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THE STORY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

A film series on the history
of the Churches of Christ

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Abilene Christian University Press

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Douglas A. Foster

THE STORY OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Discussion Guide

Segment One | Stone and Campbell Unite

1. What are the dangers of refusing to admit we have a history?
2. What are some of the reasons we in Churches of Christ have been reluctant to admit we have a history? Are these legitimate reasons?
3. What do you think was the most serious doctrinal difference at the time of the union of the Stone and Campbell movements? Why do you believe that one is the most serious?
4. Would it be possible today for local congregations to experience a union like those that occurred in the 1830s and following? If so, how? If not, why?

Segment Two | The Tragedy of Division

1. In your view, what authenticates a church? Is it the right system, a holy community, or something else?
2. Should Christians and churches become involved in the political and social issues of the day? Why or why not?

3. How could the division connected with the Civil War have been avoided?
4. How did post-Civil War conditions affect the discussion over the Missionary Society and instrumental music? Are there ever any “pure” discussions of doctrinal issues or do circumstances always color our thinking?
5. What are some good arguments for a cappella music in worship? What are some bad arguments for it?

Segment Three | Churches of Christ

1. What factors led many to believe that members of the Churches of Christ were the only Christians?
2. What are the dangers of developing our beliefs and theology through debates? Were religious debates mostly helpful or harmful?
3. Why did members of Churches of Christ found so many new colleges after 1941? What effect did this expansion of higher education have on Churches of Christ? How did the expansion affect the relationship between black and white Churches of Christ?
4. What were the issues involved in the four twentieth-century divisions (one cup, pre-millennial, non-Sunday school, and non-institutional)? What social or cultural factors made these items into issues? What made these issues divisive?

5. In what ways did Churches of Christ become more like the culture around them in this time? In what ways did we remain or become counter-cultural?
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Segment Four | Global Impact

1. What are the ways that your church supports mission work around the world? What are the benefits and challenges to this way? Is there a better way of supporting missionaries?
 2. Why did Churches of Christ have so many foreign mission efforts after World War II? What were the strengths and weaknesses of those efforts?
 3. How successful have the missionary efforts of Churches of Christ been? In what ways have our efforts lacked?
 4. How has the nature of mission work changed? How has the role of an American missionary changed in other countries? How needed are American missionaries in other nations?
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Segment Five | Race and Gender

1. What was the attitude toward race relations in Churches of Christ until the late 1960s? Why was that our attitude? What can we learn from this part of our history?
2. Where did the idea of race come from? How has your thinking been affected by the history of racism in the world?

3. What forms does racism take in the church today? How important should breaking down racial barriers be for our churches?
 4. In what ways has the cult of true womanhood affected our beliefs about women's roles in the church?
 5. How should the church approach the discussion about women's roles? What assumptions do we bring to Scripture when studying the issue of women's leadership roles in the church?
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Segment Six | Strengths and Temptations

1. What is the nature of restoration? Is restoration something we accomplish, and then shift our focus to defending what we have restored?
2. In what ways are the "five acts of worship" helpful, and in what ways do they limit?
3. How has the "incorporation of America" affected the leadership model in Churches of Christ? What should be the most important characteristics of an elder?
4. Which is most important to your congregation: a correct system or the fruit of a transformed body? How are they related? Which have you seen more in your church?
5. How has education shaped the Churches of Christ? What temptations does this strength bring with it?

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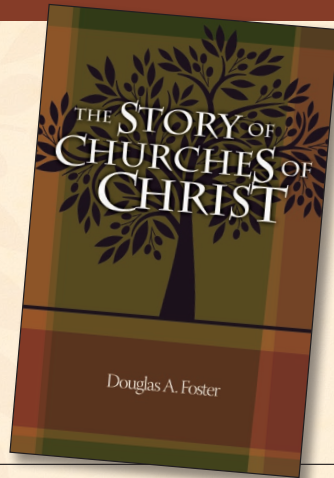


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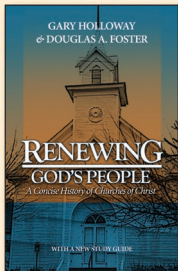
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