

But you would eventually feel comfortable because we normally treat people as we like to be treated.

You'd find the Bible the centre of the activity. We don't worship the Bible - we worship God - but like countless thousands of others, we acknowledge it as the source of our understanding of God, ourselves and others. You'll hear a strong stress on how life should be lived in light of what God says to us.

When we sing praise to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit you would see that we sing as whole congregations and without instrumental accompaniment. Like a number of other churches, churches of Christ raise the question of New Testament precedent for the instruments. But their non-instrumental praise is partly due to a healthy insistence that 'understanding' be a central element in praise.

Their congregational praise promotes unity among all the disciples as they offer their sacrifice of praise to God. People like Luther and Calvin reacted to assemblies which sat, ignored and in silence, while clerics and choirs sang in Latin.

With so many others, we wish to practice the priesthood of all believers in this crucial area and to achieve the balance of maximum understanding with the emotion that runs deeper than the nerves.

If you visited a Sunday assembly you would find the Lord's Supper at the centre of the activity. While we believe the bread and wine remain bread and wine, we would say that the Supper is more than a 'memorial' supper. We would say it was 'communion' with the risen and present Christ.

A FEW CLOSING WORDS

"Because we revere the Scriptures we might tend to be over-sensitive about all 'traditions'. Because we insist on biblical authority we can some-times sound like lawyers rather than disciples. Because we are deeply critical of division we can too easily overlook our own inner wrestlings.

Because we stress obedience to God we sometimes understate our glad acceptance of God's grace. Because we search for doctrinal correctness we could tempt you to think we were short on 'spirit' - this would not be true. Because (like every church) we have 'problem disciples', you might come across one here or there and dismiss us altogether. Please don't do that. Forgive us where we need it and be patient with us. We're in deadly earnest about our Lord Jesus Christ and we have something to offer you if you'll give us the chance. Our own pursuit of truth as it's found in Jesus Christ is a continuing one and we'd be glad to receive help from you in that quest. (Thanks for reading this Introduction and do make contact with us. God bless you.)

A warm welcome awaits you at the
CHURCH OF CHRIST

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And Greenhill Rise
Corby

Telephone (01536) 628862

Meeting

Sundays Worship 10.30am,
Tuesdays Bible Study 7.00pm

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST



WHO ARE THE 'CHURCHES OF CHRIST'?

The truth is, the only way to get to know these people is to talk with them, watch them as they live in your community, listen to their children and so forth. But it isn't always possible to invest that kind of time or drum up that kind of interest in other people. Daily schedules are full enough without adding more to them. And, besides, who wants to act like a detective? Still, it wouldn't be a waste of time to keep your eyes, ears, heart and Bible open when looking in our direction. I've been a part of this movement for more than forty years so maybe you'll find this 'introduction' useful.

VERY ORDINARY PEOPLE

We're very ordinary people with the strengths and shortcomings of the rest of the ordinary people. Our families wrestle with the same stern tests that all families face (financial, family, health, social and spiritual challenges).

Most of us are very serious about our spiritual roots and direction and we worry about the rise in crime, the moral and spiritual decline of the West, the exploitation and pain of the underdeveloped nations and unemployment (with the tensions and unhappiness springing from it). But we're anxious to be socially useful. If you knew us, you'd think we were you. We don't know all the right questions much less all the right answers but most of us, almost all the time, are deeply conscious of God who reigns through Jesus Christ; we trust him and long to please him.

WHAT ARE THEIR BASIC CONVICTIONS?

Like every other church you know, these people have some views that are peculiar to them or that receive an emphasis from them that they feel others don't give. But you'd be surprised (perhaps) at how much they hold in common with all other evangelical churches. Here are some of their basic convictions just to give you an idea of the direction they move in.

I'll cite only a couple of Bible verses with each point. That might be helpful.

1. We believe there is one God and that he has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6).

2. We believe that God has been manifested as Son in the person of Jesus of Nazareth who is called the Christ (John 1:1,14; 20:28).
3. We believe in the bodily death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, His ascension into heaven and His bodily return sometime in the future (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:1).
4. We believe the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) to be the fully trustworthy and sufficient Word of God to humans (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).
5. We believe that humans have life with God through the person of Jesus whose life, death and living again, is the means and guarantee of that right relationship with God which comes to us as a gracious gift (Romans 3:23-25; 4:25; 6:23; Ephesians 2:6,8-10).
6. We believe and practise the New Testament teaching that those who wished to have life with God in Christ were called to trustingly and repentantly be immersed into Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27).
7. We believe that Christians are called by the New Testament teaching to share the Lord's Supper (Communion) each Sunday (Acts 20:7; compare 1 Corinthians 11:17-26 and 16:2).
8. We believe that those who are freely given the gift of life with God are called to live lives of personal integrity and to be a blessing to the world in which they live (Ephesians 4:17-6:9; Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-37).
9. We believe that Jesus Christ is returning again to judge the world and completely right all wrongs (2 Corinthians 5:10; Acts 17:30-31; Matthew 11:22,24).

RELATED MATTERS WHICH RECEIVE A LOT OF STRESS IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST

As you can see from the nine points listed, these people move in line with many other evangelical churches but there are differences. In the few points which follow I'll tell you some things we feel need stressed which are either not

emphasised or not believed by some evangelical churches. (I won't load this down with many more texts.)

- We stress that Jesus Christ died for all humans without exception and not just a certain number of them (1 John 2:2).
- We stress the sinfulness of humans and the human inability to cure the sin problem (Ephesians 2:1-10).
- We stress the point that humans are accountable for their own sin and that the degree of accountability varies according to God's assessment of one's whole life and environment (Ephesians 2:1-3; Matthew 11:22-24).
- We stress 'believer's baptism' as part of the trusting sinner's submission to God as she/he says 'yes' to God's free gift of life in the blessed redeemer, Jesus Christ and we stress it as a call to honourable living (Romans 6:1-7; Acts 2:36-41).
- We stress the importance of the unity of all believers in Christ on the basis of the Scriptures and we stress the evil of sectarianism (Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16; Galatians 5:20).

WHAT IF YOU VISITED ONE OF OUR MEETINGS?

If you're like me when you visit a place for the first time, you'll feel a bit awkward no matter how relaxed and friendly the people are

