

OUR ROOTS

A Concise History of Churches of Christ

Lesson Six: 1906-Present

1906-1941: A DISTINCTIVE CHURCH TAKES SHAPE

In 1906, when Churches of Christ were listed separately from the Disciples in the United States Religious Census, we were numerically small, generally poor, and of little note in the surrounding society. We saw ourselves as the defenders of the true principles of the original movement.

The 1906 census listed Churches of Christ with 159,658 members (the Disciples of Christ had 982,701). By 1916 that number had grown to 317,937 and by 1926 to 435,714.

Our message was still the “simple gospel”

EARLY LEADERS OF THE MOVEMENT

David Lipscomb (1831-1917), Austin McGary (1846-1928), N.B. Hardeman (1874-1965), Foy E. Wallace, Jr (1896-1979), G.C. Brewer (1884-1956)

ISSUES AND DIVISIONS

Sunday school, The Lord’s Supper, Premillennialism,
Race relations: Marshall Keeble (1878-1968) and G.P. Bowser (1874-1950).

1941-1967: A CHURCH ENTERS THE MAINSTREAM

The aftermath of WWII was a turning point for Churches of Christ.

The number of missionaries in foreign countries grew from 46 in 1946 to 724 in 1967.

THE BOOM IN EDUCATION

Lipscomb (TN), Abilene Christian (TX), Freed-Hardeman (TN), Harding (AR), and Pepperdine (CA),
Faulkner (AL), Oklahoma Christian (OK), York (NE) Lubbock Christian (TX), Rochester (MI), Ohio Valley (WV), and Southwestern (TX)

EMERGING LEADERS AND MINISTRIES

Ira North (1922-1984), Batsell Barrett Baxter (1916-1982)

The Gospel Advocate, the *Firm Foundation*, and the *Christian Chronicle*

CONTORVERSY AND DIVISION

Non-institutional Churches of Christ, Cultural influence, Political issues

1967-PRESENT: A CRISIS OF IDENTITY

Estimates of our membership in 1965 stood at 915,000. By 1980 that number rose to 1,240,820. Our growth peaked in 1990 with 1,284,056 and then dropped off to 1,264,152 in 2000. The most recent survey (Churches of Christ in the United States, Carl Royster, 2018), put us at 1,128,279.

CONSERVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE INSTITUTIONS

Among the conservatives were Ira Rice, Jr. (1917-2001), William Cline (1940-1991), H.A. "Buster" Dobbs (1926-2017), and Thomas B. Warren (1920-2000)

Schools of Preaching vs. colleges

Those dubbed "progressives" were W. Carl Ketcherside (1908-1989), Leroy Garrett (1918-2015), Reuel Lemmons (1912-1989), and Rubel Shelly (1945-)

AN IDENTITY CRISIS

The clear differences between the conservative and progressive vision for the church raise the question, "Who are we in Churches of Christ?"

CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN SAN ANGELO (Comments in italic are Bryan Elliott's opinion)

Johnson Street – mainline, *leans progressive*

Southgate – mainline, *leans conservative*

Chadbourne North – mainline, *leans conservative*

9th & Main – mainline, *conservative*

Green Meadow – non-institutional or anti-cooperation

Ben Ficklin – Spanish speaking

19th & Lillie – African American

16th & Lillie – Spanish Speaking

West Angelo – non-Sunday school

Northside – non-Sunday school

19th Street – one cup

Abilene Street – *mutual edification/non-located preacher*

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST/CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN SAN ANGELO

First Christian Church

Community Hills Christian

Christian Church of San Angelo (*once affiliated with Independent Christian Churches, but not sure if that is still the case*)