

“WE ARE NOT CAMPBELLITES!”

4/5/2026 AM

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Text: Matthew 16:13-19.**
- B. Some refer to the Church of Christ as Campbellites.**
 - 1. That term is attributed to Robert Owen (1771-1858), an atheist who debated Alexander Campbell in 1829.
 - 2. He used the term “Campbellite” to mock Alexander Campbell.
- C. Of course, no one in the Lord’s church would accept such a name. However, we do need to be equipped to address this misrepresentation and this misunderstanding.**

DISCUSSION: IN THIS LESSON WE OBSERVE...

I. WHO WAS ALEXANDER CAMPBELL?

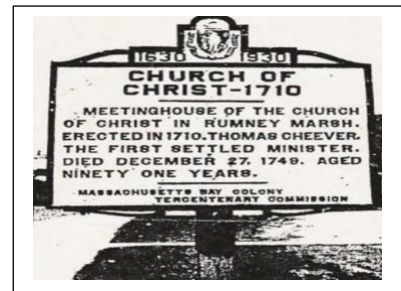
- A. He was one of several men (such as O’Kelly, Stone, and others before him) who, in seeing the folly of division in the name of religion, sought to simply return to the New Testament as their sole guide.**
 - 1. **1 Peter 4:11.**
 - 2. **Colossians 3:17.**
- B. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary says “Campbellites” are members of “A Christian denomination founded in Pennsylvania in 1810 by Thomas and Alexander Campbell.” Documentation shows this to be inaccurate.**

II. THE FACTS.

- A. Before Campbell ever left denominationalism, the church of Christ already existed.**
 - 1. The State of Massachusetts, in its Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission's work, has erected this historical marker in Revere, Massachusetts: “Church of Christ in Romney Marsh. Erected in 1770, Thomas Cheever, the first settled minister, died December 27, 1743. Aged ninety-one years.”
 - 1) The church building was located at 265 Beach Street, Revere, Massachusetts.
 - 2) The building has had several renovations, but it is still standing.
 - 2. Alexander Campbell was born in 1788. There had been a Church of Christ congregation in Massachusetts for at least 78 years before his birth.
- B. It is a matter of historical record that there were churches of Christ in both Europe and America before Alexander Campbell had a clear concept of what primitive Christianity was all about.**
 - 1. Leslie G. Thomas has documented New Testament churches in Scotland, England, and Ireland, dating between 1778 and 1810 (The Restoration Handbook, p. 73).
 - 2. Historical accounts reveal that the Old Philadelphia congregation of the Lord’s people, near Morrison, Tennessee, was organized in 1810.



Old Philadelphia meeting house in Tennessee.



3. Alexander Campbell was not baptized until 1812, and he remained affiliated with the Baptists until the 1820s. (Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier*)
 4. There is not a single church in existence that uses the term “Campbellite” to refer to itself, either collectively or singly.
- C. Jesus, of course, made a proclamation regarding His church (**Matthew 16:13-19; Ephesians 5:30**).**
1. As our studies have shown, this church has distinctive, Biblical doctrines that Christ taught in His Word.
 2. Jesus taught that His word was the seed, which, of course, can be planted at any time, in any place (**Luke 8:11**). What would be the fruit of such a seed?

III. A CHALLENGE.

- A. Find a doctrine which the church of Christ teaches and practices that ...**
1. Originated with Alexander Campbell.
 2. Our task is to follow the book that was penned over 2,000 years ago.
 - 1) **Colossians 3:17**.
 - 2) **1 Peter 4:11**.
 - 3) **Acts 17:31**.
- B. The doctrine taught by the churches of Christ is upheld by a study of God’s word, but denied by denominations.**
1. Where do the denominations get their names?
 2. Who designed their organization?
 3. From where does their worship originate?
- C. .**

IV. CONCLUSION:

- A. We are thankful for all who have stood for the truth of God’s Word and fought to encourage others to do the same (including Alexander Campbell). But we will continue to follow the King of Kings, recognizing that doing so will never be popular (**John 15:17-20**).**
- B. I am content to be a member of the church that was purchased with His own blood (**Acts 20:28**), and to have His word as the all-sufficient guide for life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).**
- C. As such, I am not a “Campbellite”; I am a Christian (**Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16**).**
- D. Any who desires can be a Christian, a member of the church JESUS FOUNDED, the church of Christ (**Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16**), will look to the seed of the kingdom and love Christ enough to obey the gospel rather than the teachings of man, may enter into His church (**1 Corinthians 12:13**).**