

The Articles of Faith of the Apostolic Church International

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things (Lu. 24:46-49). These are the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to His first disciples after His resurrection from the dead.

Prior to His ascension He promised: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"The faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) was born on the day of Pentecost with the message of the apostle Peter under the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14-47). It was to this apostle that the Lord Jesus Christ promised to give the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mat. 16:15-19).

The following Scriptures firmly establish the doctrinal authority of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ: (Mt. 10:40; Luke 10:16; John 15:16; 17:18-20; Mark 16:15; Lu. 24:44-45; Acts 10:39-42; Gal 1:8-12; 1 Cor 3:10-11; 2Cor. 4:3-4; I Jn 4:6; I Jn 1:1-4; Eph 2:20; Rev 21:14)

The Apostolic Church International fully believes and adheres to the teachings and practices of the Bible writers, prophets, and apostles that are summarized in the following Articles of Faith.

Article 1

The Holy Bible

The Bible claims that its author is God. It is His inspired word. The perfect unity and harmony of the 66 books of the Bible attest of its divine inspiration (Is. 34:16; 2Pe. 1:19-21, Jos. 1:7-9; Pr. 22:20-21).

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible establishes its own infallibility (Pr. 30:5-6; Re. 22:18-19; De. 4:2).

Its fundamental purpose is to reveal the eternal One True God, Father of all creation, and to show mankind the way of salvation (Jn. 20:31; Mat. 22:29). There is no salvation outside of the written Word of God.

- "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2Ti. 3:16).
- The word of God is life, healing and food for the soul. (De. 8:3; Pr. 4:20-22; Pr. 22:19-21; Jn. 6:63, 68; Ps. 107:20; Ex. 15:26; Ac. 5:20; Je. 15:16; Eze. 3:1-3; Mt. 4:1-10).
- Quoting the Bible itself: "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2Pe. 1:20-21)

- Understanding the scriptures requires the guidance of the Spirit of God (Lu. 24:45; 1Jn. 2:27; Ps. 119:18; Is. 28:9-11; Eph. 4:11-12; 1Co. 12:1-28; Ja. 3:1-2; Ac. 18:24-28; Ac. 8:29-35; Is. 30:20-21; Jn. 14:26; Ga. 1:6-12; Jos. 1:6-9; 1Ti. 4:13; Col. 1:24-29; 1Co. 4:1-2; 2:9-14; Eph. 3:1-6).

Article 2

One True God, the Father of All

There is only One Eternal True God, who is Spirit and Word, creator of heaven and earth and of all beings. Absolute monotheism runs through the sacred writings of both Testaments (De. 6:4, Mk. 12:29; De. 4:9-24; 32:39-40; 1Ti. 6:15-16, Ps. 33:6; Jn. 4:24; Ps. 139:7-8; Is. 66:1-2; Jer. 23:23; Is. 45:5-6; 48:12-13; Ja. 2:19).

There is no other God beside Him, before and after Him, nor like Him, and He is the only Saviour (Isa. 43:10-12; 44:6-8, 24; 45:21-24; 46:8-9; 25:6-9; 2Sam. 7:22; Isa. 40:18).

Finite man cannot comprehend the infinite God, and put together a complete definition of His creator. However God's attributes or His perfections are known to us through revelation. The unsearchable God reveals them to man (Job. 26:14, Is. 45:15), and this list can never be exhaustive. They are commonly referred to as: Eternity (Ps. 90:2; Ge. 21:33, He. 13:8); Sovereignty (Is. 10:13-14); Holiness (Le. 11:44; Ps. 99:3,59; Is. 40:25; Hab. 1:12; Jn. 17:11; 1Pe. 1:15; Re. 4:8; 1Jn. 1:5); Immutability (Ma. 3:6; Ja. 1:17); Infinity (1K. 8:27; Ac. 17:24-28, Job 36:26); Love (1Jn. 4:8); Omnipotence (Ge. 17:1; Ex. 6:3; 2Co. 6:18; Re. 1:8; 19:6); Omnipresence (Ps.137:7-11; Jn. 3:13); Omniscience (Ac. 15:18; Eph. 1:11; Ps. 135:6; Pn. 16:4; Eph. 1:14); Truth (Jn. 17:3; Ti. 1:2; Ro. 3:4; He. 6:18).

The Scriptures remind us: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? (Mal. 2:10).

It was foretold by the prophet Isaiah: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Is. 25:9). The door of salvation was opened to mankind when 'In the fullness of time,' the invisible and indivisible God manifested Himself in the Son, "the brightness of His glory and the express image of his person." (Is. 7:13-14; 8:8; 9:6; 12:1-6; 53; 59: 16-17; 52:5-6; Ps. 118:22-24; Dan. 9:24; He. 1:1-3; Col. 1:12-15) That which was from the beginning, the Word of Life was seen and touched (1Jn. 1:1-4). The One True God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. (2Cor. 5:19; 1Ti. 3:16; Jn. 1:1, 14; 1Ti. 2:5; 1Co. 8:5-6; Mt. 1:20-23; Lu. 1:35; Ro. 9:5; Re. 1:5-8, 17-18).

The scriptures declare: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zec. 14:9; Is. 44:6; Re. 1:8; 19:1-15; 21:3-7).

Article 3

The Son of God

Beginning with Genesis 3:15, until the close of the Old Testament, prophetic promises of a coming Redeemer alternate with God's own declaration of Himself being the only Saviour. The Bible declares that God "...saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto him; and His righteousness, it sustained him" (Is. 59:16). The fact that salvation is only of God is stressed in Scriptures like Isaiah 43:11: "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour" (see also Is. 52:5-6; Ps. 2:2-3). His salvation extends to all the earth: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear" (Isa. 45:22-23; see Phil. 2:6-11; Isa. 7:13-14; Ro. 14:10-12;).

In his gospel the apostle John quoted Jesus saying: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3; See also I Jn. 5:20). The Bible speaks of "the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3). It is Jesus own assertion that "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Lu. 10:22; 1Pe. 2:6-7; Is. 28:16). Truly, "no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (Jn. 1:18). It took indeed a revelation from God for the Apostle Peter to be able to declare "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Mt. 16:16, 17).

- The Bible declares that "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God . . . And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth (Jn. 1:1-14; see 6:33-68).
- It is also the Bible's clear teaching that "God was manifest in the flesh." (1Tim. 3:16). The God who was manifested in the flesh was none other than God the Father Himself (Jn. 14:7-11).
- It is written that "Whosoever ...abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (I Jn 1:9).
- Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. (Jn. 1:14; 1:18 Jn. 3:16)
- The Lord said "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee" (Ps. 2:7). And the voice from heaven confirmed: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Lu. 3:22).
- The Virgin birth spoken of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah is a miraculous work of the Holy Ghost. (Is. 7:14, 9:6; Lu. 1:35; Is. 53:1; Je.31:22; Ps. 118:23)

- The name Emmanuel given by the prophet to the child born of the virgin Mary is interpreted in the New Testament as God with us. (Mt. 1:21-23).
- Jesus said that He 'came out from God,' 'came forth from the Father,' and that He is 'from above not of this world' (Jn. 3:13, 31; 8:23-24; 16:28; 17:8).
- The apostle John wrote, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:1-3).
- The Son of God proclaimed that He is the bread of life which came down from heaven and that the bread that He will give for the life of the world was His flesh. (Jn. 6:33, 45-51).
- The apostle Paul revealed that "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Co. 15:47).
- The heavenly flesh in which God was manifested was prepared by Himself for the work of reconciliation and the redemption of mankind (Is. 43:10-11, Is. 53; Je. 31:22; Jn. 1:14; Col. 2:9; 1Cor. 15:47-49; Ro. 9:4-5; He. 8:1-2;). The Bible declares that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2Cor. 5:19)
- According to the Scriptures: "When he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had not pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (He. 10:5-7, 10, Jn. 1:1-3,9; 1Jn. 4:3).
- God purchased His church with His own blood (Ac. 20:28; Ro. 8:3; Ro. 5:11; Re. 1:5) And Jesus declared: "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Mt. 26:28). The redemption of the soul is so precious that no other substitute for God's own blood can take away the sins of the world. (He. 7:26-28; Mt. 20:28; He. 9:11-12, 24-28; Ps. 49:7-8). There is peril in dishonoring Christ and His holy blood of the covenant (He. 10:29; Ro. 1:18, 12-23, 25).
- It is written: "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (He 10:10; 12:22). Scriptures also say: "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit" (1Pe. 3:18).
- Thus, The Son of God is the body in which, God, The Everlasting Father, Who is Word and Spirit, was manifested to destroy the work of the devil and deliver us from the power of darkness (Co. 1:12-22; Jn. 1:1,14, 1Ti. 3:16; 1Jn. 3:1-2, 5, 8; Ga. 1:3,4). It is written, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col 2:9).

- Christ was called the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). The "Sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1Pe. 1:10-11) is the central theme of the Scriptures (Is. 53; Da. 9:24, 26). The apostle Paul wrote: "Our saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle and a teacher to the Gentiles (2Tim. 1:10-11). Speaking of this Gospel he underlined: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (1Co. 15:1,3; Co. 1:23).
- To fulfill the Scriptures and as foretold by Himself, Jesus rose from the dead the third day, without seeing corruption, "swallowing up death in victory" (Mt. 16:21; Jn. 10:17-18; Jn. 2:19,21; Lu. 24:26,46; Mt. 28:5-9; Act 2:22-32; Act 13:29-37; Act 17:31; Ro. 1:3-4; 1Co. 15:12-22; 1Pe. 1:3-5; Is. 25:7-8; Is. 53:10-12; Is. 26:19).
- Speaking of the Father to his disciples, Jesus warned, "If ye believe not that I am He, (The one who came from above) ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:21-24).
- Jesus asserted, "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him; ...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; ...Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John 14:6-11).
- To this concurs also the teaching of the apostles: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." God has given us eternal life through His Son (1Jn.5:11-12;Jn. 3:16). (I Jn 5:20; Co. 2:9; 1Tim. 3:16; Jn. 1:1-14; 1Jn. 1:1-4; 2Co. 5:19; He. 1:2-8; Co. 1:15; Ro. 9:4-5).
- The scriptures warn, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (I Jn. 2:23).
- Without controversy the Lord Jesus Christ is the only true God, the everlasting Father (Is.9:6), "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Rev. 1:8) and the Creator of the universe (Col. 1:17; He. 1:2; Jn. 1:1-3).
- In His message to the church the Lord Jesus Christ said: "I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead: and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (Ro. 1:8, 17-18; Jn. 10:17-18).

Article 4

The Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets and the other Scriptures combine to bring forth one basic lesson: there is one eternal God, who is Spirit (Ge. 1:2; Ge. 3:8; De. 4:12, 15-19; Ps. 139:7-8; Is. 40:12-15, 18, 21-22, 25; Jn. 4:24).

The teaching of the O.T. about the Spirit of the Lord gives the background for the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit, expounded in the New Testament.

The Almighty God, creator of the whole universe, who declared "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" (Is. 66:1), and, "Do not I fill heaven and earth?..." (Je. 23:24) revealed Himself in time past to the patriarchs of Israel as an invisible, omnipresent, eternal Spirit. (Is. 44:6-7; 45:5-6; 46:9; 48:12-13).

Creation is made alive by the breath of God the Father (Ps. 33:6; Job. 33:4; 34:14, 15), for the Holy Spirit is the breath of God that flows from his being to give life to all of creation.¹ In Genesis He breathed His life giving Spirit in man (Ge. 2:7). The Lord, who is Spirit, is eternal life by definition. (Jn. 1:1-4; 1Jn. 1:1-3) God is not sustained by a life outside of Himself (Is. 40:13-14; 45:10-11). In all biblical references, the Spirit of God never appears as a divine being separate from God. The Spirit of God is His life-giving breath, His personal presence, and essentially God the Father in action in powerful and mysterious ways. He is that infinite source of life who defines Himself as "a fountain of living waters" (Je. 2:13) who time and again promised to pour His Spirit upon the seed of Jacob (Is. 44:1-6; 59:21; 32:15).

It was foretold that God would change men in the days of the New Covenant by putting His Holy Spirit within them, so that they should walk in His ways and keep His commandments (Je. 31:31-34; Ez. 36:25-27). Such was the hope for the last days, and this was the hope that the Christians had seen fulfilled with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus (Joel 2:28, 29; Ac. 2). After Pentecost the Holy Spirit, being poured out, began to produce holiness in God's people. (See article 9-C)

Article 5

The Saving Name of the Lord

Introducing His New Covenant, God, who declared "I, even I, am the Lord and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:11; 45:20-21) was manifest in the flesh for the redemption of mankind (John 1:1-14; 1Tim. 3:16), becoming Immanuel, 'God with us'. (Is. 7:14). This took place, when, in fulfillment of Scriptures, Christ was born from the virgin Mary and was given the name **Jesus** to "save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21-23). That name, which was also called "The Lord our Righteousness by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 23:6) was in reality the saving name of the Lord Himself (Isa. 9:6; Pr. 30:2-4; Jn. 3:13; Is. 52:6; Is. 12:2-4; Is. 62:2; Acts 15:14-17; Mal. 1:11). For it is written, "God was in Christ reconciling the world

unto Himself" (2Co. 5:19, see Jn. 1:1,14; Co. 2:9; 1Tim. 3:16). And more precisely, Jesus Himself revealed:

- "I am come in my Father's name" (Jn. 5:43);
- "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gravest me out of the world" (Jn. 17:6)
- "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it" (Jn. 17:26);

The gospels record on the one coming in the name of the Lord and His kingdom (Mark 11:9-10) echo the prophecies in Psalm 118:22-26; Micah 5:4, Zechariah 9:9, all pointing to God our salvation.

In harmony with the prophecy of Isaiah, the New Testament declares: "wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phi. 2:9-11; Is. 45:22-25).

The essence of the Christian faith, the root of the saving doctrine was to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Holy one of Israel of the Old Testament. The revelation of the saving name of God the Father is at the root of the salvation doctrine of the New Testament as underlined by the Scriptures: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men where by we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and the Apostles witness that remission of sins is in the name of **Jesus**, and that those who believe in it and obey the apostolic doctrine receive the power to become sons of God. (Jn. 1:12) (See Lu. 24:46; Ac. 2:38-39; Ga. 3:26-29; 1Pe. 1:23-25; 1Jn. 2:12; Ac. 10:43; 1Co. 6:11).

The disciples of Christ (Christians) are also to use this hallowed name of God the Father in prayer, thanksgiving, worship and praise, following the exhortation: "And whatsoever ye do in word and deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Co. 3:17; see Phi. 2:9-11; Jn. 14:13; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26, Mt. 6:9).

Article 6 Universal Call of Salvation

The doctrine of Salvation is the grandest theme in the Scriptures. It relates to all mankind without exception (Mt. 22:9, 14; Ro. 10:12; Is. 45:22; Is. 55:1; Jn. 7:37; I Ti. 2:4; Re. 22:17), and it centers on our Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist declared: "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29; see Jn. 3:1-15; 1Ti. 1:15-17; 2:6; He. 2:9; 1Jn. 2:2). From God's perspective salvation includes the total work of God in bringing people from condemnation to justification from death to

eternal life from alienation to the adoption of children (Ep. 1:4). That salvation is offered to all, whether a man accepts or rejects it, is seen in that God does not delight in the death of the wicked (Ez. 18:25-25; 33:11), and is not willing that any one should perish (2Pe. 3:9). This fact is made clear in the last command of Christ (Ac. 1:8; Mk. 16:8-20; Mt. 24:9-14; see Is. 45:5-13; Je. 1:4-19; Is. 60:; 61:1-9; Is. 45:22-23; 66:18-19; 2Co. 5:14,18-20).

Article 7

Grace

The grace of God is revealed to save and is given to those who will humble themselves before God and accept it by faith (Ep. 2:8; Ps. 34:18; Tit.2:11-12; Ja. 4:6; I Pe. 5:5;). The word grace means unmerited favor, or free gift. It is undeserved mercy, (Je. 9:23-24; Jn.1:14-29; Ep.2:8), the divine influence upon the heart of those it is granted to.

The first mention of grace in the Bible is in Genesis 6:8 where it was given to the just man, Noah, in the form of a warning of coming judgment (He. 11:7). This grace (Divine influence that warned of coming judgment), would have been of no use to Noah if he did not believe the warning to be true, and move with fear to the saving of his house. Therefore it is essential that grace have accompanying faith, which is demonstrated by obedience. Noah was saved by grace through faith (Ep. 2:8-9). The ark that Noah built was not his salvation by works, but rather, his obedience to grace, which is the correct response in order for grace to save. This is the like figure whereunto baptism does also now save us (I Pe. 3:20-21)

Without grace man has nothing to act on that can save him if he receives it. (Acts 18:27). The gospel itself is a divine revelation and is the evidence of the grace of God (Acts 20:24; Tit. 2:11). In order for the gospel that was preached by the apostles to save, it must be received and stood in (I Co. 15:1-4; Ro. 6:16-18). Access to grace (Grace's application to our situation) can only be realized by faith (Ep. 2:8), which is confirmed by works of obedience (Ro. 6: 16-18; 16:25-26; Ja. 2: 18-26).

The act of coming before God with a broken heart to receive water baptism, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, might be considered by some to be works of our own righteousness (Is. 59:6; Ep. 2:9 Tit. 3:5; Ro. 10:3), however, the Bible draws a clear distinction between the works of the Law and the obedience of faith (Ga.2:16; 3:1-14). Romans 14:23 goes so far as to say "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Baptism, the Holy Ghost, the Name of Jesus and his blood, the word of God, all these are the gifts of grace that we cannot purchase with a price, (I Pe.1:18-19,23; 3:18-21; II Pe.1:2-3; Eze.36:25-29; Mt.7:21-23; Ro.10:3-8) they can only apply to us through faith.

Article 8

CREATION OF MAN

The biblical record alone gives us accurate information about the origin of mankind. According to the Genesis account: "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." (Ge. 1:27).

Adam was predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Ro. 8:29).

When God, in His own appointed time, was manifested in the flesh (Jn. 1:1-14; He. 1:1-3), His own "express image" was actually seen in Christ, in whom "all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily" (Co. 2:9; Co. 1:15-16). Thus, the mystery of the creation of mankind and the full picture of man's destiny is only revealed when considered in retrospect from the New Testament provisions (I Pe. 1:10-12). For, the first man, Adam, formed originally from the dust of the earth, and whom God predestined to be an eternal being in the image and likeness of Christ, partook of the forbidden fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Ge. 2:17; 1Cor. 15:47).

The account of the fall of man in Genesis chapter three is validated in the New Testament (1Co. 15:21-22; 1Tim. 2:14; Ro. 5:12-21). Adam's sin affects the entire race. The fall affected all human beings bringing depravity and eternal death (Eph. 2:1,3; Ro. 3:9-10,23; Ga. 3:22; Co. 2:13; Ps. 51:5).

It is the teaching of the Scriptures that God in His omniscience and foreknowledge knew that man, in the frailty and weakness of his earthly nature would yield to temptation and break His commandment, for the Bible speaks of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). And consequently God enacted His foreordained grand plan of redemption through the death of His Son Jesus Christ (Ge. 3:15; Rom 8:1-3,29,30; Eph. 1:4-12; Titus 3:4-8; He. 1:1-3).

Article 9

THE NEW BIRTH

Christ, the author of our salvation, was the first to set forth the conditions for entering the kingdom of God by revealing the mystery of the second birth (Jn. 3:1-8). Teaching Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration, Jesus said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5).

The doctrine of Jesus and His Apostles points to the New Birth that would ultimately bring about the real "likeness and image of God" to the sons of Adam, making possible the transition from the corruptible and sinful nature inherited from the Fall, to the incorruptible state that God predestinated them to be conformed to (Ro. 8:29-30; Jn. 3:3-8; Jn. 1:12; Ti. 3:3-5; 1Pe. 1:23-25; 1Co. 15:45-50; Ga. 3:26-29; 2Co. 5:17-18; Co. 2:10-14). That is why the Bible declares: "Of His own will beget he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruit of His creatures" (Ja. 1:18).

The Bible declares that the gospel was preached first by God to Abraham and that "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made" specifying that actually, this "seed" of regeneration was Christ (Ga. 3:8, 16).

It is written, "He came unto his own, and His own received him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (Jn. 1:11-12).

The condition for the New Birth of water and spirit is faith in the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-37). When one has received the gospel, he must enter into the promise through obedience, or stand in the gospel to be saved (I Co. 15:1-2). The Bible's first example of this was established on the day of Pentecost as Peter preached to all that were present (Ac. 2:14-36). The preaching established conviction that led to a question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Ac. 2:37). Peter then gave them the command of Acts 2:38:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost".

This was the command by which one could be born again, or "saved" if received and obeyed (Ac. 2:40). Those that gladly received the word obeyed and were baptized (Born of water), and received the Holy Ghost (Born of the Spirit), then they were added to the church body that Jesus Christ is the saviour of (Ac. 2:41, 47; I Co. 12:13; Ep. 5:23 see also Ro. 6:16-18; 16:25-26). This "Born Again" experience constitutes the beginning of transformation into the likeness of Christ (II Co. 3:18; He. 6:1-2).

Only born-again Christians could relate to Scriptures such as:

- "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Co. 3:9-10);
- "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Ro. 8:29).
- "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1Jn. 3:2).
- "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (1Pe. 1:23).
- ". . . we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body . . ." (Phi. 3:20-21).
- "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1Cor. 15:49).

9-A REPENTANCE

Jesus' first recorded words in the Gospel of Mark are: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mk. 1:15). Prior to His

ascension the Lord told His disciples that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luk. 24:47).

The Bible proclaims that God “Commandeth all men every where to repent” (Ac. 17:30), and that He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2Pe. 3:9). The apostles pleaded earnestly: “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2Co. 5:20). Repentance is the initial step to salvation (Ac. 2:38). It requires a definite and deliberate act on the sinner’s part to turn away of his own will from his sinful past.

Different aspects of repentance are mentioned in Scriptures:

- Works worthy of repentance are expected from the one who desires to be saved (Acts 26:20; Mt. 3:7-12).
- It is turning away from idol worship to the one true living God (1Thes 1:10; Acts 26:20).
- It is death to sin, by “crucifying the old man with Christ” (Ro. 2:6-7; Ga. 2:20; 1Pe. 2:24), or mortifying the members of the flesh (Col. 3:3-5; Ro. 8:9-14).
- Repentance is synonymous with forsaking sins (De. 7:1-5; Job. 22:21-23; Is. 1:16; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 5:11; Ro. 6:1; Ro. 6:2-4; 1Thes 4:3).
- Confessions and restitutions are enjoined (Pr. 28:13; Lu. 3:12-14; Mt. 5:23-26; Jn. 4:15-20).
- “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to forgiveness” (2Cor. 7:10).

Repentance is given by God without partiality. The Apostle Peter, in recounting the Cornelius episode in Acts 11:15-18 said: “Then God has given the Gentiles also the gift of repentance leading to life”. It is only through the agency of the Holy Ghost, enabling us to repent and believe, convicting us of sin and making Jesus attractive to us, that we ever become Christians.

The miracle of the New Birth of water and Spirit can only take place in the life of a truly repentant sinner. Repentance is indeed the first key element in the command of Acts 2:38.

9-B Water Baptism

Before His ascension, our Lord Jesus Christ commanded: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mk. 16:15-16), making baptism an absolute necessity for all who desire to be saved. Jesus has declared that “except at man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:5).

In the Book of Acts, from all the baptism episodes describing how the Great commission was implemented in the early church, it can easily be deduced that being “born of water” is actually realized in repentant believers who, by faith, submit themselves to water baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Acts

2:37-41; 8:12-18, 26-39; 9:1-9; 22:16; 10:42-48; 11:13,14; 16:30-34; 15:3; 19:1-7;). This is also consistent with the teaching of the Epistles (Ro. 6:3-8; Ga. 3:27-29; Col. 2:10-13; Tit. 3:4-7; I Pe. 3:20-21). Several types and shadows, as well as messianic prophecies pointing to baptism in the New Covenant dispensation are found in the O.T. (Ez. 36:25-26; 37:1-14; Mi. 7:18-20; Zec. 13:1; Je. 31:31-34; Is. 53; Ps. 74:13-14;)

The Prophet Ezekiel in particular spoke of a "Clean water" that would wash away all filthiness and idols in conjunction with the promise of a new heart and a new spirit for God's people. (Ez. 36:25-27). The apostle Paul revealed that the covenant of circumcision made by God to Abraham was none other than the shadow of the baptism of regeneration brought in by the New Covenant, based on the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Ga. 3:8,16,29; Co. 2:11). The apostle Peter wrote: "the salvation of your souls, of which the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" making allusion to the messianic hope of the prophets (1Pe. 1:9-10; see 1Pe. 1:11-12).

The apostle Paul explains that in the process of the New Birth a kind of spiritual surgery takes place when the "Old man" is "buried with Christ in baptism" (Co. 2:12; Ro. 6:3-4). He proclaimed: "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11; Ro. 6:6-7). What the prophet Micah declared: "thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic. 7:19) surely points to the burial with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins (See Ps. 74:12-13). The Bible says that Christ came by flesh, blood and water for the ultimate atonement (1Jn. 4:3; 1Jn. 5:6; Re. 1:5; 5:9). To complete the picture Paul continues: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Ga. 3:27). This is certainly what the garment of salvation and robe of righteousness mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah is all about (Is. 61:10).

9-C

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord baptizing with water as a mark of repentance. Announcing the coming kingdom he declared that Jesus "shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Mat. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Lu. 3:16; Jn. 1:33).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is also promised by Jesus to his disciples: "you shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you and shall be witnesses unto me" (Ac. 1:8) (see Jn. 7:37-39; Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Lu. 24:49; Act. 1:5). This is none other than the birth of the Spirit that the Lord explained as being an essential requirement for entering the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5-8; see Titus 3:4-8).

The prophets of old were led by God to foretell the last days, and of the outpouring of God's own Holy breath (Spirit) within man, which would warm his heart to desire God's way, and enable his will to keep it (Joel 2:28-32; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Is. 28: 9-13; Zec.

10:1). This prophetic hope was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when the disciples of Christ filled with the Holy spirit, "spoke with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterances." (Ac. 2:1-4, 16-18). The apostle Peter proclaimed on that day that whosoever shall "repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Ac. 2:38).

Even though the Holy Spirit has been poured out on many individuals, it does not mean that the Holy Spirit has become many in number, or a multiple of entities. The Bible says: "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1Cor. 12:13).

Scriptures declare that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us", so that through Him "We might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Ga. 3:13-14).

Jesus died to redeem us, and adopt us into the family of God, and because we are sons of God He has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, enabling us to call "Abba, Father" (Ga. 4:5,6; Eph. 1:5; Ro. 8:15-17). With this metaphor of "adoption" the New Testament writers use different words to describe different aspects of this work of assurance (1Thes 1:5) which the Holy Spirit does for the believer. It is a "seal" (Eph. 1:13), an "earnest", or the pledge of the fuller life that is to come (2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14; 2Co. 5:5; Heb. 6:5).

The Spirit of God comes upon believers in order to create in them a quality of life that would otherwise be beyond their powers. After assuring us of our son-ship the Spirit sets out to reproduce in us the character and graces of the Family into which we have been adopted. It is a Spirit of freedom (2Cor. 3:17; Ga. 3:10-14), a Spirit of power (2Tim. 1:7). Indeed, through His Spirit, God has given us the ability to fulfill the requirements of His Law. Not only is there "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus," but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Ro. 8:1-2). We are encouraged by the Scriptures that God is at work "in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phi. 2:13). The fruits of the Spirit characterize the believer's new life in Christ (Ga. 5:22). A Holy God requires His people to be holy. But the God who has called us for holiness gives us His Holy Spirit (1Thes. 4:7,8) to enable us to fulfill His requirement.

The Bible tells us also that a person born of water and the Spirit "has put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10; 2Co. 5:17). In the New Birth emerges the new man in Christ who should reckon himself "dead indeed to sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro. 6:11). The Bible declares: "For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son," and that the born-again are "complete in Him" (Ro. 8:29; Co. 2:10).

It is by the Holy Spirit in the united body of the church that the gifts of the Spirit are distributed among its members by the effectual working of God's power (I Co. 12:1-11;

Ep. 3:7; 4:3-16). The gifts of the Spirit are given to every member in order that they might be established in the body, and that the body might profit by each member (Ro. 1:11-12; 12:6-8; I Co. 7:7; I Co. 12:7). The spiritual gifts that are mentioned in the scriptures are as follows: Exhortation, giving, mercy, word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, (I Co. 12:7-11; Ro. 12:6-8). There are also gifts of ministry spoken of in the Bible, they are namely: Apostle, Prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, helps and governments (I Co. 12:28; Ep. 4:8-15). These gifts are to be used with wisdom in an orderly fashion (I Co. 14:12-33). The scriptures challenge the believer to stir up the gift given them by the laying on of hands, not neglecting it but rather ministering the same one to another as good stewards of the gift given by grace (I Ti. 4:14; II Ti. 1:6-7; I Pe. 4:10-11).

Article 10

The Church

The day the apostle Peter declared through divine relation, that Christ is the Son of God (see Article 3), Jesus proclaimed that, upon this revelation, He will build His Church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He then promised to His chosen vessel the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 16:16-19).

The birth of the Church took place "When the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1-4; Joel 2:28-32; Lu. 24:44-49). People obeyed in faith, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the key salvational command of the apostle Peter recorded in Acts 2:38-39. God was, in this way, taking out a people for His name (Ac. 15:14-18), baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost, for this was His foreordained divine plan (Eph. 1:3-11; 2:1-14; He. 11:39-40; Jn. 10:16).

When Christ died on the cross (He. 13:11-12), the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was rent from top to bottom (Mat. 27:51). It was the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus words, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19-21; Ac. 7:48-50). With the shedding of His precious blood (Ac. 20:28), all blood ordinances of the Old Testament came to an end (He. 7:27; 9:11-12; 10:14). A new order had dawned (He. 7:19), a new way (Acts 9:2; He. 10:11-20; Jn. 14:6), a new and living access to God had been opened through the priesthood of Christ (He. 8:1-2; 10:19-22; 12:22-24; 1Pe. 2:9). The days of the temple were over.

God prepared Himself an eternal abode, which is the Church, the body of Christ made up of born-again believers (Ro. 12:4-5; I Co. 6:15; 12:12-27) These, being born of incorruptible seed (1Pe. 1:23-25; Ga. 3:27-29), and partakers of His divine nature (2Pe. 1:4) are made complete in Him (Co. 2:10). The Bible declares that the church of the Living God is purchased by His own blood (Acts 20:28). Born again Christians are "members of His body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph 5:30). Scriptures reveal that

the Church is God's new creation in Christ that will show forth His 'manifold wisdom' to 'principalities and powers in heavenly places' (Eph 3:10; Col. 3:15; I Pe. 2:9-10).

The "new Israel of God" (Ga. 6:15-16) still continues to be called out of tongues and nations (Re. 5:9-10) "into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Col. 1:13). The Bible declares: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord..." (2Co. 6:17; Ac. 2:40; Re. 18:4).

Different metaphors are used in the New Testament to describe the church the universal "ecclesia" and combine to convey its unique nature.

- The Church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23-27,30; Col. 1:18; 2:10,19; 1Co. 12:11-14; Col. 3:9-11; Ac. 2:42).
- The Church is the Temple of God (Ac. 7:48-49; Jn. 2:19,21; 1Co. 3:16; 6:19-20; Re. 21:3; Mat. 18:20; 1Pe. 2:9).
- The Church is the Bride of Christ (Ge. 2:18-25; Jn. 3:6; Jn. 1:12-14; 1Pe. 23-25; Eph. 5:30; Jn. 3:29; 2Co. 1:3; Eph. 5:22-27; Re. 22:17; Re. 19:7-8; Co. 2:10-14; 1Jn. 3:1-3; Phi. 3:20-21; Hos. 2:19-20; 23; 3:1-5).
- The Church are the children of God. (Eph. 3:8-9; Co. 1:26-27; Jn. 3:3, 5-7; Ro. 8:29; Eph. 1:4; 1Jn. 5:1; Jn. 1:12-13; Eph. 1:5; 2Co. 6:18; Je. 31:33-34; 2Sa. 7:12-16; 1Jn. 3:9; 1Pe. 1:23; 1Jn. 3:1; 2Co. 6:16).

Article 11

The Ministry of the Laying on of Hands

The ministry of praying lifting holy hands and blessing is a designated authority given only to the men that are serving as ministers. (He. 6:2; Mk. 6:12-13; 10:13-16; 16:18; Mt.19:15; Ge. 48:8-16; Acts 13:1-3; 19:6; II Ti.1:6-7). The women (female gender) in the church are permitted to be a part of any other ministries except for the laying of the hands. (I Ti. 2:8-15; 4:13-14; 5:9-16, Acts 2:17-20; II Co. 6:14-18; Ro. Ch. 16).

Article 12

The Healing and Blessing of God

The Bible declares that Jesus Christ, by his stripes and bruises, through his suffering, has taken our pain and weaknesses. (Mt.8:16-17; 11:5-6; 12:28; I Pe. 2:24; Ex.15:26; 23:25). Through his death on the cross he has saved us from sin and liberated us from eternal death. (I Co.1:18; 15:55-57, Ga. 1:4; 3:13; Ep. Ch. 2; Is. 53:1-10; 61). The Bible assures us, even though he was rich, he became poor. He went through nakedness and affliction. He did it all for our sake so we, his followers, through his poverty might be rich and live a blessed life on this earth (Mt. 8:20, II. Co. 8:9, Mk.10:29-31). The only way we can receive all these blessings is if we receive his word by faith (Ps. 107:20).

Article 13

The Restoration of a Backslider through Repentance

Repentance means to be totally remorseful and to turn back from sin or to entirely die to the filth of this world and the will of sin. If after a person was born of the water and of the Spirit, he falls into sin, that individual can be restored if they sincerely repent of their sin. Regardless of how heavy their sins might seem to them, their sins are forgiven the instant they returned back in repentance. It is written in I John.1:7-9, "...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin...If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Hebrews 8:12 reads, "...their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Also in Ezekiel 18:21-32, verse 28 reads, "Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die." Also see the following references (Lk.7:36-50; 13:3-5; 15:1-32; 18:35-43; 22:54-65, I Jn.2:1-3; Ezr. 10:11-12; Pr. 28:13; Je. 3:13; Joel 2:12; Acts 8:21-23; Jn. 8:1-11; He. 9:14; 10:10-25).

Article 15

Conscience

The word of God affirms to us that the moment one has been justified through obeying the gospel of Jesus Christ, he is given a good conscience that will allow him to keep God's law. (Ro. 2:2-16, I Jn. 3:19-22). Therefore he should not be a part of anything that will nuisance his conscience. But if he goes against his conscience we know that it will be a sin. (Ro.9:1; 13:5, II Co. 1:12; 8:7; He.9:14; 13:18; Acts 23:1; 24:16; I Ti.1:5,19; 3:9; I Pe. 2:19-23; 3:16; Ge.42:21; Jn.8:7-9). Therefore the saints should listen and obey their conscience when it encourages them to live in purity and holiness.

Article 16

Holiness

Holiness is the attribute of God. When God allowed us to be his children, He expected us to have his holiness. Therefore since our body is the temple of God where the Holy Ghost dwells, we must abstain from everything that is an abomination unto God and from everything that will defile and harm our body and soul.

Ephesians 1:4 testifies, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Therefore we believe that we should not be conformed to this world whether in our body (how we

dress and keep ourselves), or our life style (How we behave) (II Co. 6:14-18; 7:1; I Co. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; I.Pe.1:13-16; 2:9-10; 3:1-18; Ep.4:17-32; 5:1-33; Ex.22:5; Col.3:1-25; Mt.5:48; He.12:14; I Ti.2:8-12; Jb. 22:21-30; Is.3:1-26; De.28; Le.19:1-4; Eze.44:9-24).

Article 17

The Lord's Supper

Those who accept as true, that Christ Jesus is the Word that was made flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14). Who further believe He died for the remission of their sins, and are born of the water and of the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-7; Acts 2:37-41 (those who had put on Christ Ga. 3:27) are to be partakers of the Lord's supper to testify of his death.

The Bible is clear that it is possible to take of communion unworthily (I Co. 11:29). There are several reasons for one to abstain from communion. Those who have not received the likeness of Christ through obedience of the gospel, those who have not yet put on Christ in baptism, cannot take part of communion. As communion is the intimate joining of the members of Christ's' body, we must be of his flesh and spirit to be joined to him (I Co. 6:15-17; 12:13-20; Ep. 5:30). Those who do not have the full understanding of the mystery of Christ's flesh and blood should not take part in communion. Because they have not discerned the Lord's body (Jn. 6:48-51; 8:21-24; I Co. 11:29), they don't understand what they are joining themselves to. Those who have not examined themselves cannot be a part of this sacred communion, because they were not careful to judge themselves, especially in consideration of what they are about to take part in (I Co. 11:28-31). Because some have taken communion unworthily, the Bible gives account saying, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Co.11:23-34). Therefore we take heed through the warnings of God's word, not to bring the judgment of God on ourselves. (Ro.15:4, I Co.10:1-22, II. Ti.3:16-17)

For these reasons the church is to give strict warning through preaching that if any one has ought against another, they should first repent or make it right with God and the person with which they have ought.

It is wise to refrain from giving communion to frequently so as not to bring the judgment of God on those who might take it unworthily (Mt.5:23-26; 26:26-29, Jn.6:35-63, I Co.5:6-8; 10:14-22).

Article 18

The Washing of the Feet

Just as our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ before the last supper, humbled himself and washed the feet of his disciples, we also with understanding and faith that we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets ought to humble ourselves and received the circumcision of the heart (Je. 4:4; Ep. 2:19-22; Ph. 2:5-8).

The Church members must humble themselves and wash one another's feet, without looking down on any one whether small or great, and because it is the duty of the saints, it is to be done with love and humility (Ge.18:3; 19:2). The Lord has commanded us saying "you also ought to wash one another's feet", and "if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them". (Jn.13:3-17).

Article 19

Marriage and Divorce

Hebrews 13:4 reads, "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." In order to be saved from the judgment of hell, the Bible commands fidelity allowing one woman for one man and one man for one woman, therefore any marriage that is not according to this principle is a defiled marriage that is against the law of God. It is of utmost importance that the church regards God's word, for anything less will frustrate the revelation of Gods' relationship with the church as well as harm the community and the family. The church will not perform, nor give consent to double marriage (polygamy) among the saints, nor to same gender marriage, neither will the church regard these arrangements in society since Christ has only one bride (Ep. 5:23-32), the Church, and **He** is faithful to **her**.

Since the act of divorce is an abomination and evil in the sight of God (Mal 2:14-16), unless it is because of adultery, anyone initiating divorce will not be considered a Christian, but instead a heathen. Those who divorce for a reason outside of adultery are to live unmarried or are encouraged to make peace with one another. (Mt.19:3-9, Ep. 5:22-23, I Co.7:10-11, 39).

The Bible does however make provision for an unbelieving spouse to depart. In such case, the believer is not bound to that union (I Co. 7:15).

Article 20

Tithe and Offering

The Bible clearly warns us to give to the government what belongs to the government, and to God the things that belong to God. Therefore, those who do not participate in

the principle of biblical stewardship are cursed by God (Mal.3:7-12), as they are rebellious against the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. We believe those who trust the word of God and serve their God will receive double portion blessings. (Mk.12:14-17; Pr.3:1-10; De.8:18; 12:5-6; 16:16-17, Ro.13:1-7, I Co.9, Lk.8:1-3, Mt.25:34-36).

In II Corinthians nine, we read in the sixth verse, "... He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Verse nine further states. He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth forever." (II Co.9:6-15, De. 26:1-19).

Article 21

The Government

Romans 13:4 reads, "...for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The regulations and laws of this earth's government are from God and every soul should be subject to those powers for they are ordained of God.

In order for peace to be multiplied on this earth, and for us to have the ability to live quietly and calmly in freedom, we must earnestly pray for our own leaders and also for the leaders all over the world that are in authority. (I Pe. 2:13-14,17, Ez. 24:21, Ec.8:1-5; 10:20, Tit.3:1, Ma.17:27, Ex. 22:28, I.Sa. 24:5-7, Acts 23:5, Pr. 25:5).

See also the following scriptural references that concern our praying for leaders: I Ti. 2:1-4, I Ki. 13:6, II. Ki. 19:1-37, II Chr.19:32; 20:23; 33:10-13, Ezr. 8:21-23, Da. 9:3-23, Est. ch. 4-9.

Article 22

The Great Commission

Our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the great commission "... go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mk. 16:15) Therefore as He has found us trustworthy, we must confess it to the world not to please men but to please God who searches our hearts.

The church is given the challenge to preach the gospel until the end (death), to deliver them that are drawn unto eternal death (second death), and to save those that are ready to be slain by the sword of sin. Whether it is persecution, famine, or thirst, counting those things as nothing, we must work for God more intensely than we have ever worked before and walk toward the future. (I Th.2:9, Re.2:10-11; 21:8, Mk.16:8-

17, Mt. 5:11-12; 10:16-39; ch.25; 28:17-20, Pr.24:11-13, Jn.15:13-14, II Ti.4:1-8, I Pe.2:9, Ph.1:15-30, II Co.6:3-10, I Co. 9:16-17, Ro.1:16, Lk.24:47-49, Acts 1:8, Da.12:3).

Article 23

The Quickening or Catching up of the Saints

Those who have been born of the water and the Spirit in the Name of Jesus according to Acts 2:38, Jn.1:12-13; 3:1-6, Tit.3:4-8, Col.2:11-14, Ga.3:26-27, who have died to the filth and sin of this earth, who are walking in a new life, who are full of love and unity, the Saints who are the body of the Church (Children of God), will be united with Christ at the time of his choosing. Because they have the Spirit of God in them that resurrected Jesus Christ, we believe that their mortal bodies will be quickened (Changed) when he returns back to swallow up death and take his bride (Ro. 8:11; I Co. 15:50-57).

If we live holy and walk in love and remain alive unto the coming of the Lord we shall not prevent them that are asleep (in paradise) but we shall be caught up together with them in the clouds (I Th. 4:13-18, Re.3:10-12, Ph.3:20-21, Jude 14-15, Zec.14:5-9, Re.19:7-8, Da.7:27; 9:27).

Article 24

The second coming of Christ and the Millennium

Just as Christ was ascended into heaven with glory, He shall return in like manner as he went into heaven with those that meet him in the air at the catching up of the Saints. He will reign in Jerusalem for a thousand years. During that time the earth will have no chaos and turmoil but be filled with peace, the world from one end to another will surrender to God, and Satan will be tied in hell for the thousand years.

Acts 1:11; 3:19-21, Mt.ch.24; 25:1-30, Ph.3:2-21, Jude 14-15, Zec.14:1-9, Da.7:27, Mal.4:1-2, Re.19:11-16; 20:1-5, Is.2:1-22; 11:1-10; 65:17-25; 66:8-24; ch.60, He.2:14, II Th.2:4-12.

Article 25

The Last Judgment

After the thousand years with God's command Satan will be loose from his prison. The multitude of sinners that were in hell who were not resurrected in the first resurrection will come close to the Holy City (Jerusalem) with Satan to fight the Lord.

At that time the Lord will make an eternal judgment upon the sinners and the devil. However, for the Saints, the New Jerusalem with the new heaven and the new earth shall be presented to give them eternal heavenly rest and the chosen Saints will enter into it and live without end. This present earth will burn with fire and fervent heat and become the lake of fire where the devil and sinners will be punished forever. Mt.25:31-46, Re.20:7-15; 21:8, II Pe.3, II Th. 1:5-10, Jn.14:1-6, II Co.5:1-5, Da.12).