Walking in the Teachings of the Holy Scriptures

Understanding the beliefs and practices of the Apostolic Christian Church
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Preface

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”¹ God has provided the wonderful gift of His son, Jesus Christ, to be the Saviour of mankind² and the Bible to serve every believer as “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”³ The Bible is God’s inspired Word and is sufficient in meeting our needs. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”⁴

The Word is intended to be applied in all aspects of our individual lives and to help us as a body of believers to fulfill the God-given mission of the church. Achievement of these objectives requires proper understanding of the Word in relation to many different topics.⁵ God wants us to be people of understanding,⁶ not “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”⁷ We are richly blessed with a heritage of emphasis on trust in the infallibility and completeness of God’s Word; sound biblical interpretation as led by the Holy Spirit;

¹ John 1:1  
² John 3:16  
³ Psalm 119:105  
⁴ 2 Timothy 3:16-17  
⁵ 2 Timothy 2:15  
⁶ 1 Corinthians 14:20  
⁷ Ephesians 4:14
instruction of practical application of biblical principles in our homes, our churches, and our lives; and sincere efforts to obey these truths, by the grace of God.

The purpose of this book is to help the reader grow in understanding the biblical basis of many of the foundational doctrines taught by the Apostolic Christian Church of America. This first edition is not intended to cover all our beliefs and practices; those will be addressed more fully in future editions. “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us,” to reaffirm and communicate “those things which are most surely believed among us.” All who seek truth are exhorted to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Such endeavors should increase our faith and help us “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,” and above all, bringing glory to our great God.

We should have a genuine desire to learn and to obey biblical teachings from the beginning of our walk with Christ. As we grow in understanding of God’s Word and in appreciation of the many blessings resulting from its proper application to our lives, we become more committed in our walk with Christ and become more useful vessels in His kingdom. “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine....

8 Acts 15:28
9 Luke 1:1
10 2 Peter 3:18
11 Ephesians 4:1
12 Jude 25
13 Matthew 5:6; John 14:15
Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

- the Elder Body

14 1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16
God’s Word as Our Authority

As we face the realities in the world today, we could easily become overwhelmed by questions surrounding our existence, fears of the unknown, a rapidly changing environment and inability to control our circumstances. The believer can take great comfort as we trust in and obey God’s unchanging Word as our authority.

Many reasons exist for seeing God’s Word as authoritative. Though written by dozens of writers over a span of more than one thousand years, the Bible has one Author and one consistent message from beginning to end. The Author is God as seen in 2 Timothy “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.”1 Peter states, “Knowing this first, that 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.”2

1 2 Timothy 3:16
2 2 Peter 1:20-21
The constant message is one of redemption of fallen man through Jesus Christ, and it is written with the purpose of helping us to learn and to grow spiritually. The Apostle John says in his Gospel, “But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” He states again in his first letter, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

We are comforted by the truth of God’s Word. The psalmist declares, “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.” David describes the Word of God as perfect, sure, right, and pure. Not only is the Word of God true, but it is also eternal. “Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.” The enduring nature of God’s word was stated by Jesus and the apostles.

The authority of God’s Word is seen most clearly as we submit to it and grow by it. “But whoso keepeth his

3 Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11  
4 John 20:31  
5 1 John 5:13  
6 Psalm 119:160  
7 Psalm 19:7-9  
8 Psalm 119:89  
9 Isaiah 40:8  
10 Matthew 5:18, 24:35  
11 1 Peter 1:25
word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” 12 “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” 13

We are called to study the word of God, 14 to carefully interpret it, 15 and to guard against adding to or taking away from it. 16 Part of our care in “rightly dividing” or interpreting the word is to read it in context, considering the whole counsel of God 17 as we apply it to our lives or engage in teaching others.

The Word of God describes itself in many ways that show how its readers might be blessed and changed by it. It is a light to our path, 18 the power of God unto salvation, 19 a spiritual weapon to use against Satan and the powers of darkness, 20 a surgical, probing instrument, 21 and a mirror by which we can see our true selves. 22

To approach the Word of God without the intention of obeying it or allowing oneself to be changed by it could result in peril to our spiritual being. Jesus equated such a one as a fool who would build his house without

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12 1 John 2:5  
13 1 Peter 2:2  
14 Isaiah 34:16; John 5:39  
15 2 Timothy 2:15  
16 Deuteronomy 12:32; Revelation 22:18-19  
17 Acts 20:20, 27; Joshua 1:8  
18 Psalm 119:105  
19 Romans 1:16  
20 Ephesians 6:17  
21 Hebrews 4:12  
22 James 1:23
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a foundation.\textsuperscript{23} He also said that the Sadducees were in error, \textit{“not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God.”}\textsuperscript{24} God’s desire is that we would trust the Word as our necessary food\textsuperscript{25} and allow it to purify and cleanse us.\textsuperscript{26} As we internalize it or hide it in our hearts,\textsuperscript{27} we will find ourselves overflowing with praise for Him and with godly instruction for how to treat others.\textsuperscript{28}

\textit{“O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.”}\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{23} Matthew 7:26-27; Luke 6:49
\bibitem{24} Matthew 22:29
\bibitem{25} Job 23:12; 1 Peter 2:2
\bibitem{26} Psalm 119:9; Ephesians 5:26
\bibitem{27} Psalm 119:11
\bibitem{28} Colossians 3:16
\bibitem{29} Psalm 119:97
\end{thebibliography}
The Nature of God

The Bible describes the nature of God in many ways, which makes it clear that He desires that we know who He is and understand Him to the extent He reveals himself in His Word. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour.”¹ God reveals himself as eternal, all powerful, all knowing, Creator, holy, loving, compassionate, just and true.

The greatest commandment to the children of Israel was “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”² Loving the Lord with all one’s heart, soul, and might leaves no room to love another god. This worship of a single, living God was unique to the nation of Israel in Old Testament times, in contrast to many of the nations around them. The temptation to worship other gods was always present.

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1 Isaiah 43:10-11
2 Deuteronomy 6:4-5
However, when they were faithful, His status as the only living God became the focus of their zeal.

We believe there is only one God, and this Creator God exists as one essence in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The existence of one God in three distinct persons is known as the Trinity (derived from “triunity”). While the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture, it is clearly biblical. Although we refer to three distinct persons, we believe that they are all the one eternal God. Three distinct persons are represented at the baptism of Jesus in God’s voice from heaven, in Jesus being immersed, and in the Spirit as a dove descending on Jesus.³ There are other supporting references in the New Testament.⁴

In the New Testament, we read that the Jewish people were unable to reconcile Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God with their belief in the uniqueness of the Father as the only living God. However, Jesus declared himself to be one with God.⁵ In many ways, this is a mystery and impossible for man to completely understand. Regardless of our inability to fully comprehend the nature of God, we can know and be certain of what the Bible says about one God in three persons.

**God the Father**

Whether through the prophets, or the Ten Commandments, or in the greatest commandment mentioned

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³ Matthew 3:16-17  
⁴ Matthew 28:19; 1 John 5:7; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:4-6  
⁵ John 10:30
previously, the Father has always made it clear that none are like Him, and that we should not serve other gods. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” He is our Father and Creator: “But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” As God’s children, we are instructed by Jesus to address God as our Father in prayer: “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

**God the Son**
The prophet Isaiah declared many years before the birth of Jesus that a virgin would conceive and bear a child and call his name Emmanuel. Matthew records the fulfilling of that prophecy with the birth of Jesus, emphasizing the interpretation of the name Emmanuel. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” As Jesus began His public ministry proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, He provoked the wrath of his countrymen when He called God His Father. “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was

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6 Deuteronomy 6:4-5  
7 Exodus 20:3  
8 Isaiah 45:22  
9 Isaiah 64:8  
10 Matthew 6:9  
11 Matthew 1:23
his Father, making himself equal with God.” They clearly believed that He was claiming equality with God. Jesus Himself confirmed this, as he told Philip that if he had seen Jesus, he had seen the Father. John, as he begins his Gospel, states that the Word was God and became flesh (Jesus) and dwelt among us. The Apostle Paul refers us to Jesus as the one who was the very image of God. In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is described as the express image of His (God’s) person. Jesus is clearly shown to have divine attributes in passages like “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

God the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a distinct person with whom we interact. The Holy Spirit as God is seen less in direct statements, but is clear in complementary passages of Scripture. For example, Paul says that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God,” and we read “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.” Luke attributes

12 John 5:18
13 John 14:9
14 John 1:1,14
15 Colossians 1:15
16 Hebrews 1:3
17 Revelation 1:8
18 John 14:16-17, 15:26; Acts 10:19-20
19 2 Timothy 3:16
20 2 Peter 1:21
21 Acts 28:25-26
the origination of Isaiah’s words to the Holy Ghost, while Isaiah\textsuperscript{22} says their source was God. His divine attributes include being eternal,\textsuperscript{23} being the Creator,\textsuperscript{24} being omnipresent,\textsuperscript{25} being omniscient\textsuperscript{26} and being life-giving.\textsuperscript{27}

The Old Testament includes many direct references to the Spirit of the Lord and to the Holy Spirit. Some of these refer to God’s working in the judges and prophets, and others refer to King David or King Saul. God gave the Holy Spirit to Jesus without measure. “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.”\textsuperscript{28}

Those who put their faith in Him through repentance and conversion are assured of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives as a sign of the Father’s commitment to give His children the Kingdom.\textsuperscript{29} “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Isaiah 6:8-10
\item \textsuperscript{23} Hebrews 9:14
\item \textsuperscript{24} Genesis 1:2-3
\item \textsuperscript{25} Psalm 139:7
\item \textsuperscript{26} 1 Corinthians 2:10
\item \textsuperscript{27} John 3:8
\item \textsuperscript{28} John 3:34-35
\item \textsuperscript{29} John 7:38-39
\end{itemize}
of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

**The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one**

Just before leaving the earth, Jesus gave His disciples their final instructions. He clearly communicated that they should baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In other conversations with His disciples, He reminded them of the unity (oneness) between Himself and the Father: “I and my Father are one,” and “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

As we have seen, there is equality in the nature of all three persons of the God-head. However, as we consider the whole counsel of God, and by His grace rightly divide these Scriptures, we see the three persons occupying different roles. Jesus acknowledged that His Father is greater than He, and the Apostle Paul wrote that “the head of Christ is God.”

In describing the nature of God, Scripture declares that the Father is over all, and that the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal with God the Father. Each of the three persons of God fulfills His distinct function. They all work in perfect unity with each other; but in the end

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30 Ephesians 1:12-14  
31 John 10:30  
32 Matthew 28:19  
33 John 14:28  
34 1 Corinthians 11:3
become subject to the Father, that He may be all in all.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”35

35 Ephesians 4:4-6
Man’s Sinful Nature

The gospel of salvation means “good news.” Jesus Christ brought us the good news of salvation because the sinfulness of mankind created a situation that left us in desperate need of help. To find the beginning of that sad state of affairs, we go back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 2 God created man, was in unbroken fellowship with him, and placed him in the garden to keep it with one restriction, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”¹ At that time, Adam and Eve were sinless and without guilt or shame.²

That all changed in Genesis 3 when Eve was tempted by the serpent, and both Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. With that one act of disobedience, sin entered into the world. The relationship between God and His creation was drastically changed as the separation of sin, its condemnation and death, came upon Adam and Eve. Not only did the condemnation of sin fall upon the first couple; but sin, through them, had now entered

¹ Genesis 2:17
² Genesis 2:25
the human race. We read, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” “Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”3 All of creation, from that moment on, was in the bondage of corruption, waiting for “good news.”4

From the day when Eve believed Satan instead of God, no one has escaped the bondage of sin. “Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”5 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”6 Each one of us inherited a sinful nature from Adam. “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”7 “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”8

Not only are we born with a sinful nature, but Scripture is clear concerning the depth and pervasive-ness of man’s sin. The apostle Paul refers to Psalms 14 to conclude that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin. “As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

3 Romans 5:12, 18-19
4 Romans 8:21
5 Psalm 53:3
6 Romans 3:23
7 Psalm 51:5
8 Psalm 58:3
Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Paul’s letter to the Ephesians concludes that the presence of sin renders one “dead in trespasses and sins.” He considers them without Christ, aliens, strangers, having no hope, and without God. Furthermore, “having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Not only does sin place man in such a state, but it deceives the bearer to deny the condition and to seek to establish one’s own righteousness. The teaching expressed in Isaiah “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” reinforces Paul’s instruction to the Romans that the desire to establish one’s own righteousness comes from being ignorant of God’s righteousness and refusing to submit to the same. Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, “Are we blind also?” He responded, “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see;
therefore your sin remaineth.”¹⁵ The misery of sin leads us to cry out with the Apostle Paul, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”¹⁶ The answer to the condemnation of sin is Jesus Christ our Lord, resulting in thanksgiving to God.¹⁷ Through justification by faith,¹⁸ we are delivered from the penalty of Adam’s sin. Through the Spirit of adoption, we are made children of God and joint-heirs with Christ,¹⁹ replacing the separation of sin. Through the regeneration of being born again, we receive a new nature and a new heart.²⁰ Through sanctification we are freed from the pollution of sin,²¹ and are washed with the Word by Jesus, Himself, as seen in the beautiful picture in Ephesians.²² In the final act of glorification in Heaven, we will be free from sin and the flesh.²³ Until that day, the Apostle John directs us not to be in denial concerning our sin,²⁴ but to confess it and to experience the forgiveness of sin and the cleansing from all unrighteousness from the One who is faithful and just.²⁵

¹⁵ John 9:40-41 ¹⁶ Romans 7:24 ¹⁷ Romans 7:25 ¹⁸ Romans 5:1 ¹⁹ Romans 8:15-17 ²⁰ Romans 6:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Peter 1:3-4; Ezekiel 11:19-20 ²¹ Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:1-2 ²² Ephesians 5:26-27 ²³ 1 Corinthians 15:52-57; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 19:7-9, 21:4, 22:3-4 ²⁴ 1 John 1:8, 10 ²⁵ 1 John 1:9
Salvation, Repentance, Conversion

We are blessed beyond measure through God’s love in that “he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In order to be saved, we must believe that Jesus died on the Cross and paid the price for our sins. The Bible teaches that we ourselves cannot atone for our sin. It is only by God’s grace through faith that we are saved and inherit such a wonderful salvation. This atonement was accomplished by Christ on the Cross, taking upon Himself the sins of the world, and giving His life in place of ours. His shed blood can cleanse us of our sins, if we come to Him in faith and repentance. When we answer God’s call and come to Him in repentance with a broken and contrite heart, we receive

1 John 3:16
2 Ephesians 2:8-10
3 Revelation 1:5
grace to turn away from our old way of living and turn in faith toward God, praising Him for His mercy and forgiveness found in the shed blood of Jesus.⁴ This most important decision allows fulfillment of His purpose for our life. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”⁵

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, all mankind has been born in sin and separated from a proper relationship with God. God has pronounced His judgment on sin; “The wages of sin is death.”⁶ However, our loving, merciful Lord has prepared a way by which we can be saved from His wrath: “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”⁷

The gift of grace to a humble heart will lead to fruitful repentance and conversion. Repentance would be ineffective without God’s grace and power to convert the heart. Conversion means to be spiritually born again.⁸ This miracle of becoming a new creature in Christ⁹ by His grace is evidenced by a new walk of life, restoration of peace with God (and man as much as possible)¹⁰ and the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

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⁴ Acts 20:21  
⁵ John 1:12  
⁶ Romans 6:23  
⁷ Romans 6:23  
⁸ John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23  
⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:17  
¹⁰ Romans 6:4  
¹¹ Romans 12:18
Before repentance we followed our own degenerate thinking and were blinded by Satan’s deceptions. All have sinned and fallen short of God’s standards, as spelled out in His Word. Before we are able to repent, we must recognize our lost condition and need for a Saviour. Sorrow for sin, confession and restitution are some of the fruits of repentance. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” As we seek God’s forgiveness, we also must be willing to forgive others. God also asks that we openly acknowledge Jesus as the only Saviour. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Justification by faith restores us to peace with God and allows open communion with Him.

The Word directs us to make amends to anyone we have offended. When Zacchaeus repented, he told Jesus that he would repay everyone whom he had wronged. The Word instructs us: “as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” and “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love.” Following these principles

12 Romans 3:23
13 Matthew 3:6,8
14 1 John 1:9
15 Matthew 6:14
16 Romans 10:9
17 Romans 5:1-2
18 Matthew 5:23-24
19 Luke 19:8
20 Romans 12:18
21 Romans 12:10
nurtures peace in our relationships with people.\textsuperscript{22} We are called to be a Christ-like example, a light in the world, and salt of the earth.\textsuperscript{23}

God promises a helper and comforter to all who believe.\textsuperscript{24} He is called the Holy Spirit “\textit{in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.}”\textsuperscript{25} This Spirit directs and teaches us; and by His work in our hearts, our actions and thoughts reflect the fruit of the Spirit, which “\textit{is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.}”\textsuperscript{26} This fruit will be reflected in a walk of life which includes separation from evil and unrighteousness. One must turn away from unwholesome things, which is a fulfillment of the biblical instruction to: “\textit{Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.}”\textsuperscript{27}

Repentance is followed by baptism,\textsuperscript{28} which is a symbolic burial of the old nature which has been crucified with Christ and a coming forth in newness of life in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Romans 14:19
\item \textsuperscript{23} Matthew 5:13-14
\item \textsuperscript{24} John 14:16
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ephesians 1:13-14
\item \textsuperscript{26} Galatians 5:22-25
\item \textsuperscript{27} 1 John 2:15
\item \textsuperscript{28} Acts 2:38
\end{itemize}
likeness of the resurrection of Christ. Standing in the baptismal waters, converts express their faith by publicly testifying of their covenantal relationship with God and by stating they will be true and faithful to God as long as they live, which is made possible only by His grace.

When God converts us, He also adopts us as children. His relationship to us is not only being our Lord, but also being a loving Heavenly Father. We become bound to Him in love. Jesus told His disciples before He left the earth, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Motivated by love for Christ, our greatest desire is to “serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” John writes, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

Clearly, the believer is expected to live an overcoming life. God promises to be faithful, not allowing the believer to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear, providing a way of escape from temptation. The Word teaches we should not sin. God in His holiness hates all iniquity (sin) and so should we. God’s word also teaches that if we sin we are given a remedy, if we repent and seek forgiveness.

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29 Romans 6:4-6  
30 Ephesians 3:17  
31 John 14:15  
32 Hebrews 12:28  
33 1 John 2:3  
34 1 Corinthians 10:13  
35 John 5:14; 1 John 2:1  
36 Hebrews 1:9  
37 1 John 1:9, 2:1-2
This is made possible by faith in Christ’s sacrificial death and resurrection, His atoning blood and His merciful advocacy on our behalf. We are exhorted to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”  

We are blessed with a lively hope of being with our Lord eternally, if we continue in faith and hope, looking to Him as our anchor. “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast.”

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38 Hebrews 4:16  
39 Hebrews 6:19
Justification is a gracious act of God declaring righteous the sinner who believes in Christ. It makes it possible for a human being to be accepted by God as His child. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

Justification is the answer to the question “How can sinful man come into the presence of a Holy God, to live in communion with Him and to walk in innocence before Him?” We read concerning man: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” and concerning God, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” We understand the heartfelt questions of the Psalmist: “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” We marvel that “being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope

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1 John 1:12
2 Romans 3:23
3 Habakkuk 1:13
4 Psalm 8:4
of eternal life.”

Since sin has separated man from God, sin must be taken away so that man may be reconciled to God. In love God gave his own Son, that, as the lamb of God, He might take away the sins of the world. Through Christ, God has provided a righteousness which man otherwise could never achieve. This righteousness comes through faith in Christ and in His shed blood, and comes to all who believe in Him. When our pride has been broken, we abandon our own self-reliant efforts to earn divine favor, and humbly commit ourselves to God, to receive what He is prepared to give.

Trusting in the atoning blood of Christ, the believer is “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.”

In this act of grace we have a glimpse of the nature of God. We see His divine love and forbearance, His mercy and care for man. We also see God’s righteousness “that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Since justification is a gift, it results in humility and gratitude in the believer. It also results in unity and peace among the recipients. This oneness is built upon the foundation of peace with God. “Therefore being

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5 Titus 3:7
6 John 1:29
7 Psalms 51:17
8 Romans 3:24
9 Romans 4:25
10 Romans 3:26
justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

11 Romans 5:1
All members of the Apostolic Christian Church have experienced baptism and a prayer of consecration. This is based on the New Testament teaching\(^1\) that all who believe should follow through with baptism. What is baptism, and what does it mean?

The Bible teaches that faith and baptism belong together, and that baptism should always follow a confession of faith in the Lord. This concept has its roots in the Old Testament practices of the Levites of anointing with oil, and of washing with, or in, water.\(^2\) These practices signified a spiritual cleansing and a setting apart for the Lord’s work. In the New Testament from the time of John the Baptist, we see the application of baptism to those who are converted by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Several aspects of New Testament baptism are found in the Bible, which are presented here in no particular order.

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1. Acts 2:38
2. Leviticus 8:6,12
1. Baptism is commanded and should be carried out for all believers. “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Baptism should not be viewed as optional, although circumstances may not afford the opportunity (e.g. the thief on the cross, whose circumstances did not permit it.)

2. Baptism should follow repentance and public profession of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the order always given in Acts, as in the examples of the Jews, Simon, the eunuch, Cornelius’ household, Lydia’s Household, the jailor’s household, Crispus’ household including many of the Corinthians, and the Ephesians. A space between the first experience of repentance and the time of baptism is beneficial for spiritual growth and stability, and demonstration of the work of the Lord in the convert’s life. There are two kinds of baptisms mentioned: one by water and one by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye

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3 Matthew 28:19
4 Acts 20:21
5 Acts 2:38
6 Acts 8:13
7 Acts 8:36-39
8 Acts 10:47-48
9 Acts 16:14-15
10 Acts 16:31-33
11 Acts 18:8
12 Ephesians 4:4-5
shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” Baptism by water is what an elder or ordained deacon performs in accordance with Jesus’ teachings, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit, prophesied by John the Baptist is what Jesus has given since the day of Pentecost. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Him. As in the example of Cornelius’ household, believers are given the Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts from the time that they truly believe.

3. The English word “baptism” is taken directly from the Greek noun “baptisma” which means immersion. In Old Testament times baptism could have been by sprinkling or immersion, but in the New Testament baptism appears to have been performed only by immersion. John the Baptist baptized in Aenon because there was much water there. In the examples of Jesus and the eunuch, the Word says that they both came up out of the water. When health issues or physical circumstances are such that immersion is not feasible, we apply the alternative of sprinkling.

4. Baptism symbolizes two important aspects of the believer’s conversion. The first is a symbol of spiritual cleansing. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full

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13 Acts 1:5
14 Matthew 28:19
15 Matthew 3:11
16 John 14:16-18, 16:7
17 Matthew 3:16
18 Acts 8:39
assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”¹⁹ Water is often used in the Bible as a symbol of cleansing. Baptism itself does not cleanse our hearts from sin; this is done only by Jesus’ blood which was shed on the cross. Baptism is a symbol of our cleansing which has taken place as a result of our faith in Jesus blood and of God’s grace. The second symbol of baptism is one of a burial and resurrection.²⁰ A converted soul is one who has died to self and put off the old man; and baptism represents the burial of this old man, and then rising to a new life in Jesus. Just prior to baptism, the convert publicly acknowledges a covenant of life-long faithfulness to God, which is to be kept by the grace of God.

5. Since a profession of faith and a converted soul are required for baptism, we can conclude that baptism is not meaningful for individuals with insufficient maturity and understanding. This point is one of the main tenets of the Anabaptists (which means “rebaptizing”), who held that regardless of infant baptism, everyone must, as a mature individual, repent and be converted, after which baptism would be administered. We find no example in the Bible where infants were baptized. Rather, we understand that young children do not have the

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¹⁹ Hebrews 10:22
²⁰ Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21
capability of discerning between good and evil with full accountability.\textsuperscript{21}

6. Following baptism, an elder will lay his hands on the believer and offer a prayer of consecration. We can find several examples of laying on of hands and prayer in the New Testament: the Samaritans,\textsuperscript{22} Paul,\textsuperscript{23} the Ephesians,\textsuperscript{24} Timothy,\textsuperscript{25} and Hebrews.\textsuperscript{26} In this prayer the elder will acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit and consecrate the individual for the work of Christ being “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,” “unto the day of redemption.”\textsuperscript{27} This prayer includes acknowledgement of the believer’s life being set apart for self-sacrificial service for God. The new brother or sister is then received as a member of the body of Christ and of the church.

The Bible exhort all to believe in Jesus Christ, repent and be converted. This conversion is to be followed by baptism, consecration, and a life of faithfulness to God.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Deuteronomy 1:39
\item \textsuperscript{22} Acts 8:15-17
\item \textsuperscript{23} Acts 9:17
\item \textsuperscript{24} Acts 19:6
\item \textsuperscript{25} 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6
\item \textsuperscript{26} Hebrews 6:2
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ephesians 1:13, 4:30
\end{itemize}
Sanctification can be defined as being set apart unto God, belonging to God, called to be saints. It is not just a one-time experience, but occurs daily as a part of the believer’s life. We can read in Scripture that the child of God is sanctified by faith in the shed blood of our Saviour, by the Holy Spirit, and by God’s Word.¹ We are sanctified as the result of God in His mercy justifying us through Christ, declaring us righteous that we may have communion with Him. This work of God (being made holy) is available only by grace through faith; it is the gift of God.²

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is ongoing. The Word of God calls us to a life of submission to the Spirit and of obedience to the teaching of our Father’s Word. This process includes humbly repenting for any sin which may occur in our lives and being cleansed by grace through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, our advocate and the propitiation for our sins.³ The power of

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¹ Acts 26:18; Hebrews 13:12, Romans 15:16; John 17:17
² Ephesians 2:8-10
³ Hebrews 10:19; 1 John 1:7-9, 2:1-2
submission opens the door to receive God’s grace. Being free from the bondage of sin, we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God.

Thus, we no longer serve sin. The sanctified life (life from God and life for God) extends to all areas of human experience. Living the sanctified life is a sincere effort to make the ordinary sacred. Sanctification calls the believer to “let your moderation be known unto all men,” which is manifested in forbearance with each other and sweet reasonableness in all aspects of life. In submission to God’s Word, the believer esteems others better than himself. The believer in submission to the Spirit bears the fruit of the Spirit, abstaining from the works of the flesh.

Walking in faith, we trust our Saviour, knowing that without Him we can do nothing. Striving to walk worthy of his vocation, the believer earnestly attempts to live as directed by the Scripture: “the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do we have the humility and faith to

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4 Romans 6:14  
5 Romans 12:1  
6 Romans 6:11  
7 Colossians 3:17  
8 Philippians 4:5  
9 Philippians 2:3  
10 Galatians 5:22-23  
11 Galatians 5:19-21  
12 John 15:5  
13 Ephesians 4:1  
14 1 Thessalonians 5:23
entreat God to deeply change us as we read in Ephesians, “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word”\(^\text{15}\)

The blessing of a sanctified life is expressed in charity, humility, integrity, modesty and all other godly virtues. In the believer’s walk and way of life we are exhorted to: “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”\(^\text{16}\) In our thoughts, words, and deeds, we are called to consider how we can please our Heavenly Father and help our fellow believers and neighbors.\(^\text{17}\) “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”\(^\text{18}\)

God’s children are exhorted as the “holy (sanctified) and beloved” to walk in mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, peace, thankfulness, and wisdom.\(^\text{19}\) The wisdom which is from above, is “first pure, then peaceable, gentle,
and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

There is a joy in obedience when we walk after the example of Christ, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.” Walking after the Spirit, the believer finds joy in living a holy, sanctified life; remembering the words of the Saviour, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

20 James 3:17
21 Hebrews 12:2
22 John 17:16-17
Faithfulness & Perseverance

Faith is essential for every child of God. It consists of a sincere belief in God’s existence; in His three-person nature as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and in the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures are indeed the basis of such faith, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Furthermore, the blessed promises of the Holy Scriptures, including God’s plan of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ and His promise of an eternal reward, are the believer’s treasure.

Though small in its inception, this faith has boundless potential for growth. The Lord Jesus likens faith to a tiny seed, but gives hope to those who hear and prayerfully seek to understand the Word, allowing the seed to multiply greatly. As the apostles of old requested the
Saviour to “Increase our faith,”\(^5\) so the child of God recognizes the need for faith to grow; and he is not complacent in seeking its increase. As faith increases the believer’s heart is filled with love for God and a sincere desire to please Him. Demonstration of this love is accomplished by the believer applying the Holy Scriptures to all aspects of life in humble obedience.\(^6\) This loyalty to God and His Word is known as faithfulness.

Faithfulness is established throughout the Holy Scriptures as necessary for God’s children. David instructed the people of Israel to “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually.”\(^7\) In praise to God, the prophet Isaiah remembers His many blessings: “for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.”\(^8\) The Lord Jesus commends the “faithful and wise steward... Blessed is that servant.”\(^9\) Additionally, the Apostle Paul addresses a requirement for stewardship, “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”\(^10\)

The believer’s commitment to faithfulness is life-long, established in a sacred covenant with the Heavenly Father in which He promises His guiding counsel,\(^11\) all-sufficient

\(^{5}\) Luke 17:5  
\(^{6}\) 1 John 2:3  
\(^{7}\) 1 Chronicles 16:11  
\(^{8}\) Isaiah 25:1  
\(^{9}\) Luke 12:42-43  
\(^{10}\) 1 Corinthians 4:2  
\(^{11}\) Psalm 73:24
Walking in the Teachings of the Holy Scripture

grace,\textsuperscript{12} and an eternal inheritance in heaven.\textsuperscript{13} Moreover, one will never be alone in serving Him, “\textit{for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.}”\textsuperscript{14} The Lord Jesus clearly identified the child of God’s obligation and hoped for reward when He exclaimed, “\textit{he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved,}”\textsuperscript{15} and “\textit{be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.}”\textsuperscript{16}

The believer and his life of faithfulness can be likened to a sailor on a voyage. Though the sailor often finds the seas smooth and serene, storms may stir up the waves, making the voyage difficult. Regardless of the difficulty, his goal is unchanged: to deliver the vessel and its precious cargo safely to its destination. The skilled mariner strives to keep his vessel’s bearings steady in spite of the sea’s conditions. He realizes that to lose his way during a raging storm could bring calamity. With diligent effort and focus, he navigates the tempestuous seas and arrives at the port unharmed. Likewise, in the quest for faithfulness, one must remain undeterred by life’s tribulations. The believer must recognize that God has promised His grace is sufficient to allow us to persevere in faith through all circumstances to reach our heavenly goal.

Perseverance involves the persistent application of godly principles to the believer’s life, regardless of the ease

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{12}{Ephesians 2:8}
\footnote{13}{1 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:25}
\footnote{14}{Hebrews 13:5}
\footnote{15}{Matthew 24:13}
\footnote{16}{Revelation 2:10}
\end{footnotes}
or difficulty in applying them. This commitment can be illustrated by two instances in the Old Testament example of Joseph, when he refused to allow the enticement of sin and trial of imprisonment to deter him from persevering. While serving as a slave, Joseph’s faithfulness was rewarded by his master, Potiphar, who entrusted the affairs of his household to him. Potiphar’s wife, attracted to the young slave, attempted to lure him into sin. Resisting the temptation, he did not waver in doing what was right. In spite of his victory over sin, he was slandered, falsely accused, and sentenced to prison. Joseph’s light as a godly example again afforded him recognition, this time in the prison. The keeper of the jail committed the care of fellow prisoners to him. Joseph did not merely tolerate the imprisonment, but used it as an opportunity to do the good works of God. His example inspires a child of God to persevere through temptation and hardship, remaining faithful to the Heavenly Father.\textsuperscript{17}

The believer’s greatest model of perseverance is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, “\textit{the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.}”\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the Apostle Paul taught the virtues of perseverance in his New Testament letters.\textsuperscript{19} He encouraged

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Genesis 39:1-23
\item \textsuperscript{18} Hebrews 12:2-3
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ephesians 6:18
\end{itemize}
the believer to be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,”\(^ {20}\) and to “stand fast in the faith.”\(^ {21}\) Paul recognized the need for divine assistance in this effort: “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.”\(^ {22}\)

The Apostle Paul’s acknowledgment of the need for God’s armor is born from the trials and tribulations he experienced. Likewise, each believer faces experiences in his spiritual life that require the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit. God’s assurance not to forsake His children\(^ {23}\) and His gift of grace\(^ {24}\) are of immeasurable value in the good fight of faith.\(^ {25}\) However, these promises can only be claimed by the believer who continues to live a life of faith and faithfulness to God and His Word.

To remain faithful, the child of God must nurture a heart of humility which receives grace; and he must abide in His relationship with Christ, while maintaining sensitivity to the Spirit’s direction.\(^ {26}\) Allowing self-will to interfere with the Holy Spirit’s guidance would grieve the Spirit. James teaches that “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”\(^ {27}\) Without God’s grace, the believer

\(^{20}\) 1 Corinthians 15:58  
\(^{21}\) 1 Corinthians 16:13  
\(^{22}\) Ephesians 6:13  
\(^{23}\) Hebrews 13:5  
\(^{24}\) James 4:6  
\(^{25}\) 1 Timothy 6:12  
\(^{26}\) John 10:27, 15:5  
\(^{27}\) James 4:6
would soon lack the ability to persevere and overcome sin, for which the consequences are dire. The Scriptures are clear that if the believer returns to a life of sin, refuses to repent and rejects his faith in Christ, salvation is forfeited.\textsuperscript{28} The child of God will do well to embrace James’ encouragement to “\textit{Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you}.”\textsuperscript{29} A believer’s life of faithfulness, persevering through the inevitable trials and tribulations, is a testimony of love for the Heavenly Father and of the desire to spend eternity with Him. God’s blessings for the faithful abound and contain their great hope of eternity.\textsuperscript{30} The believer is encouraged to “\textit{love the LORD, for the LORD preserveth the faithful}.”\textsuperscript{31} He will reward them with eternal life whose faith results in “\textit{patient continuance in well doing}.”\textsuperscript{32} The Apostle Peter sums up this hope beautifully in his expression, “\textit{Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls}.”\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{28} Hebrews 10:29; 2 Peter 2:20-22 \\
\textsuperscript{29} James 4:8 \\
\textsuperscript{30} Proverbs 28:20; 1 John 2:25 \\
\textsuperscript{31} Psalm 31:23 \\
\textsuperscript{32} Romans 2:7 \\
\textsuperscript{33} 1 Peter 1:8-9
\end{flushleft}
Resurrection & Eternal Destination

Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead, conquering sin, death, and all the powers of Satan. The resurrection is God’s historical affirmation and vindication of Jesus Christ’s unique identity, mission, and message. Historical evidence of the resurrection is manifest in Christ’s empty tomb, His many resurrection appearances, and in the emergence of the Christian church. Jesus Christ now resides at the right hand of the Father and lives to indwell all who recognize their sinfulness, who repent, and who turn their lives over to His authority. The resurrection of Christ is the basis of the faithful Christian’s assurance of a similar resurrection followed by an eternity in heaven. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

1 1 Peter 1:3-4
1 Corinthians\(^2\) contains Paul’s vigorous defense of the bodily resurrection, saying that to deny that would cast doubt on the resurrection of Christ. Both the saved and the lost will also be resurrected, they that are saved to the resurrection of life, and they that are lost to the resurrection of eternal damnation.\(^3\)

Ample warning is given to the sinner to change his ways and to avoid the eternity of the lost. “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”\(^4\)

Heaven and hell are real places. Heaven is the place where God resides. Followers of Jesus Christ will spend eternity with Him in heaven.\(^5\) Hell is the place that God created for Satan and his fallen angels to be punished for their rebellion against Him. After living life on earth, unbelievers will be judged by God and sent to hell where they will be eternally tormented with the Devil and the fallen angels.\(^6\) Scripture clearly teaches that only these two options exist for eternity: heaven or hell. Just as a shepherd divides his

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\(^2\) 1 Corinthians 15
\(^3\) Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:42,44; Revelation 3:5, 20:11-15
\(^4\) 2 Peter 3:7-9
\(^5\) Matthew 25:34; John 17:24; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 11:16;
1 Peter 1:4
\(^6\) Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-48; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:9-11,
20:12-15, 21:8
flock between the goats and the sheep, Jesus explains that all people of every nation will be divided between these two destinations. Even in the Old Testament, this truth is evident. Daniel states that “many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Job also testifies that his Redeemer lives; and that after his death, he will see God with his own eyes.

The Bible speaks of immediate destinations of the soul that will eventually become reunited with the body (becoming a new spiritual body) for a similar fate. At the time of our death, our spirit and body separate from one another. The body decays and returns to dust, “all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” while our “spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Our soul will then immediately appear in one of two places, depending on our faith in Christ and His teachings. The dying thief on the cross received the blessed assurance from Jesus: “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Similarly, Jesus told the parable of the beggar Lazarus who was “carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” after his death. On the
other hand, the lost or unfaithful soul experiences no such comfort or pleasure. In the same parable of Lazarus, Jesus also describes the opposite destination: “the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.”  

At the time of the resurrection of the just, our old body will change and become an incorruptible body, rejoined with our living soul. “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” The soul will quicken (make alive) our resurrected and immortal body: “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” A wonderful and indescribable culmination of faith and hope accompanies this miraculous resurrection as the redeemed look forward to an eternity of “joy unspeakable and full of glory,” with our risen Lord and Saviour in heaven.

As the hope of the saved lies in Christ’s resurrection, the fear and dread of the lost corresponds to Satan’s inescapable damnation. Prior to the final resurrection of the just, Satan will be cast into a bottomless pit for a thousand years. “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless

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16 Luke 16:22-23
17 1 Corinthians 15:52
18 1 Corinthians 15:45
19 1 Peter 1:8
The unimaginable horror and dread accompanying the sensation of endless falling in this depthless and infernal bottomless pit is similar to the abject despair of the lost soul in hell waiting for the “resurrection of damnation.” The deceitful and temporal life of sin ceases forever within the grave of the sinner. “Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned. The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.” The bodies of the lost are also resurrected, but only to hear their final and inescapable doom at the judgment at the great white throne. “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.... and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.” The lake of fire is the final, never-ending destination of those souls who refuse the wonderful opportunity of salvation and instead foolishly chose to “enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

The choices we make in this life regarding serving the flesh or the Spirit have eternal consequences. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,

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20 Revelation 20: 2-3
21 John 5:29
22 Job 24:19-20
23 Revelation 20:11, 13-14
24 Hebrews 11:25
that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Our eternal destination becomes permanent at death. We cannot pass from hell to heaven, or even the other way around. “And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”

However, such a sad and miserable end can be avoided. In His infinite love and mercy, God provided a way of salvation for the lost sinner. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” A life of faith on earth, by God’s grace, is the Christian’s triumph at the Lord’s return. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

Our reward in heaven is beyond the comprehension of mortal man. “But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them

25 Galatians 6:7-8
26 Luke 16:26
27 John 3:16
28 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
“that love him.” 29 We know any sadness or sorrow that we have endured on earth will cease forever in Heaven. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice forever in that which I create.” 30

God’s desire is that we would trust the Word as our necessary food 31 and allow it to purify and cleanse us. 32 As we obey the Word, we will find ourselves overflowing with praise for Him and with Godly instruction for others. 33

May we all continue striving by God’s abundant grace to live by faith, as we will certainly wish we had lived, on that great day when we stand before His son Jesus Christ, our Righteous Judge. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” 34

29 1 Corinthians 2:9  
30 Isaiah 65:17-18  
31 Psalm 119:103; 1 Peter 2:2  
32 Psalm 119:9; Ephesians 5:26  
33 Colossians 3:16  
34 2 Timothy 4:8
Holy Communion

Jesus instituted Holy Communion as He was eating the Passover meal with the twelve disciples: “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”¹

The primary purpose of Holy Communion is to commemorate the redemptive work of Christ Jesus, our Saviour and to remember His atoning, sacrificial death until He comes again. He gave His life and shed His blood on the cross of Calvary on our behalf. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.”²

The emblems of communion—bread and wine—symbolize Christ’s broken body and shed blood on the cross. Following Jesus example, after prayer each participant receives the bread as a token of His body which was broken for our sake. In turn, the cup is filled

¹ Luke 22: 19-20
² I Corinthians 11:26
with the fruit of the vine and each participant partakes, receiving it and pondering the depth of His sacrificial shedding of pure and innocent blood for our redemption.

A participant in communion must have a testimony of repentance and conversion — of having been born again by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Knowing the crucified and resurrected Lord and thus able to remember the Lord’s atoning sacrifice, one should be living a life of faith that commemorates the death and resurrection of our Saviour. Although imperfect, one should be walking in grace, overcoming sin, and revealing fruit of the Holy Spirit.  

Scripture provides guidance for the believer to revere the holiness of communion. An emphasis is placed on preparing the heart prior to partaking of this sacrament. This self-examination is a special time to draw near to God and be renewed in faith and love for Christ, and in love for one another. This results in a deeper consecration of one’s heart and life to the Lord.

Holy Communion in the Apostolic Christian Church is served to members of the church, those who are in full fellowship with and thus spiritually accountable to this body of believers. This practice assists the congregation to exercise loving care and accountability for one another, fostering unity in Christ. Together we seek to strengthen our witness for Christ.

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3 2 Corinthians 4:7; Acts 3:19-20; John 3:3; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 3:9-11; 1 John 1:9; John 15:8; Colossians 3:2-15
4 1 Corinthians 11:28; John 17:17; Ephesians 4:23-24
and our brother/sister relationships. Love motivates and God’s grace enables this caring and accountability.\(^5\)

By observing communion only among its members, the church is not judging other believers, nor is it determining their readiness for communion; rather it is facilitating a deeply personal and communal rite which is experienced in the context of common understanding and covenant relationship.\(^6\)

We must always remember that our ultimate worthiness is only through faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ.\(^7\) Communion is a cherished and sacred time of worship and fellowship with the Saviour and with brethren, inspiring the believer to serve with joy as a disciple of Christ as we remember what Jesus accomplished when He willingly gave His life as the Lamb of God.

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\(^5\) John 17:23; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:12-16  
\(^6\) 1 Corinthians 11:27-34  
\(^7\) Romans 5:1-2; Galatians 2:16
From the beginning, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. In order to provide a suitable companion for Adam, God created Eve from the very essence of Adam and placed them together in the Garden of Eden in a perfect union. While this was clearly for the purpose of providing Adam a companion, according to the New Testament, it also models the relationship between Christ and the church. Understanding marriage in this light, we can gain a deeper understanding of the believer’s commitment to, appreciation for, passion towards, and intimacy with Jesus.

Jesus taught his disciples that marriage was to be a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman. He expressly clarified that the Father never intended for divorce to be an option.¹ This unwavering commitment to marriage is an essential ingredient in working through times of difficulty in a marriage relationship. It provides

¹ Mark 10:6-9
a sure foundation for children, teaching them that Dad and Mom will never disappear or abandon each other, and through that commitment will never abandon their children either. This principle of commitment also helps us understand the level of commitment the church and Jesus have for each other. If we are certain of commitment in a marriage relationship, without regard to the circumstances that may exist, then we can more easily understand and participate in that same commitment toward Christ — whatever difficulties we may find it necessary to endure. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. How can we do any less?

The principle of appreciation is woven throughout the Bible, expressed in many ways. We all long to be appreciated by those whom we love. This is especially true in a marriage relationship. Sacrifice on behalf of our spouse is often necessary in marriage. True love is willing to give up selfish desires for the sake of the other. When such sacrifices are received with gratitude, it brings us joy. This teaches us to appreciate the love and sacrifice of Jesus, expressing our gratitude often.

Regarding marriage, the Bible teaches, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it” and that husbands are to treat their wives with honor and respect. Husbands can learn how to demonstrate sacrificial love and respect for their wives by observing how Christ lived. Jesus seemed to be always available to

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2 Ephesians 5:25
3 1 Peter 3:7
heal, to speak truth with love, to show compassion, to teach, to warn, and even to open His arms to the little children. Ultimately, He not only washed His disciples’ feet in the lowliest service, but submitted Himself to the death of the cross for the sake of His beloved. Husbands can demonstrate love by serving unselfishly.

Likewise, wives are taught to love and respect their husbands, and to do so with a willing submission, as unto the Lord Jesus. It is easier to understand the call to properly submit to one’s husband by observing the example of the submission of the church to Christ.

When the church unhesitatingly submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit, magnificent love is the result and souls are born again. This spiritual truth is mirrored physically in the miracle of children born out of love and intimacy in a marriage relationship between a husband and wife. God designed human reproduction to require both a man and a woman. This teaches us that spiritual rebirth and growth is a result of faith in Christ Jesus resulting in deep spiritual identification with and intimacy between us and Him. Jesus taught that we can bear no fruit of ourselves, but if we stay connected to Him, spending time and sharing moments of everyday companionship with Jesus, our lives will “bear much fruit.”

We also find a spiritual model for healthy relationships between parents and children in the Word. The submission of children to the nurturing love of

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4 Titus 2:4; Ephesians 5:22-23
5 John 15:4-5
parents is a recipe for success that is unmatched in any textbook. Even as the Lord corrects and chastens those He loves, we are also instructed to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Loving parents will combine godly nurturing and discipline in the correct proportions, gently and firmly teaching children right from wrong. This method of teaching is only possible if we truly love our children with the same deep love that Jesus demonstrated as he charged his disciples to, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Because marriage and family teach us much about our relationship with Christ, sometimes those who are single feel something is missing in their lives. This is a natural response to the way God created us, but can be distorted by the culture in which we live. The Word teaches us that an unmarried person can be more devoted to serving God because he or she doesn’t have the responsibilities that a married person has, in essence, developing the relationship with Christ in the same way as one would develop a marriage relationship with commitment, appreciation, contentment, and passion towards Jesus. Whatever our marital status may be, we can learn from this model of contented commitment just how deep and fulfilling our relationship with Christ can be.

6 Ephesians 6:4
7 Matthew 19:14
8 1 Corinthians 7:34
Noncombatants —
the Peacemakers

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the
children of God.”¹

God has called His New Testament church to be
citizens of an eternal kingdom² and to engage in the
spiritual fight for that kingdom.³ In this spiritual battle
He tells us that in this world we will be as lambs among
wolves,⁴ and He elaborates on this with many challenging
sayings like the following:

“Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on
thy right cheek, turn to him the other also,”⁵ “Love your
enemies,”⁶ “do good to them that hate you,”⁷ “being reviled,

¹ Matthew 5:9
² John 18:36-37
³ 2 Timothy 2:3-5
⁴ Luke 10:3
⁵ Matthew 5:39
⁶ Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27
⁷ Matthew 5:44
we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it,”⁸ and “pray for them which despitefully use you.”⁹

The call to be a peacemaker and to love in the face of hate are probably some of the more challenging teachings for the believer, but Christ modeled them for us at Gethsemane as He asked Peter to put up the sword and healed the ear of his enemy.¹⁰ He then set his face toward Calvary where He did not resist the aggression of man, but submitted to God. In doing so He died for your sins and mine and changed the world forever.

One of the main objections to the teaching that we are not to take human life is that God commanded the children of Israel to take human life in the Old Testament. This is not an easy issue to address, but let’s start by comparing the old covenant with the children of Israel to the new covenant with the New Testament church. While the nature and character of God has never changed and never will, the advent of Jesus Christ to this earth turned the world upside down.

One of the most profound and life-changing events for the New Testament believer is the sending of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ The Holy Spirit lives within the hearts of believers, whose bodies are the temple of God.¹²

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⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:12  
⁹ Matthew 5:44  
¹⁰ John 18:11; Luke 22:51  
¹¹ John 14:26  
¹² 1 Corinthians 6:19
and to all nations brought about dramatic change to the entire world. The law was not being abolished, but it was being fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. The law was a “shadow” or foreshadowing of things to come. The sacrifices, ceremonies and sabbatical teachings were being fulfilled in Christ.

So, God was now calling on us (the New Testament church) to preach and to love all nations so that He may set up temples in the hearts of all who will hear the message of Jesus, instead of asking a people (the Jews) to defend a nation and a physical temple.

Jesus articulates this change as it relates to taking of life in Matthew with the following contrasting statements:

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.”

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them

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13 Hebrews 10:1  
14 Matthew 5  
15 Matthew 5:21-22  
16 Matthew 5:38-39
that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Jesus was expressing a new way to live and to love all mankind, including our enemies and our persecutors. His focus was on the temple of God (the inner heart) to sacrificially love and to pray for others.

Paul further developed the teaching as he called us to respect those in authority and who “bear not the sword in vain.” However, his conclusion in Romans is not to join them by taking our sword, but instead to be subject to those in authority, to pay respect to them, and to give honor to them. Then we are further instructed: “to love one another,” “Thou shalt not kill,” “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” and “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” The point of Paul’s exhortation is clear: we are to support our government in any way we can rightfully do so, but we are also to be those who “put on the armor of light,” not the armor of the flesh, because we are in a spiritual war and are to arm ourselves spiritually.

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17 Matthew 5:43-44  
18 Romans 13:4  
19 Romans 13  
20 Romans 13:5-7  
21 Romans 13:8  
22 Romans 13:9  
23 Romans 13:9  
24 Romans 13:10  
25 Romans 13:12  
26 Ephesians 6:11-12
In light of these scriptural teachings, the Apostolic Christian Church of America takes a position that we should only serve the government in a “non-combatant” role. This is a difficult issue, and God is ultimately the judge of men. We can share the Word with others and tell them plainly we are striving to apply the Scripture that calls us to be peacemakers and to love one another. We believe we can best carry out those directives by being about the Father’s work: preaching, teaching and living the gospel; so that we are focusing our efforts on helping in God’s work to save spiritual lives (or souls) for eternity rather than involving ourselves in the taking of human life. Being a peacemaker applies to all aspects of our life as believers.
Loving Discipline

As believers we are called to a life of holiness. This is accomplished by God’s grace, the presence of the Holy Spirit living in the heart of a believer. Fellow believers who love us also help hold us accountable to His Word. One aspect of living an overcoming life is dealing effectively with temptation and sin. God in His wisdom established a way to assist us in this calling. If a believer sins, then God in His love chastises him just as an earthly mother and father would discipline a child who has disobeyed them. As it is written “My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

This discipline has many forms, beginning with self-discipline. As a believer goes to God in prayer each day, he searches his heart diligently to see where he may

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1 1 Peter 1:15-16
2 2 Timothy 1:9
3 Hebrews 12:6
4 Proverbs 3:11-12
have trespassed God’s Word and then humbly confesses the same to God and asks Him for forgiveness. As 1 John clearly states, God forgives; and He also reproves us, corrects us and instructs us how to live in righteousness according to His Word. However, the believer who rejects the chastening of the Lord and continues living in sin will need help from Christ’s body on this earth to experience the fruits of loving discipline. Matthew 18 instructs believers to be willing to lovingly confront sin in a fellow believer’s life. Individual believers in Christ are united in His holy body, the church, and knit tightly together in love. The members of the church are accountable to one another, and when “one member suffer(s), all the members suffer with it.” A true brotherhood cannot dismiss the necessity of applying a kind and loving discipline when one strays from Christ and continues in sin or falls into sin that the Bible defines with greater severity than others. The church body is to show love, compassion

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5 Psalm 139:23-24
6 Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4
7 1 John 1:9
8 2 Timothy 3:16
9 Hebrews 12:11
10 1 Corinthians 12:27
11 Colossians 2:2
12 1 Corinthians 12:26
13 Matthew 18:17
14 1 Corinthians 5:11
and forgiveness to the individual,\textsuperscript{15} while at the same time renouncing the sin and mourning over it.\textsuperscript{16}

Although the church aspires to perfection, it is not perfect. This is acknowledged by the fact that the Word gives many instructions for admonition, chastisement, correction and discipline.\textsuperscript{17} Although no sin can be ignored nor taken lightly, greater and lesser sins exist. The Lord Jesus exemplified this when He said to Pilate, “he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”\textsuperscript{18} In the description of Herod’s many evils, the Word says that he: “Added yet this above all, (in) that he shut up John in prison.”\textsuperscript{19}

Using the example of earthly parents again, a child who makes a mistake and apologizes may have no consequence; however a lack of an apology or acknowledging the error may result in discipline. Likewise, a serious disobedience that could be life-threatening, like running out on the road, will likely result in discipline even if the child has tears from being scared. This is done to ensure that the child, or another who witnesses the violation, understands the possible consequences of disobedience, and saves them from a future tragedy. 1 Timothy expressed this concept as it relates to church discipline for sin, “them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{15} 2 Corinthians 2:6-11
\bibitem{16} 1 Corinthians 5:2
\bibitem{17} Romans 15; 1 Corinthians 5; Matthew 18; Hebrews 12; Proverbs 3
\bibitem{18} John 19:11
\bibitem{19} Luke 3:19-20
\bibitem{20} 1 Timothy 5:20
\end{thebibliography}
The believer who is in serious spiritual trouble may become subject to the discipline of the church to help bring him or her back into a right relationship with Christ. Although initially a measure of suffering occurs for both the individual and the church, discipline is a positive rather than a negative practice. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.”21 Ideally, the erring believer responds to the conviction of the Spirit, voluntarily confesses his sin to God in the presence of man for accountability, and accepts God’s loving discipline (either individually or through the church) as a token of love and mercy. Far better for one to confess and repent for sins in this life rather than to carry them into eternity where there will be “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.”22 There are also unfortunate instances of individuals who become hardened and apostate for whom discipline must also be applied.23

The varying degrees of discipline depend upon the nature of the sin and the circumstances involved. Determination of the appropriate steps is made by the prayerful consideration of the elders to whom God has given the responsibility to rebuke and to exhort to godliness,24 based on a number of scriptural teachings

21 Hebrews 12:11
22 Hebrews 10:27
23 Titus 3:10-11
24 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9-11
and examples. The forms of discipline could include an apology or denial of church privileges or membership removal, depending on the circumstances.

Loving discipline is carried out in the name of Christ\textsuperscript{25} as we seek to apply God’s Word. Restoration with God through repentance, forgiveness, redemption and a return to righteous living are always the desired result of every form of discipline, leading to a “glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but, that it should be holy and without blemish.”\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{25} 1 Corinthians 5:4 \\
\textsuperscript{26} Ephesians 5:27
\end{flushleft}
The Church and its Mission

The church as it is represented here on earth consists of a fellowship of converted men and women, with Christ as Head, functioning in accord with New Testament teachings. The church is to serve as a haven for lost sinners.1 The church is to be a viable body of believers whose members promote and preserve biblical truth by their words and deeds.2 The glorious church, the Bride of Christ,3 will be presented to the Lord Jesus Christ at the marriage of the Lamb.4

The Bible states that God created mankind “in His own image,”5 for the purpose of bringing pleasure to God and glorifying His worthy name.6 The four-pillar mission of the Apostolic Christian Church is committed to the accomplishment of this divine

1 Luke 10:34-35
2 1 Timothy 3:15; Jude 3
3 Ephesians 5: 25-27
4 Revelation 19: 7-9
5 Genesis 1:27
6 Revelation 4:11
purpose, not only as a church but also as individual members of the Body of Christ.\(^7\)

The mission of the church should reflect a fulfillment of Christ’s teaching to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world,\(^8\) with the ultimate goal of glorifying God in all endeavors.\(^9\) The church accomplishes its four-pillar mission by looking to Christ as its Head\(^{10}\) and following His pattern for living.\(^{11}\)

**The first pillar is to present to the lost the gospel message of salvation based on faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and a true repentance and conversion.** Christ gave a compelling command to the church when He said “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”\(^{12}\)

The gifts and callings of believers vary significantly.\(^{13}\) Some will be called to full- or part-time mission work in various areas where they are sent by the church. Others will contribute time and money to support the many mission outreach initiatives of the church including locally, nationally, and internationally. All have the responsibility to pray for the lost and for those who bring

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7 Romans 12:5  
8 Matthew 5:13-14  
9 Romans 15:6  
10 Colossians 1:18  
11 2 Corinthians 5:15  
12 Matthew 28:19-20  
13 1 Corinthians 12
forth the gospel message of salvation. Being prepared every day to speak of our hope and salvation to others is a calling every believer can fulfill.\textsuperscript{14} This can be as simple as inviting an acquaintance to church.

The second pillar is to teach and nurture believers toward a sanctified life and to faithfulness by God’s grace and through His Word. This part of the church mission can be likened to encouraging spiritual maintenance and growth for all believers after their conversion. The intent is to build up a strong, enduring relationship with Christ that reveals true faith, grace, Christ-like love, and Holy Spirit-enabled obedience and good works, along with overcoming of temptation and proper discipling of others.\textsuperscript{15}

Fellowship within the church is a special blessing to those who are united in the love of Christ. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”\textsuperscript{16} Every brother and sister gives and receives a measure of nurturing in this very special relationship. “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”\textsuperscript{17}

The third pillar is to preserve sound doctrine and “earnestly contend for the faith.”\textsuperscript{18} In this context,  

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Psalm 71:15; 1 Peter 3:15  
\textsuperscript{15} Philippians 1:9-11; Hebrews 3:13; 2 Timothy 2:1-2  
\textsuperscript{16} 1 John 1:7  
\textsuperscript{17} 1 Corinthians 12:26  
\textsuperscript{18} Jude 3
\end{flushright}
contending means to strive against the opposition of Satan. He was not ashamed to tempt our Lord, and there is no doubt that the Devil as “an angel of light”\textsuperscript{19} is seeking to deceive the church in these latter times. The preservation of sound doctrine involves our unified efforts against a common enemy. He can attack in the form of false prophets from without\textsuperscript{20} or as corrupted individuals from within, rising up and drawing disciples after them.\textsuperscript{21} Alert believers will recognize these false teachers by their fruits.\textsuperscript{22} The entire Brotherhood needs to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”\textsuperscript{23}

Sound doctrine consists of teachings and principles taken directly from the Holy Scripture which is entirely “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”\textsuperscript{24} Teaching and practicing “all the counsel of God”\textsuperscript{25} as absolute truth is a very important safeguard against deception.

The fourth pillar is to offer loving, humble deeds of service to fellow believers and all mankind in the name of Christ. Jesus gave us the perfect example in giving not only of His life and blood in payment for our

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\begin{tabular}{ll}
19 & 2 Corinthians 11:14 \\
20 & Matthew 7:15 \\
21 & Acts 20: 29-30 \\
22 & Matthew 7:16-20 \\
23 & Philippians 1:27 \\
24 & 2 Timothy 3:16 \\
25 & Acts 20:27 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{flushleft}
sins, but in service to His fellow man: “the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.”\textsuperscript{26} Christ gave freely of His time and strength. He and the disciples were often so much in demand “they could not so much as eat bread.”\textsuperscript{27} As His followers, we also are instructed to “do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”\textsuperscript{28} True faith is demonstrated by believers sharing loving, humble deeds of service to those who are in need.\textsuperscript{29} HarvestCall activities, including self-help, material aid, and work projects throughout the U.S. and abroad, also offer numerous opportunities.

In summary, individuals will vary in gifts and emphasis regarding one or more parts of the church mission.\textsuperscript{30} However, all of the brothers and sisters should support their congregation’s efforts to seek a balanced focus on all four pillars of the church mission “that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”\textsuperscript{31}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Luke 7:22
\item \textsuperscript{27} Mark 3:20, 6:31
\item \textsuperscript{28} Galatians 6:10
\item \textsuperscript{29} James 2:15-18
\item \textsuperscript{30} 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
\item \textsuperscript{31} Colossians 4:12
\end{itemize}
As shared in Chapter 14, the first of the four pillars of the church mission is “to present to the lost the gospel message of salvation based on faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and a true repentance and conversion.” The fourth pillar is to “offer humble deeds of service to fellow believers and all mankind, in the name of Christ.” All members are encouraged to do both, as we see Jesus and the apostles do throughout the Bible. Proclamation of the gospel and demonstration of the gospel go hand-in-hand. But what is the gospel? Before examining further how to share it and show it, we must be sure we truly understand it. Here is one way to define it: The gospel is the good news of how fallen mankind can be reconciled to God by grace through faith in the redemptive work of His son Jesus, and transformed in heart and mind by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

¹ See Appendix Part I
Sharing and Demonstrating the Gospel

_Demonstration_

We demonstrate the gospel by living a sanctified life; by being a light and example to others. We also demonstrate the gospel with deeds of service and compassion that exemplify the love of Christ when they are carried out in His name and for His glory.²

_Proclamation_

While our actions and deeds must support our talk, no one ever comes to know the Lord Jesus without the Word of God.³ When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas, “what must I do to be saved,”⁴ they spoke unto him the word of God.

_Disciple Others_

The commission of Jesus⁵ is not only to preach but to teach all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The gospel is about reconciliation and how we can be transformed in heart and mind; made free from the bondage of sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. We share the gospel as we disciple others through the commands of Jesus and His holy word.

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² Matthew 5:16  
³ Romans 10:17  
⁴ Acts 16:30  
⁵ Matthew 28:18-20
The Importance of Prayer

It is imperative that believers understand their role and God’s role as they share the gospel and serve others. The Apostle Paul understood this when he wrote, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” As he shared the gospel and served others, Paul pleaded, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak,” “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.” Only God is able to awaken people who are dead in trespasses and sin. Prayer and total dependence upon God is a prerequisite to effectively sharing the gospel and serving others. Let’s be faithful in prayer not only for those we minister to, but that God will continue raising up laborers into his harvest.

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6 1 Corinthians 3:6-7
7 Colossians 4:2-4
8 Ephesians 6:18-19
9 Ephesians 2:1
10 Matthew 9:38
Motives for Sharing and Demonstrating the Gospel

It is evident in the scriptures that our motives are important to God.\textsuperscript{11} Our motive for carrying out the mission of the church should be our love for Christ and to give glory and honor to God. We find several commands of Jesus imbedded in the church’s four-pillar mission; the Great Commandment, the New Commandment, and the Great Commission. Jesus said, “\textit{He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”}\textsuperscript{12} The church’s mission to share the gospel and demonstrate it with deeds of service represents our obedience and love for Christ in action.

\textit{The Great Commandment}

When the lawyer asked Jesus, “\textit{which is the great commandment}”, Jesus said unto him, “\textit{Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”}\textsuperscript{13} “\textit{There is none other commandment greater than these.”}\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} 1 Corinthians 13:3; Matthew 7:21-23
\item \textsuperscript{12} John 14:21
\item \textsuperscript{13} Matthew 22:36-40
\item \textsuperscript{14} Mark 12:31
\end{itemize}
The New Commandment
Jesus gave a new commandment before going to the cross; “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹⁵

The Great Commission
Before ascending to the Father, Jesus gave a command that many refer to as the Great Commission.¹⁶ The great commission is often quoted as recorded in Matthew, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”¹⁷

With Whom do we Share and Serve?
The Christian Home
The building block of the church’s mission is the Christian home which represents a mission field divinely orchestrated by God to demonstrate, proclaim, and disciple family members with the gospel. Christian parents are granted profound influence in the lives of their children as they demonstrate the gospel with sanctified

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¹⁵ John 13:34-35
¹⁶ Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20
¹⁷ Matthew 28:18-20
living and loving deeds of kindness and service to their children. Husbands and wives are given daily opportunity to fulfill the New Commandment of loving each other as Christ loved them creating a secure and peaceful ambiance conducive of relational trust and learning. From their youth, children are taught the gospel and nurtured in the scriptures that are able to make them wise unto salvation.\textsuperscript{18} Similarly, the Christian home is the building block for sharing and serving for the unmarried. The Apostle Paul states “He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{The Local Church}

The local church represents the foundation of the church’s mission and provides a means of preaching, teaching, living, and demonstrating the gospel to one another as well as to unbelievers who assemble. Moreover, believers are nurtured, encouraged, and strengthened in obedience and holiness in the context of the local church body. The Christian home and the local church are the epicenter of the mission of the church. If the gospel is not being effectively shared and demonstrated in the home and the local church our ability to share it with those without will be impaired at best. “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if

\begin{footnotes}
\item[18] 2 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4-8
\item[19] 1 Corinthians 7:32
\end{footnotes}
ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

**Friends and Neighbors**

As Jesus shared his commission to the disciples, he instructed them to begin preaching the gospel and teaching all he commanded beginning first at Jerusalem. But he was specific to direct them outward after beginning at Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world. Using the instruction of Christ as a metaphor, we recognize the responsibility we have to those around us who may not have had the gospel shared with them previously. All of us have friends, business acquaintances, classmates, and neighbors who have not demonstrated a knowledge of Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. When Jesus healed him, the demoniac desired to follow Jesus but was instructed to “go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” Is it possible to love our neighbor as our self if we fail to share with them what the Lord has done for us about his most important redemptive work on the cross and its importance in our life? “For of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.” May God grant us grace to love our friends and neighbors by prayerfully demonstrating

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20 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
21 2 Corinthians 5:19
22 Mark 5:19
23 Luke 6:45
and proclaiming the gospel to them. As we do, we will be demonstrating our love for Christ and the glory and honor of God who is not willing that any should perish.\(^{24}\)

**Community Outreach**

Every local church has the opportunity to reach out into their community with the gospel collectively as the body of Christ. In the culture of our day, the needs and opportunities are endless depending on the location of the church and community type, e.g. college town, rural community, or metropolis. Brothers and sisters are encouraged to collaborate with their church leaders and to prayerfully evaluate the various convictions and opportunities represented by their church family and locale and act as the Lord leads, pushing out into their local surroundings with the gospel as ambassadors for Christ and representatives of their church. “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”\(^{25}\)

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\(^{24}\) 2 Peter 3:9  
\(^{25}\) Matthew 5:13-16
HarvestCall

This represents the church’s mission to the uttermost parts of the earth and is carried out via a collective effort of the entire denomination. The purpose of HarvestCall is to “Enable the brotherhood to proclaim Christ and serve others beyond the capacity of the local church.” The active elders of the Apostolic Christian Church of America serve as the members of this nonprofit corporation. The church actively ministers in various countries throughout the world through HarvestCall, sharing the gospel and demonstrating the love of Christ by serving others in his name. Many brothers and sisters participate as volunteers on committees and short term mission trips. Full time missionaries are sent through HarvestCall to proclaim Christ and serve others on behalf of the brotherhood while many others serve on missionary support teams and many, many brothers and sisters faithfully pray and contribute monetarily. The vision of HarvestCall is that “God is glorified as despair and suffering are alleviated, hearts and minds are transformed, and churches are established and nurtured.”

The Bible says that God “will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” May God grant us grace as a brotherhood to faithfully share the gospel and serve others such that we are shod with the preparation of the gospel, motivated by our love for Christ, and totally

26 See Appendix Part II
27 Isaiah 61:11
dependent upon God. Most of all, may God be glorified that His righteousness and praise may spring forth before all nations.
Conclusion

Although the church was not formally established during Jesus’ life on this earth, He spoke in His revelation to John some very profound messages to the churches. We believe that Jesus desires to direct these same messages to us today through the Holy Spirit, as we take His Word in hand with a prayer on our hearts that we will receive and apply His teachings in a way that will bring glory to His name.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”¹

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”²

How thankful we can be that we are instructed to commend each other to our great and merciful God, in the footsteps of the Apostles of old.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”³

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with

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¹ Revelation 1:3
² Revelation 3:22
³ Acts 20:32
exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

4 Jude 24-25
Part 1:
Gospel Definition, Amplified and with References

Definition: The gospel is the good news of how fallen mankind can be reconciled to God by grace through faith in the redemptive work of his son Jesus, and transformed in heart and mind by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fallen Mankind
Adam and Eve died spiritually after they sinned by eating the forbidden fruit.\(^1\) Their perfect relationship with God was over.\(^2\) Adam’s spiritual death has been passed down to all humanity. We are all born spiritually dead, with a fallen nature — an ingrained tendency to sin.\(^3\) Our sin separates us from God and puts us into bondage, which we of our own efforts are powerless to escape.

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1. Genesis 2:17
2. Genesis 3:16-19
3. Romans 5:12
Reconciled
Because of sin, our relationship with God is broken.\(^4\) When we place our faith in the redemptive work of Jesus and repent, Christ’s blood removes the sin and clears the way for a restored relationship and peace with God,\(^5\) who adopts us into his family as sons and daughters.\(^6\)

Grace through faith
Salvation is received by grace through faith.\(^7\) It is a free gift to all who will believe. It cannot be earned by any good works we might perform.\(^8\) Because God is rich in love and mercy, he chose to make us alive in Christ.\(^9\) The grace that comes through faith removes our rightful condemnation and mercifully transfers us from death to life.\(^10\)

The redemptive work of his son Jesus
When Adam fell, God promised to send a Saviour\(^{11}\) and throughout the Old Testament he provided descriptions about this coming Messiah. Jesus fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies and was obedient to the Father, completing the work which he sent him to do, including

\(^4\) Colossians 1:21
\(^5\) Romans 5:10
\(^6\) Galatians 4:4-5
\(^7\) Ephesians 2:8-9
\(^8\) Titus 3:5-7
\(^9\) Ephesians 2:5
\(^10\) John 5:24
\(^11\) Genesis 3:15
living without sin,\textsuperscript{12} shedding his blood as a sacrifice, being buried, and arising from the grave,\textsuperscript{13} ascending to God’s right hand,\textsuperscript{14} and sending his Holy Spirit.

**Transformed in heart and mind** (and) **power of the Holy Spirit**

Through repentance\textsuperscript{15} and faith, God changes us from the inside out.\textsuperscript{16} He gives us a new way of thinking.\textsuperscript{17} He changes our heart\textsuperscript{18} and our desires change as the Holy Spirit makes us more like the image of God.\textsuperscript{19} As new creations we are no longer captive to sin,\textsuperscript{20} but are enabled to live holy and righteous lives, which is our reasonable service.\textsuperscript{21}

**Other Definitions**

**Grace**: the unmerited favor of God toward man.

**Repentance**: a sorrowful turning from sin, towards the mercy of God

\textsuperscript{12} Hebrews 4:15
\textsuperscript{13} Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
\textsuperscript{14} Romans 8:34
\textsuperscript{15} Acts 3:19
\textsuperscript{16} 2 Corinthians 5:17
\textsuperscript{17} Romans 12:2
\textsuperscript{18} Ezekiel 36:26
\textsuperscript{19} 2 Corinthians 3:18
\textsuperscript{20} Romans 6:6
\textsuperscript{21} Romans 12:1
Part II
HarvestCall’s Purpose, Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

**Purpose** (*why we exist*)
Enable the brotherhood to proclaim Christ and serve others beyond the capacity of the local church.

**Vision** (*where we want to go*)
God is glorified as despair and suffering are alleviated, hearts and minds are transformed, and churches are established and nurtured.

**Mission** (*what we do*)
Our mission is to equip and mobilize brethren to proclaim the gospel, disciple and nurture believers, and demonstrate the love of Christ with deeds of compassion.

**Guiding Principles**
1. **Biblical Truth:** We will teach and practice the whole counsel of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Submission to God:** We will pray and fast, seeking the Holy Spirit’s direction and the Lord’s will, consistent with the Word of God.
3. **Establish Churches:** As the Lord wills, we will seek opportunities to establish local churches, applying the
four-pillar mission of the Apostolic Christian Church of America.

4. Love of Christ: The love of Christ and the glory and honor of God will be the motivation of our ministry, never to be diminished by self-promotion or pride. We will exemplify the love of Christ by working together in unity and Godly order and in submission to God-ordained authority.

5. Stewardship: As stewards of the Lord’s resources, we will strive for efficiency and effectiveness; working as unto the Lord and not unto man by pursuing God-honoring models for ministry and communication, endeavoring to continually improve.

6. Commitment to Our Missionaries: In light of biblical examples and principles, and as an expression of love for our brethren, we will properly assess, equip, and support those who are sent as missionaries.

7. Ministry Priorities: We recognize that we cannot serve everyone, everywhere. We will need to prioritize where and to whom we’ll minister and to do that we will consider Biblical precedents as led by the Holy Spirit.

8. Ministry Practices: We will proclaim and demonstrate Christ’s love such that the gospel is never secondary. Furthermore, we will strive to minister in ways that are respectful and relevant to indigenous cultures, being careful to not create dependency.

9. Responsibility to the Church: We will promote a biblical understanding of outreach and service, while
upholding and affirming the doctrine of the Apostolic Christian Church of America as defined in our Statement of Faith. We will operate transparently to the brotherhood.

10. Doctrinal Integrity: When associating with other Christian organizations, we will practice spiritual discernment, maintain sound doctrine, and be accountable to our Heavenly Father and the brotherhood.
Walking in the Teachings of the Holy Scriptures

Understanding the beliefs and practices of the Apostolic Christian Church

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