

Christadelphians

by G.F. Ane

The Christadelphians are a Christian denomination with a unique set of doctrines and organizational structure, emphasizing the importance of biblical authority and congregational governance.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:42, Romans 10:14, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 1 Corinthians 14:26, Ephesians 4:11, Colossians 3:17, 1 Timothy 6:3, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Church History", "Christian Denominations"

Description

G.F. Ane delves into the history, doctrine, and organization of the Christadelphians, a denomination that emphasizes a return to primitive Christianity and the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity, believe in the resurrection of Christ, and anticipate His return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. The Christadelphians practice congregational polity, electing representatives to manage ecclesial affairs, and emphasize participation of all members in meetings. Their work includes home missionary efforts, the establishment of ecclesias in various countries, and the distribution of literature to spread their teachings globally.

Transcript

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION 1

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

Among those who identified themselves with the Disciples of Christ in their early history was John Thomas, M. D., an Englishman, who came to the United States in 1844. As he pursued the study of the Bible, his views changed and he became convinced that the cardinal doctrines of the existing churches corresponded with those of the apostate church predicted in Scripture; that the only authoritative creed was the Bible, the originals of which were inspired of God in such a manner and to such an extent as to secure absolute truthfulness; and that the churches should strive for a return to primitive Christianity in doctrine, precept, and practice. He soon began to publish his views and organized a number of societies in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, the central thought in his mind being not so much the immediate conversion of the world [304] as preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God for the "taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name." No name was adopted for the societies until the breaking out of the Civil War, when the members applied to the Government to be relieved from military duty in consequence of religious and conscientious scruples. It then appeared that they must have a distinctive name, and accordingly that of "Christadelphians," or "Brothers of Christ," was adopted. They have consistently

maintained that their faith prohibited participation in the army or navy of any country, whether in times of peace or times of war, until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth again. [305]

DOCTRINE

The Christadelphians do not accept the doctrine of the Trinity but hold that there is but one God, the Father, and that Christ was the son of God son of man, manifesting divine power, wisdom, and goodness in working out man's salvation, of which He is the only medium, and that He attained unto power and glory by His resurrection. They believe that the Holy Spirit is an "effluence" of divine power; that the soul is by nature mortal, and that eternal life is given by God through Jesus Christ only to the righteous; that Christ will shortly come personally to the earth to raise the dead and judge His saints, and to set up the Kingdom of God in place of human governments; that this kingdom will be established in Palestine, where the 12 tribes of Israel will be gathered; that Jerusalem will become "the City of the Great King" and there the throne of the Lord over Israel will be reestablished; that Christ and the saints will reign over them and all nations then existing upon earth for 1,000 years; and at the end of that period a second resurrection will take place, and judgment will be pronounced upon all who lived during the thousand years, the just receiving eternal life and the unjust, eternal death.

Admission to fellowship is contingent upon profession of faith in these doctrines and baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. Participation in the Lord's Supper is restricted to members of the church.

ORGANIZATION

In polity the Christadelphians are thoroughly congregational. They do not accept the name "church" for the local organization, but call it an "ecclesia." For the management of the affairs of each ecclesia the members elect representatives from among themselves, who are termed presiding brethren, managing brethren, secretary and treasurer, and superintendent of the Sunday school. The duty of the presiding brethren is to conduct the meetings in turn. They are expected to call upon the various members in the exercises of prayer, reading the Scriptures, or addressing the meeting, except when, by previous arrangement, [306] the preaching or lecturing, as they term it, has been allotted to some one brother. The aim is to have as many as possible take part in the exercises, in order to avoid the appearance of discrimination between clergy and laity. Women take no part in public speaking, although all vote on the questions that come before the ecclesia. The temporal affairs of the ecclesias are cared for by the managing brethren, who arrange the various questions that arise in proper form for final action by the ecclesia. While the duties of these persons are the same as in ordinary societies, the term "serving brethren" is preferred to "officers," to exemplify the words of Scripture, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." The meetings of the ecclesias are generally held in public halls, private houses, and schoolhouses, comparatively few church buildings being occupied.

There are no general associations or conventions of the ecclesias, although they have what are called "fraternal gatherings." These are not legislative bodies, neither do they claim to have power to act in any way for the ecclesias, but are rather for the spiritual upbuilding of the members and their further enlightenment in the Scriptures and for the instruction of the public. They are held in various places in the United States, sometimes annually, and usually occupy from two days to a week.

WORK

The home missionary work of the denomination is carried on by each ecclesia independently of the others, although when it is desired to invite a lecturing brother for special public work a number of ecclesias unite in the invitation, and each does what it considers its part in bearing the expense. Several brethren are engaged in this special work and travel more or less for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel of Christ to the alien and establishing a better understanding of and obedience to the truth among the members of the ecclesias. Salaries are not paid them, but their needs are supplied by the voluntary contributions of the brethren or by ecclesias.

No foreign missionary work is undertaken, Christadelphians believing that their province is to make known the true gospel to the people of so-called Christendom who have been led astray from the simplicity of the truth preached by Christ and His apostles. During the past, 10 years (1916-1926) the Christadelphians have established ecclesias in Germany, France, Norway, and other European countries. This work has been supported by voluntary contributions of both British and American Christadelphians.

A Christadelphian Fellow Service League was organized in 1910, with headquarters at Rutherford, N. J., for the special purpose of helping brethren in isolation, also the smaller ecclesias in their preaching. In the same year a Christadelphian monthly, Bible Truth, was founded, devoted to spreading the Christadelphian teaching throughout the world.

The denomination pays special attention to the preparation of literature, including a printed statement of its doctrines, and to its distribution at great public gatherings, such as the expositions at Chicago, St. Louis, and Jamestown. For this work funds are sent by individuals and ecclesias to committees appointed by the ecclesia at or near the place of the gathering, and these committees attend to the distribution of the literature and report all receipts and the work that is done.

There are five Christadelphian magazines, the Christadelphian, the Christadelphian Advocate, the Berean-Christadelphian, the Faith, and Bible Truth.

A summer Bible school was established in 1925 in Arkansas and is held during August in each year. The believers and their children from all States of the Union gather at the appointed place to engage in Bible study and other exercises. Arrangements are made for the housing, comfort, and feeding of all who attend. [307]

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gf-ane/christadelphians/>

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