

THE AIM AND PLEA OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, DISCIPLES OF CHRIST In 1809, Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, became displeased with the doctrines of both the Presbyterian and Baptist Church and decided that he would oversee a new congregation at Bush Run, Pennsylvania. He organized this Church of Christ on one principle, "Where the Scripture speaks, we speak; where the Scripture is silent, we are silent." From that statement came our Aim and Plea.

**Congregation:** We, the Disciples of Christ, wishing to be in complete accord and agreement with the doctrine of Christ, forth the following principles, which have been the focus of the Church for more than a century.

**Minister:** General aim of the Church.

**Congregation:** Restoration of the New Testament teachings and practices.

**Minister:** Plea of the Church.

**Congregation:** No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible; no name but the Divine.

**Minister:** Where the Bible speaks, we speak.

**Congregation:** Where the Bible is silent, we are silent.

**Minister:** In essentials unity.

**Congregation:** In nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.

The Aim and Plea of the Church of Christ is not a statement that seeks to define God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit, for the Bible has adequately done this. It is a statement that clarifies and reminds all Disciples who we are. This petition is scripturally sound and should be studied and learned by all Disciples.

**We, the Disciples of Christ** - This statement identifies us by name. "So shall ye be my Disciples" (John 15:8). Christ calls us His Disciples.

**Wishing to be in complete accord** - This refers to the unity of the Church on the matters of government as well as faith. The early Church was not divided. It was united in Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6). Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, condemned divisions in "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

**And agreement with the doctrine of Christ** - The Church agrees on the principles and precepts that Christ left for all of His followers (Matthew 28:20, John 7:16).

**Set forth the following principles which have been the focus of the Church for more than a century** - We understand that the Church has a history of followers in between Apostolic times and the present day who lived and died to hold the light of Jesus (2 Thessalonians 2:15). Restoration of the New Testament teachings and practices - As the New Testament Church moved through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and into modern times, heresies were introduced by evil gain seekers (1 Corinthians 11:19, 2 Peter 2:1). The Church is first called to teach (Matthew 28:19) so that it may give insight to the blind and liberty to the captives (Luke 4:18-21, Mark 16:20).

**No creed but Christ** - Creed comes from the Greek root credo (to believe). We do not accept human-inspired statements of belief regarding Christ. Christ is our only creed (Matthew 17:5, John 11:27, Acts 16:31).

**No book but the Bible** - The Bible is the only rule of faith and direction that God left for the Church to follow (Isaiah 8:16, Matthew 4:4, Hebrews 4:12).

**No name but the divine** - There is no other name by which one can be saved other than Jesus. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). Jesus Christ is divine, so His name is a divine name. We are to hear Him and His commandments (Matthew 17:5, Acts 4:12).

**Where the Bible speaks, we speak** - We are to rely on what the Bible says instead of relying on what people's opinions are. The Church cannot shun any subject in the scripture because others may think it is controversial (Proverbs 30:56, Matthew 5:37, 2 Timothy 3:16).

**Where the Bible is silent, we are silent** - For subjects that are not presented in the scriptures, we use the scripture as a reference, but our applications never blur the messages of any text (Deuteronomy 4:2, Revelation 22:8).

**In essentials, unity** - In spiritual matters spoken of in the scriptures, the Church strives to be on one accord without wavering. With one voice we speak the gospel and the doctrine of Christ (Psalm 133:1-3, John 17:11, Acts 2:42-47, Ephesians 4:4-6, 1 Peter 3:8).

**In nonessentials, liberty** - For those things that are not Biblical priorities, we exercise wisdom or our own judgment, with diligent care and concern to work out our own salvation (Galatians 5:113; 1 Peter 2:16).

**In all things, charity** - All works must be done in love (John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4:8).