

Madison Heights Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
149 Main Street  
Madison Heights, VA 24572



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## MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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### The United Body of Christ

This may not be the typical newsletter article for Easter. However, since we cover the glorious resurrection frequently throughout the year and since there have been many articles on the resurrection for Easter. I have decided on a different topic that is also very important.

Lent is a season of reflection, soul searching, and movement to be closer to Christ. During this season of Lent I was doing some reflection on why I decided to become a Disciple. While there are events that unfolded on a long and windy road of life, for me, the real reason is the doctrine. I can't speak for you but I became a member of the Disciples of Christ due to the doctrine. We have a very significant reason for being who we are as a church. We have a solid foundation that is based on logical faith based doctrine. Our doctrine goes back to the beginning of the formation the church that we know as the Disciples of Christ.

It begins on the American frontier where the practice of Christian ethics was not very popular within society. There was wide spread drunkenness, fighting, and a total disregard for Sunday. While the east was more civil, the frontier was basically immoral. In this environment there were religions that carried old country differences into the new frontier and they were held apart by specific doctrines that were quite different from each other. These doctrines were based on theology that either believed that the grace of God is freely bestowed upon all through the death of Christ or that believed that salvation is not for all but for a certain election by God. These various persuasions had statements of faith, creeds, or confessions of faith that taught their doctrine of faith and separated them from others.

Both Barton Stone and Thomas Campbell believed that the doctrine that we need to be teaching is the Bible itself. As such, they both found difficulty in following a particular creed or teaching a specific creed of the church, especially if that doctrine of faith was questionable by standards of biblical interpretation. So, on the one hand was a considerable immoral social environment, and on the other was a church that was inadequate to reform the social condition because it was not united. Therefore, Christian union is essential for the church if it is to fulfill its task here on earth. The creeds keep Christians apart when they need to present a united front. The individual was expected subscribe to the creed even if biblical interpretation contradicts the creedal statement. Following the Bible is much more important than following a creed. Our doctrine is based on following the Bible and acting according to our Bible based beliefs.

When serving communion becomes a violation of the standards and practices of doctrine then that is a matter of persuasion. That is not following the Bible or the teachings of Jesus. You need to decide what it is you are going to, what rule you are to live by, to follow the doctrines of persuasion, or to follow the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. It is the Bible that is our guide. It is the teachings of Jesus that we are to follow. Unity can only come as a result of people following the Bible and the teachings of Jesus over the doctrines of persuasion by the exaltation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ above any given human opinion. If we can love one another as Christ commands, if we can live by the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ, then we can be united. The united body of Christ can battle the decay of mainstream society. This is why I think it is important to be a Disciple.

George