

Denominational Background of Southern Acres Christian Church

Southern Acres Christian Church Position Paper

Southern Acres Christian Church is an independent, non-denominational Christian church affiliated with the independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (instrumental). We consider ourselves an evangelical church (see the position paper, “Is Southern Acres an Evangelical Church?”) because we agree with the basic doctrines that characterize evangelicals, beginning with the Bible as God’s inspired Word and our source of authority.

The Christian Churches and Churches of Christ are a loose fellowship of churches that trace their heritage to the Restoration Movement of the early 1800s. Christian leaders like Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone and others of that era began to decry the divisiveness occurring among denominational churches and dreamed of a time we would all be unified in Christ. The Cane Ridge Revival (1801) and the Second Great Awakening gave a spark to their movement. Many people were turning to Christ, and many churches were turning toward unity, even to the point of changing their names to “Christian Church” or “Church of Christ” to reflect their desire to join with one another in exalting Jesus Christ. According to historians, the Restoration Movement “spread across the frontier like wildfire.”

The movement had some lofty goals which continue to this day: To free Christianity of creeds, traditions and denominational distinctives that divide us; to restore doctrinal purity by using the Bible only as the source of authority; and to unify all Christians for the purpose of evangelizing the world. “We are not the only Christians,” they said, “but Christians only.”

Tragically, the movement experienced its own divisions in the early 1900s. Today there are three primary groups of churches that trace their history to the Restoration Movement: The Disciples of Christ, the independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, and the non-instrumental Churches of Christ. Southern Acres is considered a part of the independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, joined loosely by our history and an annual convention – the North American Christian Convention. The NACC is a non-voting convention open to the public, where Christians from around the world gather for the purpose of revival and edification.

Because the churches in our movement remain independent, the doctrines and practices of individual churches can vary widely and we do not agree on all issues; neither do we necessarily agree with everything the founders of the movement wrote or believed. However, we at Southern Acres want to continue to hold high the goals and ideals of the Restoration Movement.

In light of our goals, we are encouraged by the spirit of unity that exists among evangelical Christians today. It is exciting to see Christians from various denominational backgrounds worshipping and studying together at Christian concerts, Bible studies and evangelistic meetings. Many are determined to be known primarily as “Christians” who hold to the authority of God’s Word. Though they may not consider themselves a part of the Restoration Movement, and we may disagree on some important doctrinal matters, we are happy that so many have caught the spirit of the founders of our movement and are attempting to exalt Jesus Christ above all.

