PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Constitutional Change Recommended by the Constitution Committee, the Ministry Leadership Council and the General Oversight Council

In order to be reflective of the representation of General Conference which includes men and women as delegates and since the General Oversight Council acts on behalf of General Conference between conferences the following changes are recommended:

**Article VIII - GENERAL OVERSIGHT COUNCIL**

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A. COMPOSITION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. As a group of biblical elders, the General Oversight Council members shall be characterized by proven spiritual maturity, personal integrity, leadership expertise and experience, and a high level of commitment to the Missionary Church.</td>
<td>2. As a group of <em>servant leaders</em>, the General Oversight Council members shall be characterized by proven spiritual maturity, personal integrity, leadership expertise and experience, and a high level of commitment to the Missionary Church.</td>
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<th><strong>B. DUTIES</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>12. The General Oversight Council shall meet a minimum of three times per year. It is suggested that one of these meetings be a joint meeting with the Ministry Leadership Council, the other group of biblical elders, for prayer and consultation.</td>
<td>12. The General Oversight Council shall meet a minimum of three times per year. It is suggested that one of these meetings be a joint meeting with the Ministry Leadership Council, the other group of <em>servant leaders</em>, for prayer and consultation.</td>
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**Article IX - MINISTRY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

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<th><strong>B. DUTIES</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>1. As a group of biblical elders, the Ministry Leadership Council shall carry primary responsibility for leading the Missionary Church toward fulfilling its purpose and mission – an effective, worldwide ministry of local Missionary Churches, assisted by the denominational supporting structures of which they are a part.</td>
<td>1. As a group of <em>servant leaders</em>, the Ministry Leadership Council shall carry primary responsibility for leading the Missionary Church toward fulfilling its purpose and mission – an effective, worldwide ministry of local Missionary Churches, assisted by the denominational supporting structures of which they are a part.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. The Ministry Leadership Council shall meet a minimum of four times per year to fulfill its denominational ministry leadership role and responsibilities. Since the Ministry Leadership Council shall serve as one group of biblical elders for the denomination, it is suggested that one of these meetings be a joint meeting with the General Oversight Council, the other group of biblical elders, for prayer and consultation.</td>
<td>4. The Ministry Leadership Council shall meet a minimum of four times per year to fulfill its denominational ministry leadership role and responsibilities. Since the Ministry Leadership Council shall serve as one group of <em>servant leaders</em> for the denomination, it is suggested that one of these meetings be a joint meeting with the General Oversight Council, the other group of <em>servant leaders</em>, for prayer and consultation.</td>
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PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Constitutional Change Recommended jointly by the Ministry Leadership Council and the General Oversight Council

ARTICLE X – NOMINATING COMMITTEE

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<tr>
<td><strong>A. COMPOSITION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Nominating Committee shall be composed of seven members elected by General Conference for six-year terms from three candidates presented by the General Oversight Council, and four candidates presented by the Ministry Leadership Council. Terms shall be staggered, but the elected shall not serve for more than one full term consecutively.</td>
<td>The Nominating Committee shall be composed of seven members elected by General Conference for six-year terms from <strong>two</strong> candidates presented by the General Oversight Council, and <strong>three</strong> candidates presented by the Ministry Leadership Council. Terms shall be staggered, but the elected shall not serve for more than one full term consecutively.</td>
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ARTICLE XI – CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

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<tr>
<td><strong>A. COMPOSITION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Constitution Committee shall be composed of nine members elected by General Conference for six-year terms from four candidates presented by the General Oversight Council, and five candidates by the Ministry Leadership Council. Terms shall be staggered, but the elected shall not serve for more than one full term consecutively</td>
<td>The Constitution Committee shall be composed of nine members elected by General Conference for six-year terms from <strong>three</strong> candidates presented by the General Oversight Council, and <strong>four</strong> candidates by the Ministry Leadership Council. Terms shall be staggered, but the elected shall not serve for more than one full term consecutively</td>
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ARTICLE XIV – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Change “Auxiliary Organizations” to “Missionary Church Investment Foundation” and delete sections on “Women’s Ministries” and “Missionary Men International” and change the numbering for “Missionary Church Investment Foundation” from C.1.a.,b.,c., 2., 3. and 4. to A.1.,2.,3., B., C. and D.
## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Constitutional Change Recommended jointly by the Ministry Leadership Council and the General Oversight Council

### ARTICLE XVI – DISTRICT CONFERENCES

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<td><strong>E. MINISTERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Qualifications</td>
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<td>c. Ministers shall meet the following denominational qualifications:</td>
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<td>(1) participation in and completion of a prescribed program of study in the history and polity of the Missionary Church;</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Specialized Licensed Ministers</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Qualifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a) Applicants must have completed a minimum course of study consisting of at least one course in each of the following: Old Testament, New Testament, biblical or systematic theology, biblical interpretation, homiletics or communication, leadership, History and Polity of the Missionary Church and a minimum of 12 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization.</td>
<td>(a) Applicants must have completed a minimum course of study consisting of at least one course in each of the following: Old Testament, New Testament, biblical or systematic theology, biblical interpretation, homiletics or communication, leadership, Pastor Orientation Course of the Missionary Church and a minimum of 12 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization.</td>
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<td>In special circumstances and with the approval of the regional or district director, individuals with two or more years experience and 12 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization may apply and, if approved by the regional or district board, be granted a specialized ministry license upon completion of the History and Polity of the Missionary Church course. Such individuals will be given three years to complete the additional required courses.</td>
<td>In special circumstances and with the approval of the regional or district director, individuals with two or more years experience and 12 semester hours of college level work in their field of specialization may apply and, if approved by the regional or district board, be granted a specialized ministry license upon completion of the Pastor Orientation Course of the Missionary Church course. Such individuals will be given three years to complete the additional required courses.</td>
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## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Constitutional Change Recommended jointly by the Ministry Leadership Council and the General Oversight Council

**Article XVII – LOCAL CHURCH**

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<td><strong>6. Disassociation</strong></td>
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<td>Churches desiring to disassociate as member churches of the Missionary Church, following the regional or district director or his representative meeting with the membership, shall at a duly called meeting of the church by a 75% vote of the membership approve an action to disassociate from the Missionary Church.</td>
<td>Churches desiring to disassociate as member churches of the Missionary Church, following the regional or district director or his representative meeting with the membership, shall at a duly called meeting of the church by a 75% vote of the membership approve an action to disassociate from the Missionary Church.</td>
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## PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

**Constitutional Change Recommended jointly by the Ministry Leadership Council and the General Oversight Council**

### Article XX – AMENDMENTS

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<tr>
<td>This Constitution may be amended at any regular General Conference by a two thirds vote of the conference, provided that all recommended amendments be published at least 30 days prior to the date set for the General Conference. Published at least 30 days prior to General Conference means notification of regional and district directors, ministers, missionaries, delegates and churches. There shall be one reading of all amendments in a meeting prior to the one in which they shall be voted upon.</td>
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<td>Recommendations for amendments from departmental boards must come through the General Oversight Council.</td>
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<td>Recommendations for amendments from local churches, regions or districts must come through the regional or district governing body. Such action of the regional or district governing body must receive a two thirds vote.</td>
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MISSIONARY CHURCH ARTICLES OF FAITH

Introduction

The Bible tells one grand, unified story – a true account of the lavish and relentless love of a holy God. It is a drama in four acts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. It calls us – not simply to be spectators – but to respond with living faith. God calls us to believe – placing our trust in him, personally committing ourselves to him, and accepting the truth of the gospel.

He calls us to embrace certain truths that define us as a believing community and then embody those truths in how we live. We must speak, then, of what we believe (Articles of Faith) and how we should then live (Articles of Practice). As the Missionary Church, we affirm the core truths of the Gospel, and then we enact those truths as a family of churches in Christian community committed to love God fully, to love our neighbors truly, and to carry out the Great Commission for God’s glory and the salvation of the world.

The Triune God

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three divine persons, equal in power and glory – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the creator and sustainer of all things. His divine qualities – including love, holiness, justice, righteousness, faithfulness, infinite knowledge and power, self-existence, and omnipresence – all harmonize perfectly in the unity of his being.¹

The Father

We believe in God the Father, begotten² of none, the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since God is the creator, all things and all people are from him and exist for him. As the author of salvation, he adopts into his family all who are born again by faith. He gloriously upholds and providentially rules over all things, to accomplish the redemption of his people and the restoration of all creation.³
The Son

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of the Father. He is the fully divine Word of God who also became fully human – conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. His sinless human life, humble obedience to his Father’s will, sacrificial death and bodily resurrection made sufficient provision for the salvation of all people. In his ascension, he returned to his Father, where he reigns as Lord, Advocate, Great High Priest, and Coming Judge.

The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, proceeding from and sent by the Father and the Son. He is the personal expression of God’s power – instrumental in all his works. He is the author and illuminator of sacred Scripture. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the agent of the new birth, the one by whom we are baptized into the Body of Christ. As the spirit of holiness, he indwells every believer and his Church, purifying and empowering his people for holy living. He guides them into truth, comforts and encourages them, and enables them to fulfill the Great Commission. He produces his fruit in the lives of believers and gives them spiritual gifts for the good of the Church.

The Bible

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the written Word of God, verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit and, therefore, true, reliable, and without error in all it addresses. We believe the Bible has been safeguarded by the Holy Spirit and transmitted to the present day without corruption of any essential doctrine. The Bible forever remains the unchanging and final authority for faith and living.

Humanity

We believe that God created human beings – male and female – as co-equal bearers of the image of God. Gender is divinely designed, part of the goodness of creation. Human sexuality is a gift, intended to be expressed exclusively in a monogamous, lifelong marital union between one man and one woman. The Bible also affirms the sacredness of the single state and that some may have the gift of lifetime celibacy.

We believe in the historicity of the first man, Adam, who along with his wife, Eve, were uniquely created by a direct act of God as recorded in Genesis. Made in his image, they are his crowning achievement. Adam and Eve were created without sin for perfect fellowship with God and were commanded to be fruitful and exercise benevolent dominion over the earth. Humankind was created for love of God and neighbor. That love was intended to find expression in every individual and every human institution.

Through the misuse of their wills, however, our original parents succumbed to Satan’s temptation, disobeyed God’s command and thus brought sin into the world and became subject to physical and spiritual death. They became corrupt in their nature, and have passed on that nature to all their descendants. As a result, all human beings – while still bearing God’s image – are polluted in every aspect of their being. They are estranged from God by their sin and thus deserve God’s wrath.

We believe that God desires all human beings to be restored to a right relationship with him. Redemption – the gracious design by which God intends to rescue humanity from the disastrous consequences of sin – has its origin in the love of God and is brought to fruition by his infinite wisdom and might.
Salvation and the Spirit-Filled Life

We believe that Jesus Christ is God’s only provision for our salvation. He voluntarily offered himself as our representative and substitute, and suffered and died on the cross in our place – taking upon himself God’s righteous wrath. We believe in his bodily resurrection on the third day, which powerfully declared him to be the Son of God. By his death and resurrection, Jesus once for all conquered sin, death, hell, and the devil.

We believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Salvation is a divine gift given to any who repent and believe. Repentance and faith are the divinely-enabled human responses to the grace of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, a sinner must turn away from sin and embrace God – thus appropriating the benefits of Christ’s life, death and resurrection. All who truly believe and receive Christ are fully justified, reconciled to God, born of his Spirit, adopted as his children, and united with Jesus in his death and resurrection. They will one day see him in his glory and be glorified themselves, as God brings his redemptive work to completion.

We believe that God intends to transform his redeemed people by conforming them to the image of his Son through the infilling and sanctifying work of his Holy Spirit. Though this work begins with God’s gracious initiative and can only be accomplished by his life-giving power, believers must cooperate and fully yield themselves to the Lordship of Christ. Believers are called to decisively surrender their wills, be renewed in their minds, and have their hearts purified as they continuously offer themselves as living sacrifices to God.

We believe that a living faith must express itself in a life of loving obedience to God and in loving service to others. Genuine faith will inevitably produce good works, which are born out of gratitude for salvation and ultimately done for God’s glory. Christians are called to live by the power of the Holy Spirit as citizens of the kingdom, serving as God’s agents of transformation for society, culture, and the created world.

The Church

We believe that the invisible and universal Church is a spiritual body comprised of all believers, both living and dead—over which Christ himself is Head and Lord.

We believe that the local church is to be a loving community of Christ’s followers who gather for worship, prayer, instruction in the Word, mutual encouragement and discipline. As the temple of the Holy Spirit, the Church is to display his holiness, bear his fruit, and be adorned by his gracious gifts. As a people called out of darkness, the Church will embody the pervasive, life-transforming power of God by equipping the saints for the work of ministry – bearing witness to the truth and exerting influence in every realm of the broader culture. The Church is called by Jesus to proclaim the gospel – locally, cross-culturally, and internationally – and to make disciples of everyone everywhere in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that baptism and the Lord’s Supper were instituted by the Lord Jesus himself – not as a means of salvation, but as outward signs of the salvation we have by faith. They are the divinely mandated means by which believers publicly affirm their faith in Christ. Water baptism symbolizes the spiritual union that every believer has with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection. Therefore, we believe that the biblical pattern is baptism upon profession of faith in Christ, and furthermore, that it should be administered by immersion whenever possible.
The Lord’s Supper serves as not only a vivid memorial of Jesus’ bodily sacrifice and shed blood, but also as a proclamation of his death until he returns. It symbolizes the believer’s union with Christ and the spiritual unity shared by every believer. It provides a powerful inducement to self-examination, should be celebrated joyfully and regularly, and is open to all who are followers of Christ.10

The Last Things

We believe that the final years of human history will be characterized by worldwide persecution and divine judgment.

We believe that the return of Jesus will be personal, bodily, visible, and glorious. His second coming, the blessed hope for which we must be constantly prepared, is a source of encouragement and comfort, a motive for holy living, and an inspiration for ministry and mission.

We believe that when Jesus returns, he will subdue his enemies and establish his kingdom on earth and will reign in perfect righteousness.

For those in Christ, death is gain, because to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

At the resurrection, we believe that every person will face one of two eternal destinies. We believe that no condemnation awaits believers, because their sins were forgiven at the cross. They will have their lives and works judged only for reward, and will enjoy an eternal, embodied life in the presence of God and his angels, forever. Those without saving faith in Christ will be raised to appear before God for a final, irrevocable judgment. They will be consigned to a place of eternal, conscious punishment, separated from God in hell, with Satan and his angels.

We believe in the coming restoration of all things, where God – in accordance with his power and promises – will one day bring his purposes for all of creation to their glorious fulfillment. Here, God’s handiwork – though disfigured by sin and subject to decay – will be fully restored in a new heaven and new earth. We believe that all of God’s redemptive purposes will come to fruition, and death will be swallowed up in victory. 11
The word “begotten” is the past tense of an old English word which means “to bring into being,” or (in that sense) “to father” or “to sire.” When we say that the Father is “begotten of none,” we mean that no one brought the Father into being. When we say that Jesus is the “eternally begotten son of the Father,” we mean that Jesus is the only example of a person who has always (for all eternity) been brought into being by God the eternal Father, and therefore is the only person of whom it can be said that He is truly the Son of the Father. Human fathers live in time and bring human sons into being at a point in time. The eternally existing Father brings His eternally existing Son into being. Human language is inadequate to fully describe this mysterious relationship between God the Father and God the Son.
ARTICLE IV – ARTICLES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE

A. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. The Triune God
   a. We believe that the one and only true God is Spirit: self existent, infinite, personal, unchangeable, and eternal in His being; perfect in holiness, love, justice, goodness, wisdom, and truth; omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; Creator and Sustainer of all things, visible and invisible; both immanent and transcendent to creation; eternally existent in three persons, one in substance and co equal in power and glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

   Gen.1:1; Ex. 3:14, 34:6; Deut. 6:4, 32:4; 1 Kings 8:27; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 90:2, 103:8, 116:5, 147:5; Isa. 6:3, 40:28, 57:15; Jer. 23:23-24; Mal. 3:6; Matt. 28:19; John 4:24, 14:16; Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 8:4; 2 Cor. 13:14; Col. 1:17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 1:2, 12 and 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 4:10 16

   b. We believe that the Father is begotten of none. He is the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Author of salvation, the Father of all who are born into newness of life through faith in Christ.

   Gen. 1:1; Ps. 90:2; John 13:3, 16:28; Eph. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:2-3; 1 John 2:23, 3:1

   c. We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; in His eternal generation from the Father; in His incarnation by which He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, thus uniting the divine and human natures in their completeness into the one unique person of Jesus Christ; in His sinless life and miraculous works; in His vicarious death to make atonement for the sins of the world; in His bodily resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father; in His sovereign power and lordship; in His present mediatorial ministry as the believer’s Advocate; in His second coming in power and glory.

   Isa. 53:6; Matt. 28:18 20; Luke 1:35; John 1:1,14,18; Acts 2:22, 24 32; Rom. 1:3-4, 8:34; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 1:19 22; Col. 3:4; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8, 4:15, 7:25; 1 Pet. 1:18, 2:22 and 24, 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2

   d. We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, proceeding from the Father and sent by the Son, is one in substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternally God. His office and work is to reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; to regenerate those who repent of their sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; to sanctify, empower, teach, guide, and comfort the believer.

   The Scriptures reveal the work of the Holy Spirit in the church to be that of uniting believers into the body of Christ, possessing it as the temple of God, equipping it with gifts and graces for service, giving it the body of inspired truth and imparting to it the spirit of illumination and guidance into all truth, and presiding over and guiding the church into the will of God.
2. The Bible

We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God given by divine inspiration and is inerrant in the original manuscripts. The Bible today remains the unchanging authority in matters of Christian faith and practice. It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. (See Position Paper IX: "Biblical Inerrancy."

Ps. 119:9, 89, 105; Matt. 24:35; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:25; 2 Pet. 1:21

3. Mankind

a. Creation. We believe that the first man, Adam, was created by an immediate act of God and not by a process of evolution. Adam and Eve were created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality and holiness; in their original state Adam and Eve enjoyed sweet fellowship with God, the purpose of their creation being that they might glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Because all people have been created in the likeness of God they are self conscious personalities capable of free and rational choice.

Gen. 1:27; Eph. 1:5-6

b. The Fall. We believe that our first parents did not remain in the happy state of their original creation, but, being deluded through the subtlety of Satan, voluntarily disobeyed the positive command of God, and thus were alienated from God and incurred upon themselves and their posterity the sentence of death both physical and spiritual. Even the earth was cursed because of Adam’s sin. In consequence of this act of disobedience, the entire human race has become so corrupted that in every heart there is by nature that evil disposition which eventually leads to responsible acts of sin and to just condemnation. Also through the fall of Adam, people have become so completely ruined that they have neither will nor power to turn to God and if left to themselves would remain in their sin forever.

Gen. 3:13, 16-17; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 7:7ff.; 1 John 1:8

c. His Redemption. We believe that God has provided redemption for everyone through the mediatorial work of Christ, who voluntarily offered Himself on Calvary as a perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin’s curse and tasting death for everyone.

John 10:17-18; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:15, 2:5-6; Tit. 2:11-12; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:18

4. Salvation

We believe since all people are sinners and guilty before God and are dead in trespasses and sin and therefore are unable to save themselves, God has out of His infinite love given His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to become their Savior.

Matt. 1:21; John 3:14 17, 6:44; Rom. 3:10 12, 19, 20, 23; Eph. 2:1 3, 8-9
a. Repentance. We believe that genuine repentance is a necessary attitude and act of one's will that makes it possible for a holy and just God to forgive one's sins. As an attitude it involves a knowledge of, a change of mind toward, and a godly sorrow for sin; a proper reverence for God's holiness; and a surrender to God. As an act it means confessing and forsaking sin. Repentance is one's appropriate response to the grace of God in conviction. As a fruit of repentance, insofar as possible where sin has been committed against another, restitution should be made.

Ps. 51:3-4; Prov. 28:13; Isa. 6:1 5, 55:6-7; Matt. 3:2 and 8, 4:17; Luke 13:3, 15:18, 18:13, 19:8; John 16:8 11; Acts 11:18; Rom. 2:4, 10:9-10; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:25

b. Faith. We believe faith must accompany repentance and is the act of the will whereby one embraces the promises of God and appropriates to oneself personally the provisions of God's grace. It is resting in the completeness and adequacy of the atoning merit of Christ's sacrifice as the sole ground and hope of salvation. Faith must be active throughout the life of the believer and must manifest itself in obedience and good works.

Acts 13:38-39, 16:31; Rom. 4:3, 5:1; Eph. 2:8 10; Heb. 11:6; James 2:17

c. Justification and Regeneration. We believe that when the requirements of repentance and faith have been met, God justifies and regenerates the sinner. Justification is a judicial act absolving from guilt and punishment and restoring to divine favor. Justification has to do with the changing of the sinner's standing before God. Regeneration has to do with the changing of the sinner's nature through the impartation of divine life. Regeneration is a spiritual quickening, a new birth. This experience is witnessed to by the indwelling Holy Spirit who produces in the heart a desire to do the will of God.

John 3:3 and 5, 5:24; Acts 22:10; Rom. 5:1 and 9, 4:4-5, 8:16 and 33; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1; 2 Pet. 1:4

d. Sanctification and Filling with the Holy Spirit. We believe that sanctification is the work of God in making people holy. It is the will of God. It is provided in the atonement, and is experienced through faith by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word and the blood. While the divine work of making people holy begins at conversion, believers must surrender to the Holy Spirit's sanctifying power in their lives as they battle the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Furthermore, through a subsequent decisive experience, believers are to deny self, be purified in heart, and be filled with the Holy Spirit that they may be separated wholly unto God to serve Him in righteousness and holiness. Their progressive growth in Christ-likeness will be accelerated and deepened through continually submitting to His Lordship in every aspect of life until they are called to heaven.

Ps. 4:3; Matt. 16:24; John 17:17; Acts 15:8-9; Rom. 6:19 and 22, 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Gal. 2:20, 6:14; Eph. 5:26; Col. 3:3, 1 Thess. 4:3, 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 12:14, 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2 and 15-16; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 5:6
e. Resurrection and Glorification. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, and that because He lives we too shall live. The Scriptures teach that at the return of the Lord the bodies of the righteous dead will be raised and the living believers with them shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and will be changed so that both will have literal, spiritual, and immortal bodies like unto Christ's own glorious body. Our glorification is God's final act in our salvation and will be realized when we see Him as He is.

1 Cor. 15:3 8 and 19 23; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:14 17; 1 John 3:2

5. The Church

a. We believe that the invisible and universal church is an organism composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been called out from the world, separated from sin, and vitally united by faith to Christ, its living Head and sovereign Lord.

1 Cor. 12:12 27; Eph. 1:22-23, 4:15-16; Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23

b. We believe that the visible and local church is an organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together, and who meet at regular times for teaching in the Word, fellowship of the saints, observance of the ordinances, administration of discipline, exercise in prayer, and participation in public worship and evangelism.

Matt. 18:15 17; Acts 2:42, 46, 47 and 20:7; 1 Cor. 5:1 4, 16:2

c. We believe the characteristic marks of the members of the true church are faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God's commandments, and victory over the world.

John 13:35; 1 John 3:14, 4:2, 5:1 5

d. We believe the primary duties of the church consist of glorifying God and exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, of building itself up in the most holy faith, and of preaching the Gospel in all the world as a witness to all men.

Matt. 28:18 20; Acts 1:8, 20:32; Eph. 1:5-6, 3:21, 4:11 16; 1 Pet. 4:11; Jude 20-21

5. The Last Things

a. The Return of Christ. We believe that the second coming of Christ is the hope of the church and will be personal, bodily, visible, premillennial, and redemptive. His return, for which we must be constantly prepared, is a source of encouragement and consolation, a motive for pure and holy living, and an inspiration for ministry and mission. Christ will descend into the clouds, where His church, the waiting bride, will be caught up to meet Him. Subsequently, He will return to earth with His church to judge and rule the entire world.

b. The Tribulation. We believe that in the final years of this present age an unprecedented time of intensified persecution and divine judgments will occur worldwide. This period of "great tribulation" will culminate with the coming of Christ who will triumph at the Battle of Armageddon, subdue evil and fully establish His kingdom on earth.

Matt.24:15-31; 1 Cor.15:24-25; 2 Thess.2:1-10; Rev.6:1-19:21

c. The Millennium. We believe that after Christ returns with His church, He will reign on earth for a thousand years. During this period, Satan will be bound and Christ will demonstrate His sovereign power over evil by ruling the world in righteousness.

Ps.2:7-9, 98:9; Isa.9:3-7, 11:6-9; Dan.7:13-14; Rev.20:1-6

d. The Judgments. We believe that no condemnation awaits those in Christ who by faith were judged as sinners at the cross and have passed out of death into life. However, as children in the family of God, they are being disciplined and chastened during this lifetime as God conforms them to the image of His Son. Their lives and works will be judged for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Those without faith in Christ will appear before God for final judgment and condemnation at the Great White Throne.

Ps.96:13; Eccl.12:14; Matt.25:14-46; John 5:24; Rom.8:1, 29; 1 Cor.3:8-15, 4:2-5, 11:32; 2 Cor.5:10; 2 Tim.4:8; Heb.9:27, 12:5-8; Rev.20:11-15

e. The Eternal State. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead to one of two eternal destinies—heaven or hell. Ultimately, all unbelievers will be justly sentenced to eternal conscious punishment in hell together with Satan and all his angels. All believers in Christ will live forever, experiencing eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.


B. ARTICLES OF PRACTICE

1. Ordinances

The Christian ordinances are two in number, baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are the outward rites appointed by Christ to be administered in each local church, not as means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of its reality.

a. Baptism. We believe that baptism by water is the symbol of one's union by faith with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, and constitutes the public confession of these spiritual realities to the world and is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Baptism is therefore to be administered by immersion to those who have been born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and who give evidence of the genuineness of their salvation.

Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38 41, 8:36 39; Rom. 6:3 5; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; compare Mark 16:16
b. The Lord's Supper. We believe the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ Himself on the night of His betrayal. We believe that it is as a memorial of Christ's death, a center of communion and fellowship, a testimony to saving faith, and a visible seal of Christ's redemptive covenant. It is to be observed only by the children of God and consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and the fruit of the vine, which symbolize the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for life and sustenance until He comes. While the Lord's Supper is open to all true believers regardless of denomination, each one is strongly exhorted to "examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."