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:20-23, Rom. 1:24-32, 12:9-15:13, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Gal. 5:16-6:10, Eph. 4:17-6:18, Col. 3-4:6.

#### **Marriage and Divorce:**

- *No statement was found. [Independent witnesses have found that the Christian Church believes that one divorce for any reason, remarry another, and be forgiven repenting and yet remaining in the second marriage.]*

**Scriptures:** Matt. 5:31-32, 19:9, Mark 10:5-12, **Luke 16:18**, 1 Cor. 6:16-18, 7:10-15, Heb. 13:4.

#### **The End Times & Afterlife:**

- The Mandarin Christian Church, "Christ's Church", teaches, "We believe that death seals the eternal destiny of each person. When Christ returns he will pronounce the eternal fate of each individual, both living and dead – the saved to eternal life in heaven, **the unsaved to eternal separation from God in Hell** (John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2; 2 Corinthians 4:14)" ("Beliefs and Values." *Christ's Church*. 2 May 2012 <ccontheweb.com/connect/beliefs-and-values/>).
- The Fort Caroline Christian Church states, "People were created to live forever. **Each person will either live eternally separated from God or eternally with God through God's grace. Those separated from God will be placed in Hell.** (John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Romans 8:17, John 14:2-3, Revelation 20:15)" ("What We Believe." 2 May 2012. <fortcarolinechristianchurch.org>).

**Scriptures:** Matt. 24:29-51, 25:31-46, Mark 9:1, 13:24-37, Luke 21:25-36, John 14:1-4, 18:36, Acts 1:9-11, 1 Cor. 15:23-28, 50-53, Col. 1:13, 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess. 2:1-12, Heb. 12:28, 2 Pet. 3:1-13, Rev. 19-22:5.