

Frequently Asked Questions

Placing You on the Path of Enlightenment

Does God exist and who is He?

For every object, we understand that there has to be a designer and a creator. It is scientifically impossible that something can be created from nothing; such argument is unreasonable. Take for example, a watch or any electronic device. There is a designer and it is created from materials such as plastic and metals. An object cannot form itself from anything. Life springs only from life. The universe and everything in it has a designer and creator as well. The structure and orderliness of the world as we know it, argues strongly and undeniably for a designer and creator. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that God exists.

In the very first line of the Bible, which is the book containing the inspired word of God (**2 Timothy 3:16**), it states, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (**Genesis 1:1**)." The Bible tells us that God is real (**Romans 1:20**) and that He created the universe (**Genesis 1:2-2:7, Psalms 24:1**).

Is the Bible true? Can I believe it?

There are 3 reasons which prove that the Bible is true, believable and reliable. Firstly, it is scientifically accurate. Though it is not a textbook on science, there are references made to various branches of science that are true and proven by scientific discoveries made by man. These were mentioned hundreds or thousands of years before mankind discovered them. For example, a line in the Bible mentions that "He (God) stretched out the northern skies over empty space and suspends the earth over nothing (**Job 6:27**)," which Nicholas Copernicus, the famous Polish astronomer and mathematician, discovered 3150 years later to be correct. The Bible also proves that the earth is round as it states "He sits above the circle of the earth (**Isaiah 40:22**)..." God already stated that the earth is round (like a circle) 2230 years before Christopher Columbus, the renowned European sailor, found it to be so. There are other scientifically accurate facts found in the Bible. The Bible contains pre-scientific knowledge that could not come from men.

Secondly, archaeological research provides solid evidence of the Bible's accuracy in matters of historical, geographical and societal matters. It was mentioned in the Bible that "In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the King of Assyria sent him and he fought against Ashdod and took it (**Isaiah 20:1**)." For years, this remained the sole historical reference to Sargon. Critics believed that this was a historical blunder in the Bible. However, in 1843, Paul Emile Botta, the French consular agent in Mosul, and Austen Layard unearthed evidence that established Sargon as an Assyrian king. They found the remains of Sargon's palace in Khorsabad, Iraq, with its walls decorated with texts describing his reign. Today, an artifact from the ancient palace - a huge 40 tonne stone slab - is found at the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute. This is one of the many archaeological discoveries which prove that the Bible is historically reliable.

Thirdly, the prophecies (predictions) and their fulfillment prove the Bible's divine origin. There are hundreds of prophecies found in the Bible which deal with various nations, peoples and also with Jesus Christ. Many were mentioned hundreds or even thousands of years before actual occurrences and fulfilled to the minutest details. For example, more than 350 direct or indirect prophecies regarding the life of Jesus Christ are fulfilled. Some examples are that Jesus Christ would be born of a virgin (**prophecy made in Isaiah 7:14, fulfilled in Matthew 1:18**); that not a bone of his body will be broken (**Psalms 34:20, fulfilled in John 19:33-36**); and that he would become alive again three days after his death (**Psalms 16:8-10; 30:3, fulfilled in Luke 24:6, 31,34**). Such astonishingly precise details of the prophecies and the chances of them being fulfilled by one man would be less than 1 in a thousand trillion, according to Mathematicians. All of these evidences prove that the Bible is true, believable, reliable (**John 17:17**) and the inspired word of God (**2 Timothy 3:16**).

Why should I become a Christian?

It is because this is what God wants for everyone, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (**2 Peter 3:9**). The unrighteous will be cast into hell, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (**Revelation 21:8**). Why is this so? It is because of sin. Sin is the transgression, the violation, of God's law (**1 John 3:4**). It means to cross the boundaries that God has set by His law. "All unrighteousness is sin (**1 John 5:17**)." The Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (**Romans 3:23**) and that the "wages of sin is death." (**Romans 6:23**) This is a serious matter, which concerns where one will spend eternity (**Matthew 25:46**). However, there is good news. God wants us to go to heaven, to spend "eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Rom 6:23**) where there will be no more pain, suffering, and sadness (**Revelations 21:4**). "There is no salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (**Acts 4:12**)."

However, what we do in this life - our decisions, commitments and actions - has a major bearing on our eternal destiny. Our life here is preparation for the life thereafter. In **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**, the Bible states that God will take vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction. God "commands all men everywhere to repent (**Acts 17:20**)", to obey the gospel, to submit to Him in obedience, to do what He requires of us, to do His will (**Matthew 7:21**) as revealed through the Word. As a Christian, one will enjoy all blessings - God as your heavenly Father, Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, forgiveness of sins, directions on how to live right with God, comfort and peace, strength and courage to face the difficulties of life, fellow Christians as brothers and sisters in the family of God, and more.

How do I become a Christian?

To become a Christian (**Acts 11:26**), one must first hear the word of God (**Romans 10:17, John 8:32**), believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (**John 8:24, Mark 16:16**), repent of one's sins (**Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38**), confess verbally the Lord Jesus as the Son of God (**Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37**) and be baptized (**Acts 8:35-39**) - which is being immersed, soaked fully, in water - so that one can be forgiven of one's past sins (**Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21**) and be added into the one body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:13**), which is the church (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). This church is Christ's church and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the church of Christ (**Romans 16:16**). It is to this church that one is added by God (**Acts 2:47**). Thereafter, one must grow spiritually and faithfully follow Jesus Christ in a life of obedience (**1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:18, Revelation 2:10**)

Are all churches the same?

Not all churches are the same, in fact, there is only one true church, the church which Christ built and this is the only church "where the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (**Matthew 16:18**) and to which the Lord adds those who were being saved (**Acts 2:47**). In this world, we see many different churches bearing different names. However, the only true test of a church is whether its doctrines, beliefs and practices conform stringently to the Bible's standards (**Revelation 22:18-19**). Here, we must also take note that the one true church does not mean the literal building itself whereby Christians go to worship. The church refers to the group of Christians, Christ's body (**Colossians 1:24**). In **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus stated that He would build one church and in Acts chapter two, we read of its establishment. In **Ephesians 1:22-23**, the church is known as Christ's body and there can only be one as seen in **Ephesians 4:4**.

What is the distinctive plea of the Church of Christ?

It is primarily a plea for religious unity that is based upon the Bible. In a divided religious world, it is believed that the Bible is the only possible common denominator upon which most, if not all, of the God-fearing people of the land can unite. This is an appeal to go back to the Bible. It is a plea to speak where the Bible speaks and to remain silent where the Bible is silent in all matters that pertain to religion. It further emphasizes that in everything religious there must be a 'Thus saith the Lord' for all that is done. The objective is religious unity of all believers in Christ. The basis is the New Testament. The method is the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

Does the church of Christ have a creed?

No. At least, there is no creed in the usual sense of the word. The belief of the church is stated fully and completely in the Bible. There is no other manual or discipline to which the members of the church of Christ give their allegiance. The Bible is considered as the only infallible guide to heaven.

How many churches of Christ are there?

In the universal sense, there can only be one church - the body of Christ. In fact, the word "church" itself denotes a group of people, which makes up the body. However, the word "church" is often used in the local meaning - i.e. a group of people meeting regularly in a certain location, or what we call a local congregation. In the Bible itself, we can read of different congregations in various locations, e.g. the church at Ephesus, the church at Corinth, etc. Hence, there could be more than one local "churches" of Christ in the world. In Singapore itself, there are about 10 different independent congregations.

How are the churches organizationally connected?

Following the plan of organization found in the New Testament, each local congregation is autonomous, i.e. each is responsible for its own actions. It is their common faith in the Bible and adherence to its teachings that are the chief ties which bind them together. There is no central headquarters of the church and no organization superior to the elders of each local congregation. Congregations do cooperate voluntarily in supporting the orphans and the aged, in preaching the gospel in new fields, and in other similar works. There are no conventions, annual meetings, or official publications. The 'tie that binds' is a common loyalty to the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

Are all churches of Christ the same?

As explained earlier, each local congregation is independent from another. If every congregation adheres closely to the teachings of the Bible, they would be similar in their faith and their understanding on various doctrines. However, once a congregation departs from the teachings of the Bible, they are no longer regarded as the body of Christ, although they may hold on to the "Church of Christ" signboard. Hence, it is very important to identify the churches of Christ by their fruits (**Matthew 7:16**).

How are the churches of Christ governed?

In each congregation, which has existed long enough to become fully organized, there is a plurality of elders who serve as the governing body. These men are selected by the local congregations on the basis of qualifications set down in the scriptures (**1 Timothy 3:1-8**). Serving under the elders are deacons, teachers, and evangelists or ministers. The latter do not have the authority equal to or superior to the elders. The elders are shepherds or overseers who serve under the headship of Christ according to the New Testament, which is a kind of constitution. There is no earthly authority superior to the elders of the local church.

What does the church of Christ believe about the Bible?

The original autographs of the sixty-six books which make up the Bible are considered to have been divinely inspired, by which it is meant that they are infallible and authoritative. Reference to the scriptures is made in settling every religious question. A pronouncement from the scripture is considered the final word. The basic textbook of the church and the basis for all preaching is the Bible.

Does the church of Christ believe in predestination?

God predestines the righteous to be eternally saved and the unrighteous to be eternally lost. The statement of the apostle Peter, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable unto him' (**Acts 10:34-35**) is taken as an evidence that God did not predestine individuals to be eternally saved or lost, but that each man determines his own destiny.

Does the church of Christ believe in heaven and hell?

Yes. The statement of Christ in **Matthew 25**, and elsewhere, are taken at face value. It is believed that after death each man must come before God in judgment and that he will be judged according to the deeds done while he lived (**Hebrews 9:27**). After judgment is pronounced he will spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

Why does the church of Christ baptize only by immersion?

The word baptize comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' and literally means, 'to dip, to immerse, to plunge'. In addition to the literal meaning of the word, immersion is practiced because it was the practice of the church in apostolic times. Still further, only immersion conforms to the description of baptisms as given by the apostle Paul in Romans 6:3-5 where he speaks of it as a burial and resurrection.

Is infant baptism practiced?

No. Only those who have reached the 'age of accountability' are accepted for baptisms. It is pointed out that the examples given in the New Testament are always of those who have heard the gospel preached and have believed it. Faith must always precede baptism, so only those old enough to understand and believe the gospel are considered fit subjects for baptism.

Do ministers of the church hear confession?

No. Ministers or evangelists of the church have no special prerogatives. They do not wear the title of 'Reverend' or 'Father', but are addressed simply by the term 'brother' as are all other men of the church. Along with elders and others they do counsel and advise those seeking help.

Are prayers addressed to the saints?

No. God the Father is considered the only one to whom the prayers may be addressed. It is further understood that Christ stands in a mediator between God and man (**Hebrews 7:25**). All prayers are therefore offered through Christ, or in the name of Christ (**John 16:23-26**).

How often is the Lord's Supper eaten?

The Bible teaches in **Acts 20:7** that Christians are to assemble on the first day to partake of the Lord's supper. Therefore, the Lord's Supper is to be taken every first day of the week (Sunday).

What kind of music is used in the worship?

As a result of the distinctive plea of the church - a return to New Testament Faith and practice - acapella singing is the only music used in the worship. This singing, unaccompanied by mechanical instruments of music, conforms to the music used in the apostolic church and for several centuries thereafter (**Ephesians 5:19**). It is felt that there is no authority for engaging in acts of worship not found in the New Testament. This principle eliminates the use of instrumental music, along with the use of candles, incense, and other similar elements.

Does the church of Christ believe in purgatory?

No. The absence of any reference in the scriptures to the temporary place of punishment from which the soul will eventually be released into heaven prevents the acceptance of the doctrine of purgatory.

Do members of the churches of Christ believe in virgin birth?

Yes. The statement in **Isaiah 7:14** is taken as a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ. New Testament passages such as **Matthew 1:20, 25**, are accepted at face value as declarations of the virgin birth. Christ is accepted as the only begotten Son of God, uniting in his person perfect divinity and perfect manhood.

By what means does the church secure financial support?

The Bible teaches that on each first day of the week, the members of the church shall 'lay by in store as they have been prospered' (**1 Corinthians 16:2**). The amount of any individual gift is generally known only to the one who gave it and to the Lord. This free-will offering is the only call which the church makes. No assessments or other levies are made. No money-making activities, such as bazaars or suppers, are engaged in.