

The Manhattan Church – Some Highlights of Our Journey

1733 John Glas (born 1695), who broke from the Scottish Presbyterian Ch. by denying the right of civil government to interfere in religious matters, establishes in Perth, Scotland the first congregation of his followers called the Church of Christ. Robert Sandeman joins him and marries his daughter.

1764 Robert Sandeman migrates to America. “Sandemanian/Glassite” congregations were based on the restoration of the apostolic Church, the independence of each local church from every other and from the State. Emphasis was laid upon the Lord’s Supper. They were led by elders, and teachers.

1810 Oct 10 The first Church of Christ is established in New York City. A group of recent immigrants, influenced by the views of Robert Sandeman and sometimes called Scotch Baptists, break away from the Ebenezer Baptist Church and organize a separate congregation. Their first meeting house was a Watch House of the volunteer police force of New York.

Register of the rise and increase of the church professing obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ in New York.

In the month of October 1810 nine persons (the first names on the following list) separated themselves from a certain society, then in this City, called the “Ebenezer Baptist Church,” and, after such separation considered themselves bound in the fear of God, to come together as disciples of the Lord Jesus, and to continue in the apostles’ doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread and prayers. They accordingly so came together immediately and the following list exhibits their names, and the names of those afterward added to the list.

1	William Ovington	6	Sophia Kemmish	11	John Watson
2	Sarah Ovington	7	[?] Crofsman	12	Wm. Marshall
3	James Saunders	8	Elizabeth Johnson.	13	Benj. S. Hendrickson
4	Ann Saunders	9	Mary White	14	Sara Hendrickson
5	Jon.n Hatfield	10	Henry Errett	15	Thos. Stephens

1815-20 In this period Henry Errett writes a short treatise “On Baptism” in which he presents the scriptures that teach the meaning of baptism and highlights the teaching that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins. This booklet influences Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell.

1818 Mar 1 The Church in New York City sends out a circular letter describing their basic beliefs, manner of worship, and organization. They are seeking other groups with similar desires to be conformed “to the simplicity of the apostolic faith and practice.” Nine years later, Alexander Campbell reprinted their letter in *The Christian Baptist*, November 5, 1827. Campbell also reprinted positive responses to the letter from churches in Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland.

The Church professing obedience to the faith of Jesus Christ, assembling together in New York; To the Churches of Christ scattered over the earth, to whom this communication may come. Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied from God the Father, by the Holy Spirit, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearlly Beloved, That you may be better informed concerning those who thus address you, we have deemed it requisite to give the following brief sketch of our public worship, soliciting, at the same time, that wherein you may differ from us in any matter, faithfulness will dispose you to refer us to apostolic practice, plain and intelligible to the capacity of the plain and simple followers of the Lamb, as we have not much of this world’s learning, and are disposed to admit that alone as obligatory, which can be clearly adduced from the New Testament, without the aid of sophistry or allusion to the practices of man. And we trust it may be given us from above, to receive with meekness whatever of this nature your love and concern for our welfare may dispose you to communicate.

The order, which we derive from the law of Christ, is as follows: We require that all whom we receive into fellowship should believe in their heart, and confess with their mouth that Jesus is the Christ; that he died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that upon such confession and such alone, they should be baptized.

We hold it to be the duty and privilege of the disciples of Jesus to come together into one place, on every first day of the week, rejoicing in the recollections which that day revives whereon the Lord Jesus destroyed the power both of hell and death by his resurrection from the dead, and gave sure hope to his people of being raised also. When thus assembled, we proceed to attend to all the ordinances which we can discover to be enjoined by the practice of the first churches, and the commandments of the Lord and his apostles.

1831-1837 The Church in New York City meets at St. John's Lane and York Street.

1837-1850 The Church in New York City meets at 80 Greene Street near Spring. The group used the name "Primitive Christian Church of Disciples" combining the names preferred by the movement led by Barton Stone (Christian Church) and that led by Alexander Campbell (Disciples of Christ).

1850 The Church in New York City is officially incorporated and purchases its first meeting house 70-72 West 17th Street for \$10,500. The inscription over the door read "Disciples' Meeting House."

1862 During the civil war, the Church has a large group of women who were "taking immediate steps for relief of the sick and wounded soldiers now arriving in the city from the seat of the war."

1865 Sept 28 The Church moves to a building at 26-28 West 28th Street near Broadway.

1890-1910 In the Stone-Campbell movement at large, the movement divides over several issues of liberal theology, scriptural authority, open membership, and north-south cultural differences. The more liberal groups became known as the "Disciples of Christ." Those more committed to Biblical authority and restoration of early Christianity became known as the "Churches of Christ."

July, 1920—Several families that had been meeting separately for worship came together to form a new congregation in Manhattan. The fledgling church met in Wood's Memorial Chapel, 237 West 69th Street. The Johnson family, from Birmingham, England, and the families of William Boone and George McKee from Georgia formed the core of the group. They were joined by families that had left the Disciples of Christ. Their first minister was Morgan Carter.

1927—the Congregation moved to 70th Street on the West Side to the George Washington room of the Pythian Temple.

1939-41—Led by Homer P. Reeves, the Manhattan Church bought a large brick town house at 48 East 80th St. and began meeting there Aug. 3, 1941.

1940—the Manhattan Church joined with Paul English of Tennessee in founding a mission church in Harlem. The work continues today as The church of Christ in Harlem.

1945—William Fryer from the Manhattan Church of Christ began a new congregation in Brooklyn, which grew into the Flatlands Church of Christ.

1952—Eddie Grindley and a group from the Manhattan Church who were working actively with children attending Camp Shiloh began the Eastside Church of Christ on East 83rd Street. The church later moved to the lower east side.

1955-1968 Burton and Thelma Coffman lead the Manhattan Church is raising funds and building the building currently used by the congregation. New elders are appointed.

