Strange Things You Hear About the Church of Christ
"The Church of Christ Was Begun By Alexander Campbell"
Text: Matthew 16:13-18
(Adapted from a lesson by Jack Williams)

Introduction:

1. As we look at strange things which are heard about the church of Christ, we look to one begun by Robert Owen (1771-1858), an atheist debated Campbell in 1829. He used the term "Campbellite" to mock Alexander Campbell and those who followed the Biblical principles he preached.
2. Of course no one in the Lord's church would accept such a title, but we do need to be equipped to answer this argument – if those who make the charge will even listen.

I. Who Was Alexander Campbell?

1. One of several men (many, 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 Peter 4:11a; Colossians 3:17**).
2. **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** says "Campbellites" are members of "A Christian denomination founded in Pennsylvania in 1810 by Thomas and Alexander Campbell."

II. The Facts

1. Before Campbell ever left denominationalism, the church of Christ was in existence.
   (1) The State of Massachusetts, has erected this historical marker in Revere, Massachusetts: "***Church of Christ in Rumney Marsh. Erected in 1770, Thomas Cheever, the first settled minister, died December 27, 1743. Aged ninety-one years."*** Alexander Campbell was born in 1788, thus there had been a congregation of the Church of Christ in Massachusetts for at least 78 years before his birth.
   (2) lt is a matter of historical record that there were churches of Christ – both in Europe and in America – before Alexander Campbell had a clear concept of what primitive Christianity was all about.
   (3) **Leslie G. Thomas has documented New Testament churches in Scotland, England, and Ireland, dating between 1778 and 1810 (The Restoration Handbook, p. 73**).
   (4) Historical accounts reveal that the Old Philadelphia congregation of the Lord's people, which was near Morrison, Tennessee, was organized in the year 1810.
      1. Alexander Campbell was not baptized until 1812, and he continued to be affiliated with the Baptists until the 1820s. (Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier*)
         - Campbell caused a lot of problems among the Baptists. You might say they viewed him as someone who "lost his mind" because he strongly and repeatedly stood against their teachings and their documents of faith.

2. There is not a single church in existence which uses the term "Campbellite" to refer to them, either collectively or singularly (unlike denominationalists).
3. Jesus of course made a claim regarding His church (**Matthew 16:13-18**)
   (1) This church has distinctive, Biblical doctrines which 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 seed?*

III. A Challenge

1. Find a doctrine which the church of Christ teaches and practices that ...
   (1) Originated with Alexander Campbell
   (2) Is not found in God's Word (**Colossians 3:17a; 1 Peter 4:11a**)

Conclusion:

1. As for me, I am grateful for any and all who have stood for the truth of God's Word and fought to encourage others to do so.
2. We must continue to follow the King of Kings, recognizing that doing such will never be popular (**John 15:17-20**).
3. We should be content to be a member of the church He bought 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).
4. We are not a "Campbellites" – We are Christians (**Acts 26:28**).
   - Why is it that so many religious people have such a difficult time being comfortable with the name "Christian," and that alone (**1 Pt 4:16**)
5. The use of human titles is sinful (**1 Corinthians 1:11-13**).