

## CHURCH HISTORY

### Lesson 16 – Modern Churches of Christ (1950 thru Present)

Emerging from the officially recognized division in 1906, Churches of Christ suffered multiple doctrinal controversies after World War II in ways that not only divided congregations, but also diminished the ability to easily distinguish them.

#### A. Institutionalism, "para-church organizations", non-church "ministries"

1. In the 1950's, churches of Christ divided over the subject of Institutionalism.
  - a. What typically are the roles of these organizations?
  - b. How are these efforts financed?
  - c. Explain whether this is scriptural or not?
2. Other churches adopted a "Sponsoring Church" arrangement.
  - a. What typically is the role of these "sponsoring churches" (e.g., the "Herald of Truth")?
  - b. How are these efforts financed?
  - c. Explain whether this is scriptural or not?
3. Some organizations (most notably Florida College and the Guardian of Truth Foundation) sponsor annual "lectureships" (a.k.a. Gospel Meetings) financed by individuals (not churches).
  - a. Explain whether this is scriptural or not?

#### B. Social Trends

1. Starting in the 1960's, some churches of Christ (both institutional and non-institutional) started offering programs under the general term of the "Social Gospel" (e.g., kitchens in the building, Fellowship Halls, basketball gyms).
  - a. What is the "Social Gospel"?
  - b. How are these efforts financed?
  - c. Explain whether this is scriptural or not?
2. Starting in the 1970's, preachers began addressing rising divorce rates with a variety of positions on marriage, divorce, and remarriage (MDR).
  - a. Summarize what the New Testament teaches on the subject of who can marry, when they can get divorced, and if/when they can marry someone else.
  - b. Does baptism nullify an unscriptural divorce and allow remarriage?
  - c. What about divorce for abuse?
  - d. What about an unscriptural divorce followed by one spouse getting married and the other spouse now "putting them away" because of their fornication?
  - e. Doesn't 1 Cor. 7:2 give every person the right to be married?
3. Briefly discuss the following topics as they relate to "liberal" versus "conservative" practices:
  - a. Social drink
  - b. Modest dress, mixed swimming
  - c. Casual worship attendance, casual dress
  - d. Gambling
  - e. Theistic evolution
  - f. "Unity in Diversity"

C. For each of the following religious groups, summarize their origin, any significant teaching in the doctrinal areas of Lesson 9 question B., and any other distinctive doctrines.

1. 1970's, Chuck Lucas, "Crossroads Movement", and International Churches of Christ
2. "One Cup, No Class" churches of Christ
3. 1980's Max Lucado and the Oak Hills Church (per <http://www.bpnews.net/20752/max-lucado-transcends-church-of-christ-beliefs>)

D. Divisions/Conflicts

1. The variants above typically have identical names on their buildings. How do you distinguish a faithful/sound church of Christ when choosing a congregation?

E. Special Topics

1. According to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_churches\\_of\\_Christ\\_\(non-institutional\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_churches_of_Christ_(non-institutional)), what is the relative size of institutional versus non-institutional churches of Christ in the US?