

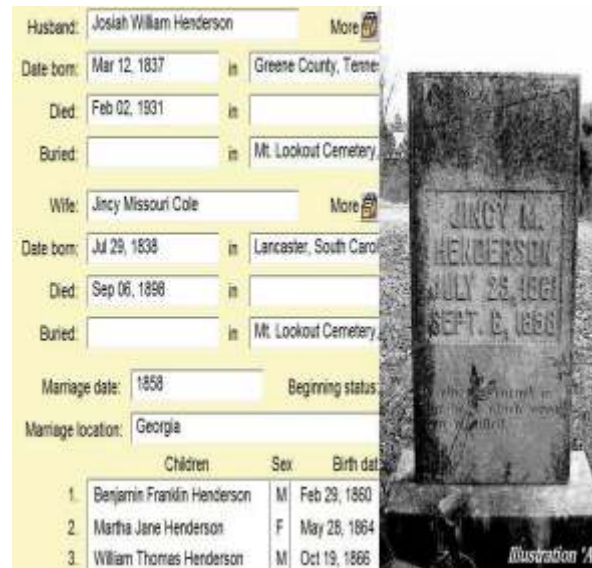
## Who founded the church of Christ?

The answer to this serious biblical question will often depend on those to whom the question is asked. For instance, if you were to ask many in the denominational world this question, a good majority of them might say "Thomas and/or Alexander Campbell," though that answer would be woefully incorrect! The reason for their answer is most likely because that is what their denominational preachers have taught them. But, is that true just because this is what they have been taught by mere men? Certainly not! In fact, that should be a very good reason for us to test the truthfulness of this particular answer! Let us now look a bit closer at this answer in light of pure historical facts.

Some things just cannot be so, even though they may be written down by man! For example, I am quite fond of genealogy work, researching my family history and learning who I am kin to and some of the interesting stories about my kin. A large part of my family tree research comes from United States census records, while a good bit more comes from walking through many cemeteries and recording information about my family from the headstones at their resting place. From all of the hours I have put into my research, I am still amazed at how many mistakes I find in the names and dates of these two types of official record keeping.

Please notice the image to follow (Illustration "A"), which is a photograph of my great-great grandmother's headstone at her resting place in Mt. Lookout Cemetery in Cherokee Co., AL and a screenshot from my family tree software showing her family and their statistics. It is quite plain that her headstone states that she was born on July 29, 1861 and died on Sept. 6, 1898. There is one major problem with this information though. Her birth date could not be correct on her headstone because her first child was born Feb. 29, 1860, which is almost one and one half years before she herself was born, if her

headstone birth date is correct! Furthermore, her next three children were born 4, 6, and 8 years after she was supposedly born, which would make her only 4 - 8 years old when she gave birth to them, if her headstone birth date is correct! And, to make matters even more confusing, her marriage records show that she was married in 1858, which would have been around 3 years before she was even born, again, if her headstone birth date is correct! Who can believe such?



The image shows a screenshot of a family tree software interface on the left and a photograph of a headstone on the right. The software interface displays the following information:

- Husband: Josiah William Henderson
- Date born: Mar 12, 1837 in Greene County, Tenne.
- Died: Feb 02, 1931 in
- Buried: in Mt. Lookout Cemetery
- Wife: Jincy Missouri Cole
- Date born: Jul 29, 1838 in Lancaster, South Caro.
- Died: Sep 06, 1898 in
- Buried: in Mt. Lookout Cemetery
- Marriage date: 1858 Beginning status
- Marriage location: Georgia
- Children table:

	Children	Sex	Birth date
1.	Benjamin Franklin Henderson	M	Feb 29, 1860
2.	Martha Jane Henderson	F	May 28, 1864
3.	William Thomas Henderson	M	Oct 19, 1866

The headstone photograph shows the following text:

JINCY M. HENDERSON  
JULY 29, 1861  
SEPT. 6, 1898

Now I know that some might say, "Well, maybe your information is wrong regarding the birth dates of her children!" but you see, those dates correspond to multiple U.S. census records, as does the corrected birth date of my great-great grandmother shown in my family tree software in Illust. "A."

When we look at simple historical facts regarding the founding of the church of Christ by Thomas and/or Alexander Campbell, as claimed by some in the denominational world, the story is much the same as the example just given - Some things just cannot be so! For example, here in the state of Alabama, not

more than 70 miles from where I live at Fort Payne, AL, is the Rocky Springs church of Christ at Bridgeport, AL that was established in 1807, as can be seen in the image to follow (Illustration "B").



From true historical facts, I know that Thomas Campbell did not emigrate to America until May 1807, at which time he was still a practicing Presbyterian minister. In fact, the Presbyterian Synod of North America was in session in Philadelphia, PA at the time Thomas Campbell arrived and he was cordially received by them and was commended to preach in Washington Co., PA as a Presbyterian minister. Do these plain historical facts seem to indicate in the least that he was the founder of the church of Christ in the Americas? Certainly not! However, he would soon break away from his sectarian confusion as he continued to study the inspired pages of the New Testament!

What about Alexander Campbell, the son of Thomas Campbell? When we look at true historical facts again, we see that Alexander did not emigrate to the United States until August 1809! He too was a practicing Presbyterian when he arrived, just like his father. Does this bit of history sound like he could have, or would have, been the founder of the church of Christ during those days, much less in 1807

when the small group of Bible believers and truth seekers were assembling together in the wilderness of North Alabama at the Rocky Springs church of Christ! No! But, just like his father before him, Alexander Campbell would continue to study the Word of God until he too broke free of sectarianism and became a Christian only, because, when manmade creeds and confessions are laid aside and the Bible is your only guide, a Christian only is the result of obedience to God. Upon that obedience, one is added to Christ's church (**Acts 2:38-47**).

**Who** was the founder of the church of Christ? I hope we can clearly see that it was not the Campbells, though they were instrumental in spreading New Testament Christianity in the United States in the early 1800's once they finally broke free of denominationalism. In **Matt. 15-18** we hear Jesus Christ say, "**But who do you say that I am?**" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 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.**" From **Acts 20:28** we can see that Jesus was not only the Builder of His church, but that He also paid the ultimate price for His church, "**Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.**" Since it is His church, and He purchased it with His own blood, it is only natural that He is Head of His church, (**Eph. 5:23**). From this same Scripture the apostle Paul said by inspiration that "**Christ is the head of the church,**" which certainly implies that there is but one true church that Jesus Christ built. In **Col. 1:18** we read, "**And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.**" When we look at **Eph. 4:4**, we

read "**There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling,**" we see that there is only "**one body,**" and from **Col. 1:18** we see that the "**one body**" is Christ's "church" over which He is the "**head.**" Therefore, there is but one true church, regardless of what mere men may say, and it's Founder is Christ!

**Are** you a member of the one true church of Christ that we read about in the Bible? If not, why not? You first need to **Hear** the gospel (**Acts 18:8; Rom. 10:17**). If you **Believe** what you have heard (**Mk. 16:15,16; Acts 18:8**), you should be convinced of your sinfulness and **Repent** of your sins (**Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38**). You must then **Confess** your belief in Jesus Christ as the only begotten Son of God before others (**Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9,10**). God's Word then commands that you be **Baptized**, which is a burial in water (**Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12**), and in order to wash away & remit your sins (**Acts 2:38, 22:16**). God then "adds" you to the body, the church of Christ (**Gal. 3:26,27; 1 Cor. 12:13**).

The End.

*Who Founded The church of Christ?*



## Bible Answers for Bible Questions

**All Scripture quotations taken from the New King James Version of The Holy Bible unless otherwise noted.**

For FREE Bible correspondence course, please write to:

FREE Bible Correspondence Course  
Sigsbee church of Christ  
2707 C.R. 115, Fort Payne, AL 35967

Lesson article authored by:  
Edward R. Henderson, Jr.