

We Believe

An introduction to the faith and practice of the Jesus Fellowship

A MULTIPLY
'Let's talk' booklet
for those wanting
to experience
living Christianity

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This booklet is based on a series of studies produced for discussion at the weekly Jesus Fellowship “agape” meals. It covers the biblical basis of the abbreviated version of the ‘Statement of faith and practice’ of the Jesus Fellowship Church. Questions printed at the side of each study have been included to provoke discussion and thoughtful meditation.

**‘Always be prepared to make a defence
to any one who calls you to account
for the hope that is in you,
yet do it with gentleness and reverence.’**

1 Peter 3:15

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1 The Trinity

We believe in one Almighty God, Father Son and Spirit, Three Persons in One, co-equal and consubstantial, Creator and Sustainer of all things. God the Father is the First Person of the Trinity, the Author of all things created.

THE DOCTRINE of the Trinity is very important. However, it is not a truth which is found simply in one scripture or passage of the Bible. It is the conclusion of reading the whole Bible and studying in particular the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Jewish tradition, we believe in only one creator God who made and sustains the whole Universe. There are not many gods of whom ours is but one:

The Lord our God, the Lord is one. (Mark 12:29)

The New Testament reveals the three persons of the Trinity to us. In some scriptures they appear together:

Chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood. (1 Peter 1:2)

Co-equal means that they have equal divine status. One is not greater than another. Consubstantial means they are of the same divine nature. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God:

Baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

2 God the Son

Jesus is both Lord and Christ, the eternal Son of God, begotten not created, incarnate by the Holy Spirit as Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary.

He is perfect God and perfect man. For us He was crucified, buried and rose again to accomplish the redemption of His church.

We believe in His sinless life as a man, in His substitutionary atoning death upon the cross for the sins of men, in His descent into Hades, in His bodily resurrection from the dead, in His ascension into heaven, in His position of authority at God's right hand, in His authority as judge of all, of His present ministry as high priest on behalf of the redeemed, and in His future coming again to the earth in glory.

He is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

THE NAME Lord Jesus Christ describes the full ministry of Jesus. He was born as a real man - Jesus:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature. (Hebrews 2:14)

He was anointed by the Holy Spirit as Christ, the Messiah, who demonstrated the power of the Kingdom and died to take away the sin of the world:

The saying is sure... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15)

And He ascended to the right hand of the Father to rule as Lord with full authority:

David said, The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet'... God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:34-36)

Jesus is the eternal Son of God. This means that He has always existed as God the Son. As humans we are created or come into existence. But He was begotten rather than created because He always existed. Incarnation means that He appeared as a male baby of Mary betrothed to Joseph. She

**Why is Christ seated
at God's right hand
and not at
His left hand?
And why must He
return to earth visibly
and not anonymously
or just spiritually?**

conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and the eternal Son of God was begotten in her as the Son of man. As a devout young woman who was betrothed to be married, her virginity was beyond question:

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35)

We believe that Jesus as man walking the earth lacked no divine quality. He was God incarnate. And we also believe that He was a complete man with every human frailty - incarnate God:

Thomas answered Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” (John 20:28)

For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

As God, Jesus lived a perfect life and fulfilled the whole law of God:

“I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made.” (John 17:4-5)

As man He was able to bear in His body the sin of the world and die for us. He perfectly redeemed His church from sin:

Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:13-14)

By His own testimony, Jesus lived a sinless life:

“Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (John 8:46)

Only because He was pure and spotless was He ‘the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world’:

For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

What does ‘substitutionary’ mean?

Why did Jesus have to rise from the dead in the body and not just spirit?

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. (1 Peter 2:24)

Jesus died and entered the place of the dead - Hades. But death could not hold Him and He rose triumphantly:

He foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. (Acts 2:31)

After appearing to His friends to confirm to them His bodily resurrection, He ascended into heaven. He took His place of authority at God's right hand:

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

When Jesus ascended into heaven He was given the rule and authority over all things:

He raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion. (Ephesians 1:20-21)

In this position of authority, Christ is the judge of all creation:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

And Christ is now the High Priest for His church. At the Father's right hand He makes intercession for us:

He holds His priesthood permanently, because He continues for ever. Consequently He is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:24-25).

From this position He will come again to the earth in glory and power:

Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him. (Revelation 1:7)

3 Christ the Messiah

Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah-King foretold in Old Testament prophecy.

THE OLD Testament has many prophecies about the Messiah. He was to be a king like David who would lead them in conquest. Jesus was the Christ which means the anointed One or Messiah:

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. (Deuteronomy 18:18)

The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which He will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne." (Psalm 132:11)

The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool." (Psalm 110:1)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me One who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old. (Micah 5:2)

Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. (Daniel 9:25)

He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah." (John 1:41)

But Christ was not like an earthly king for He came to conquer sin and death through His own death. He was the suffering Messiah:

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12)

But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 1:23)

Why did the scripture foretell Christ's coming rather than Him just appearing doing signs of the Kingdom?

Why was a crucified Messiah a stumbling block or foolishness to some?

4 The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is fully God, of one substance with the Father and with the Son, yet a distinct Person.

He personally indwells all true believers, and through the one Spirit we are baptised into the one Body of Christ.

Why should we talk about the Holy Spirit as “He” rather than “it”?

THE HOLY Spirit is God. He is also a person and not just a kind of influence:

Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit... you have not lied to men but to God! (Acts 5:3)

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden. (Acts 15:28)

The Holy Spirit is also spoken of in other ways which show His oneness with the Father and Son:

You are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. (Romans 8:9)

It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matthew 10:20)

They attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. (Acts 16:7)

The distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit is seen in the way He leads the Church in spreading the Kingdom word:

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2)

We worship the Holy Spirit as we worship God the Father and Jesus Christ:

Who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:3)

The remarkable distinctive of Christianity is the Holy Spirit in us. When we are born again, the Spirit regenerates our fallen spirit with holy power and energy:

The washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

What was the difference between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old and the New Testaments?

The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive... you know Him, for He dwells with you, and will be in you. (John 14:17)

In Him you also, who .. have believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. (Ephesians. 1:13)

But the Spirit is not given to each of us for personal spiritual pleasure. Although the Spirit makes each of us an individual holy temple, He is the building power of God's greater temple - the Church. So He joins believers together to be the Body of Christ:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Do you (plural) not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (1 Corinthians. 3:16)

For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians. 12:13)

Why do churches have different 'distinctives' even though they are made a Body of Christ by the same Holy Spirit?

5 Angels

Angels are the creation of God, to serve Him and minister on behalf of the saved ones.

The devil, a fallen angelic being, is the deceiver of the world, the father of lies, and the tempter into evil, who has been overthrown through Christ in the cross.

GOD CREATED all that is seen and that which is not seen including angels. Angels are ministering spirits with individual identities:

Let all God's angels worship Him. (Hebrews 1:6)

Who makes His angels winds, and His servants flames of fire. (Hebrews 1:7)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God. (Luke 1:26)

And, as is necessary, angels can appear in a form which is visible to men:

About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an

How can we show respect to angels and encourage their presence in our daily living?

**In what way do we
have more power
than the devil?
How can we use
this power more
effectively?**

angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.” (Acts 10:3)

An angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, “Get up quickly.” (Acts 12:7)

For this very night there stood by me an angel of the God to Whom I belong and Whom I worship, and he said, “Do not be afraid, Paul. ” (Acts 27:23-24)

Angels have a special ministry to those who are receiving God’s grace:

For I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of My Father. (Matthew 18:10)

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation. (Hebrews 1:14)

The devil or Satan only has angelic power. His exact origin is unknown but he appears to have fallen from a position of authority. He still has his power which he uses for evil:

And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.” (Luke 10:18)

We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one. (1 John 5:19)

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

He tries to tempt men and women to sin so as to destroy them and accuse them before God:

The Spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan. (Mark 1:12-13)

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith. (1 Peter 5:8-9)

He may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Timothy 3:6)

But Christ through the cross has broken his power of accusation over us:

That through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2:14)

The accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. (Revelation 12:10-11)

6 Man

Man was created by God, but has fallen away from God's presence and likeness and so is doomed to suffer the torment of everlasting hell. Only through God's mercy can man be released from the captivity to his sinful flesh and enter into eternal life.

MAN WAS made in the image of God. This makes us distinct from animals and also from angels. Animals have no spirit or sense of worship. Angels have no body in the likeness of the eternal Son of God who has a glorified and resurrected body for ever:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness". (Genesis 1:26)

After the Fall man became aware of his uncleanness and hid himself from the Lord God of purity and holiness:

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God. (Genesis 3:8)

Man was no longer God-centred but flesh-centred. He was not a slave to the law of love in God but a slave to the law of sin in his fallen body. The devil who tempted Eve has successfully tempted all men and women to do the most evil of things. Man had fallen from God's will:

Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

Of our own works we cannot be delivered from this law of sin. But by God's mercy He can open our hearts to see Jesus and come to Him for salvation:

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

**What does it mean
to be restored to
God's glory?**

7 God's People

God's eternal purpose is to gain a people for His own possession and glory.

GOD MADE covenant with Abraham as father of the chosen race of Israel. This promise is fulfilled in the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, which unites both Jews and Gentiles in the true Israel, the church of the living God.

Man was made in God's image to be enjoyed by God. Man's pure worship and love was to bring God pleasure:

Now before he (Enoch) was taken he was attested as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him. (Hebrews 11:5-6)

After the Fall, God sought again for a people to bring Him pleasure. The Old and the New Testament is the story of how this desire was achieved.

Abraham was a man of faith and the father of God's old covenant people:

I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. (Genesis 17:7)

This people was established under the leadership of Moses and given the Law. The Law taught them how to please God:

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 14:2)

When Israel wilfully broke this Law and turned to other gods, then the Lord promised a New Covenant for the people who would be His:

But this is the covenant which I will make... I will put My law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

The Church of Jesus is the fulfilment of this people. We are

**How does God
write His Law
on our hearts?**

His people:

“I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (2 Corinthians 6:16)

God’s covenant sign to Abraham was circumcision:


This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. (Genesis 17:10)

This was the practice of the people of Israel which made them particularly different from other races. After the Kingdom was divided into Israel and Judah in the time of the kings, both halves were deported to foreign lands. Israel disappeared as a kingdom but some of Judah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. These were the Jews who continued in the Law and the covenant of circumcision.

The Jews treated other races with contempt and called them “Gentile sinners”. They would not even eat with them. But Jews are also sinners and need Jesus. So when Jews are converted along with Gentiles there is reconciliation. Together, as the church, we are the fulfilling of God’s desire for His own people - a holy Israel:

For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. (Galatians 6:15-16)

He is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart. (Romans 2:28-29)



**How does God circum-
cise our hearts in the
new creation?**

8 Water Baptism

God works sovereignly in free grace to sinful men, giving them repentance, faith, and new birth to enter the Kingdom of God.

Scripture reveals the necessity of baptism in water, identifying the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Why should
baptism be only
for the born again,
and by immersion?

NO ONE can choose to enter the Kingdom of God unless God has first opened his heart to believe. God exercises His sovereignty in this way. We enter the kingdom through faith and not by our own efforts or goodness. Grace chooses us and even then we cannot earn our salvation - it is free:

Justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:24)

All the blessings of salvation are free gifts to us. Men can only repent when God gives them the gift:

God exalted Him...to give repentance...and forgiveness of sins. (Acts 5:31)

Faith, too, is a gift from God and not something we can acquire ourselves:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

New birth follows repentance and faith. Only God as Father can make someone a newborn spiritual child. The power of the Spirit changes them and transfers them into the Kingdom of God:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Baptism is a word meaning “dipped” or “immersed”. Baptism is a demonstration to the world and the heavenly powers that the newborn Christian is entering the kingdom:

Rise and be baptised and wash away your sins, calling on His name. (Acts 22:16)

In baptism in water God works through the Holy Spirit to deal with the old life of the believer. There is a transaction of spiritual power in the experience of baptism.

What is a realistic ‘age
of accountability’ for
deciding to be bap-
tised?

Firstly, baptism is entering the death of Jesus on the cross. It is an experience of death for the old nature:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? (Romans 6:3)

Secondly, baptism is the burial of the old sinful life. It is as though it is placed in the tomb of Jesus:

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death. (Romans 6:4)

And finally, as we rise out of the waters of baptism we are entering the resurrection of Jesus and embarking on a new life of power and victory:

For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. (Romans 6:5)

Why do you think some people have a “bad birth” into the kingdom?

9 Spirit Baptism

Baptism in the Spirit (normally with the gift of tongues) is a vital work of God in the believer, bringing sanctification and power. Holy living however requires self-denial and many experiences of the Spirit’s grace.

THE BAPTISM in the Holy Spirit was first revealed to John the Baptist. He spoke of how it would characterise the revolutionary ministry of Jesus:

He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16)

Jesus spoke prophetically of how His disciples had to receive the spirit after His ascension to heaven:

“And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

On the Day of Pentecost and afterwards these prophecies were fulfilled:

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

What difference has the baptism of the Holy Spirit made in your life?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a sanctifying work of God because it sets us apart from the world and sin and gives us power to be holy:

Chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood. (1 Peter 1:2)

Holiness is a process of being healed from the effects of sin and learning to live close to God in obedience to His will:

Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

10 Holy Society

God's covenant people are not to love the world, nor the things in the world. As His temple they are to be a holy society that displays the fruits of righteousness and shows light to the world.

THE CALL to be God's people is also a call to be separate from the world:

"I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)

Our separation from the world is a sign that we are really filled with God's love:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

Our separation from the world enables our testimony to carry power. We are a light which convicts the world:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be

Why is
separation such a
contentious issue in
the church today?

hid... let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven.
(Matthew 5:14-16)

The world is convicted by our righteousness of life. We live in the equality of love for one another. This shows that we are genuinely God's people:

By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil; whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:10)

11 Church-Communities

The regenerate should gather together in local Church-Communities in a voluntary covenant bond, with love and service, with various gifts and graces flowing through each member.

THE CHURCH is really a community because its members are joined to one another in love. The church is not a building but a spiritual temple built of human living stones. In it we are called to love and serve one another:

We, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:5)

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)

God gives varying gifts to His church so that it can fulfil a threefold purpose:

a) To worship God and love Him with everything we have and are:

"You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4:10)

b) To care for one another and build the church up as strong and mature:

When each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love. (Ephesians 4:16)

c) To be a testimony to the spiritual powers in the heavenlies and to people on the earth that the Kingdom has come:

To make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for

Which gifts
would most help your
church household to
mature and grow?

ages in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:9-10)

12 The Body of Christ

God unites believers in the Body of Christ, the Church. This is seen in the local church, the universal church on earth, and as the triumphant church in glory.

THE CHURCH is the Body of Christ. We are only way in which men and women can now see Christ and touch Him in any way at all. The church can be looked at in three great ways:

a) The local church

This is a group of believers who are joined together in a district to testify to Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. This district may be a village, town, suburb or an island. They have meetings for worship and strengthening. They have the community heart of sharing together practically.

b) The universal church

All true believers wherever they live belong in a sense to one Body of Christ. They may be in different cities or countries but they are of the same Spirit and therefore Body. They cannot all meet or share together, but together they are a witness to Jesus to the world.

c) The triumphant church

All the saints of old and new covenants who have died are part of the eternal gathering of God's people. When Christ returns and the new earth is revealed, all those justified by faith will live triumphantly with Christ for ever as His church.

The church is made up only of those truly born again. It is possible to believe in God and even in Jesus in a sense without being really born again:

You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe - and shudder. (James 2:19)

And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" (Luke 4:41)

And it is possible to fall from a true faith into deception and

Why can an
over-concentration
on the universal
church make us less
committed to the
Kingdom?

believe lies:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. (1 Timothy 4:1)

By rejecting conscience, certain persons have made shipwreck of their faith. (1 Timothy 1:19)

The church has no option but to exclude or excommunicate those who believe lies. This is especially true of heresies about the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Any one... who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. (2 John:9)

People who believe heresies are divisive and destructive and must be removed from fellowship with the church:

Take note of those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught; avoid them. (Romans 16:17)

As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:10-11)

Which beliefs do we consider heretical?

13 Renouncing All

We accept Jesus' commands to renounce all other things to be His disciples, growing into holy maturity. This does not mean that we become exclusive or reject the natural family. The goal of discipleship is holy maturity.

JESUS STATED the need to renounce all things very clearly:

Sell your possessions, and give alms. (Luke 12:33)

If any one comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26)

So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:33)

Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matthew 16:25)

The things of earth, even though they may be dear to us, can

How has following Jesus changed your relationship with natural family and friends?

compete with our service for the Lord. Jesus teaches us to get our priorities right and to turn priorities into actions.

Renouncing can be literal and from the heart. When we sell possessions we are literally renouncing what we own. When we hate our life and our natural family in the sense that Jesus meant it is a heart matter which influences our attitudes. By worldly standards men will consider that we hate our natural family. From our point of view we love them more than ever. But because of our priority to follow Jesus first, it is seen as hatred.

14 Community

We believe that, where possible, it is right for believers to voluntarily share their possessions and income, having “all things in common” as in the first Church-Community in Jerusalem. Community membership is not, however, a condition for Church membership.

THE COMMUNITY which followed the Pentecost revival was birthed in the life of Jesus. He had lived in community with His disciple band:

Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast”. (John 13:29)

And He taught clearly the need for community sharing:

Peter began to say to Him, “Lo, we have left everything and followed You. Jesus said, “Truly, I say to You, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions. (Mark 10:28-30)

Christian community is the greatest expression of the justice of God’s Kingdom. It is the perfect opportunity to love your brother as yourself. This gave the early church a great testimony:

Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed

What are
the benefits of
Christian community
to the church?

was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:32-33)

15 God and Mammon

It is not possible to serve God and Mammon (wealth), as Jesus taught. The church will therefore be seen to have a distinctive culture, different from society at large.

WHEN JESUS taught about the conflict of riches, He was mocked by the Pharisees:

“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at Him. (Luke 16:13-14)

The worldly heart revolves around money. So does the heart of the worldly religious. Jesus taught the need to renounce what is ours:

Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens. (Luke 12:33)

Those who would believe in Christ and yet pursue wealth run along a slippery road:

He went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:22-23)

But those who desire to be rich fall into:

...temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. (1 Timothy 6:9-10)

We must learn how to use what money we have generously

**Why are
the worldly-minded
in love with money?**

for God:

He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully... God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

16 Worldly Authority

We respect and submit to governments and secular authority, while reserving our freedom of faith and worship.

WE MUST submit to worldly authority in order to please God. If we refuse to do so we will in the end grieve the Spirit:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. (Romans 13:1-2)

Although authorities exist in the will of God, it sometimes happens that they also persecute us for our faith:

If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God. (1 Peter 4:14-16)

We do risk punishment for following the truth and conscience. In this case we must bear it with patience:

So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "... we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." And when they had further threatened them, they let them go. (Acts 4:18-21)

When they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name. (Acts 5:40-41)

Why does God support worldly authority even when it is not Christian?

17 Common Grace

We recognise God's 'common grace' to all mankind, and that there is therefore goodness to be found in many human activities and inventions.

COMMON GRACE is God's goodness to all mankind whether they are good or evil. It was promised with the rainbow after the Flood in Noah's day:

"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Genesis 8:22)

And the promise of goodness was for all men:

He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)

Man's creativity which he has inherited from the Creator also works for good in God's common grace. This means that many discoveries prove to be a blessing to mankind. Progress in building construction makes for safer dwelling places. And mankind can live in more hostile environments. Discoveries in medicine have brought healing from such awful things as leprosy and smallpox.

And also there is a basic kindness found in humanity without which life would be impossible. Anne Frank remarked in her wartime diary - "despite all I have been through I still think people are basically kind at heart."

In what ways
do you see common
grace at work?

18 Bearing The Cross

Believers are to bear their own cross, suffering reproach and persecution for Christ's sake.

JESUS SPOKE about the cross to His disciples as He neared the end of His ministry. It was a teaching they found hard to accept:

From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer... And Peter took Him and

began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to You." (Matthew 16:21-22)

Jesus had to rebuke Peter for his natural way of viewing things. Then He went on to apply the principle of cross-bearing to the life of the disciple:

"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)

Those who wish to save their lives desire to live for natural things and the cares and loves of this present world. Those who lose their lives by the cross live so that the power of the eternal Spirit will be theirs.

Those who take up the cross will be rejected by men as Jesus was. This persecution may come from people we love:

"You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends." (Luke 21:16)

**Why do some
Christians oppose
taking up the cross
in a radical way?**

19 Evangelism

We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of salvation to all who believe. This gospel shall be proclaimed through the living and militant witness of the Church-Community in the power of God, confirmed by signs and wonders. The poor will be especially receptive to the gospel.

THE FINAL command of Jesus was for His disciples to go out into all the world:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15)

And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it. (Mark 16:20)

Our other motivation for preaching the gospel is the love of God in our hearts:

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves

**Do you have
a positive approach
to evangelism, and
are you anointed
in it?**

but for Him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

There is also a blessing for us as we engage in evangelism. God's favour is upon us because He anoints us and makes us beautiful people:

But how are men to call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" (Romans 10:14-15)

Evangelism is a ministry which the Holy Spirit will give us power to perform:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor." (Luke 4:18)

20 Holiness

God calls us to be holy, as He is holy. Where there is a consistent wilful rejection of this call to holiness then apostasy must result.

HOLINESS IS the quality of God that means He is pure and without blemish. Everything about Him is completely holy. He requires that we share this with Him:

But as He who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)

This holiness is implanted in us through the Holy Spirit's power:

And designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead. (Romans 1:4)

And the heavenly Father disciplines us so that we can share His holiness:

He disciplines us for our good that we may share His holiness. (Hebrews 12:10)

We believe that unless we continue to love God and His holi

What are the differences between backsliding and apostasy?

ness, then we shall fall from grace. If we refuse to receive His discipline then He may cast us off to the point of losing our faith in apostasy:

For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

They then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold Him up to contempt. (Hebrews 6:6)

21 Church Discipline

The Scriptures give authority for Church disciplines of correction and, if necessary, exclusion, with the aim of restoring a fellow-member from sin.

THERE ARE three categories of church discipline with the aim in each case to:

- i) win the erring member back,
- ii) keep the spirit of the church pure.

a) Matthew 18 - On-going discipline

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you...if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen... let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (verses 15-17)

This process of discipline continues for most of the time in church life. Usually, brethren acknowledge their fault before the church household becomes involved.

b) Titus 3 - Disciplining the divisive

As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice have nothing more to do with him. (verse 10)

This usually happens with leaders or people of influence. It does not apply to the immature or unstable.

c) 1 Corinthians 5 - Immediate exclusion

When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in

How can we guard against self-righteous rejection during discipline?

the day of the Lord Jesus. (verses 4-5)

This happens in situations of serious moral sin where there is no repentance.

22 The Bible

The Bible (the Old and New Testaments in the Protestant canon) is the fully inspired Word of God, and, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, is alone the warrant for our faith and practice.

CANON IS a word meaning the list of books which were generally accepted as inspired. This list was decided on many centuries ago. The Old Testament books were the Jewish Scriptures. Those which were not felt to be inspired but have been passed on are in *The Apocrypha*. The books and letters included in New Testament are those generally agreed upon as being inspired.

The principle of inspiration is:

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

This inspiration came through holy men who knew the prophetic wisdom of the Holy Spirit. We must interpret the scriptures in the Spirit not independently:

No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20-21)

This written word is the Word of God as it conveys the truth of Jesus to us who is the Word of God:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The bible is the test of new revelations. They are simply new light shining out of the inspirations in the scriptures.

**Why must
the bible not be
interpreted to satisfy
personal ideas?**

23 Sacraments

We practise the sacraments of baptism of believers by immersion, and of Holy Communion in bread and wine.

THE WORD sacrament means basically a sacred covenant. Christ taught us to baptise disciples and share bread and wine together. These are outward signs of God's inward grace. They show that something is happening spiritually within us. So sacraments must be times of spiritual power and not just religious ritual. The four aspects of sacraments are:

a) The outward sign

In baptism this is dipping the person right under the water.

In Communion it is eating bread and drinking wine.

b) The command of Christ

Jesus said:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them.
(Matthew 28:19)

The Lord Jesus... took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me". In the same way also the cup...

"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this... in remembrance of Me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

c) Spiritual power

In baptism we enter the power of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as far as our old nature is concerned. In Communion we are spiritually eating and drinking the life and grace of Christ.

d) The covenant bond

In baptism we are baptised into the Body of Christ and belong in covenant love. In Communion we strengthen the bond which makes us members of one another.

What speaks to you of
covenant in baptism
and communion?

24 Foot-Washing

We practise washing of feet to symbolise our service to one another in the love of Christ.

IN NEW Testament times, foot-washing was a sign of hospitality. When a visitor entered the house their feet would be uncomfortable from the dusty roads. The lowest slave performed the job of removing the sandals and washing the feet. Simon the Pharisee insulted Jesus by not offering Him this hospitality. But inspired by the Spirit the prostitute washed His feet:

I entered your house, you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. (Luke 7:44)

Jesus showed His servant-heart to the disciples at the Last Supper:

Jesus... rose from supper, laid aside His garments, and girded Himself with a towel. Then He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. (John 13:3-5)

In the apostle Paul's mind foot-washing showed those who were genuine servants of the church:

And she must be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has... washed the feet of the saints. (1 Timothy 5:10)

It is good for us to use the symbolism of foot-washing to show our servant-heart. It is a time of unity when people get reconciled to one another. We also wash the feet of new church members to welcome them amongst us.

Where does
humility come into
foot-washing?

25 Right Hand of Fellowship

We receive into membership and the covenant bond of brotherhood through the Right Hand of Fellowship those who have been validly baptised and show the fruits of holiness and love.

Why is
the idea of
binding, covenantal
commitment
a stumbling block
to some people?

NEW CHRISTIANS are received as church members by baptism. This is a covenant occasion when they are made members of the Body of Christ. When Christians who have been baptised before wish to join us they too may join us through a covenant declaration. Firstly, they should be sure that their baptism was a genuine work of the Holy Spirit's power. If this was the case they may make their covenant pledge by the Right Hand of Fellowship.

The joining of hands has long had covenant significance:

"Is your heart true to my heart as mine is to yours?" And Jehonadab answered, "It is." Jehu said, "If it is, give me your hand." (2 Kings 10:15)

In the New Testament the apostles used it to indicate their commitment to the different aspects of the work of the gospel. It showed their unity in a common cause:

And when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John... gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. (Galatians 2:9)

26 Healing

We practise the anointing of the sick with oil together with laying on of hands, praying for healing of body and soul.

THERE ARE different kinds of healing in the New Testament. Jesus healed as a sign which demonstrated the power of the Kingdom. The healing ministry in the church brings help to the needy in body and soul. We believe that both still operate today. There is also healing grace as we are filled with the Spirit. And healing of the soul happens through prayer

and the love of the brotherhood.

a) Life to our bodies

The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you... will give life to your mortal bodies. (Romans 8:11)

Being filled with the Holy Spirit helps us to live in healing grace.

b) Signs and wonders

And these signs will accompany those who believe... they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

Healing is to be a part of our evangelism effectiveness.

c) Anointing with oil

Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins... and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:14-16)

One of the spiritual gifts is “gifts of healings”. There are different types of healing depending on the gift received.

27 Laying on of Hands

We practise laying on of hands for baptism in the Holy Spirit, for receiving of spiritual gifts, for commissioning to ministry offices.

LAYING ON of hands has a long historical tradition as a way of bringing blessing. Usually one who is older or anointed brings a blessing to another. Isaac and Jacob blessed their sons in this way. In the church, laying on of hands carries the power of the Spirit:

a) Baptism in the Spirit

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

This is the usual way of helping people into receiving the baptism of the Spirit.

b) Receiving spiritual gifts

**Do you have a healing gift?
How have you received any obvious healing?**

Do you recall any particularly anointed times when hands were laid on you?

When Paul laid hands on the Ephesian disciples they received spiritual gifts. Leaders can lay hands on people especially to commission them in spiritual gifts:

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. (1 Timothy 4:14)

c) Commissioning to ministry office

Paul was commissioned into his apostolic ministry through the laying on of hands:

The Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2-3)

We commission new church leaders in the same way.

28 Exorcism

Christ's church has power in His Name to exorcise demonic spirits.

THE MINISTRY of exorcism (or 'deliverance ministry') did not start with Jesus:

"And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?" (Matthew 12:27)

The difference was that Jesus had amazing power:

And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." (Luke 4:36)

Jesus gave this authority to his disciples:

And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons. (Luke 9:1)

After Pentecost the church continued with this ministry which demonstrated the power of the Kingdom:

And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice. (Acts 8:6-7)

How can we distinguish between the human spirit, the Holy Spirit and a demonic spirit?

This power was promised by Jesus to all who believe in Him:

And these signs will accompany those who believe: in My name they will cast out demons. (Mark 16:17)

We believe this promise and make exorcism an important part of our ministry in the Gospel.

29 Children

Infants of believing parents are to be presented to the Lord with thanksgiving and brought up in accordance with the practice of the Church-Community. The faith of the parents will sanctify the children, although this needs to be confirmed by their own personal new birth after they reach the age of accountability before God.

WHEN WE bear children they should only be for God's Kingdom and not in some way for ourselves. This is how Hannah spoke about Samuel who was a special gift from God to her:

"Therefore I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." (1 Samuel 1:28)

For this reason, children should be brought up in Christian principles. This is not just basic morality but brought up to understand and love the ways of the Kingdom church:

But Jesus called them to Him, saying, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." (Luke 18:16-17)

Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Such children, even where only one partner believes, are sanctified - set apart for Kingdom influence to faith:

... consecrated through his wife... otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. (1 Corinthians 7:14)

**What fruits
of sanctification
do you see
in the children
of our church?**

When they are of age they need conversion and to submit their will to God's.

30 Marriage

We acknowledge the ordinance of holy marriage between believers, in accordance with the teachings of Scripture, with the husband as the spiritual head.

WE HAVE to acknowledge the value of marriage. One of the errors of the last days is the rejection of marriage:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith... who forbid marriage. (1 Timothy 4:1-3)

We believe that a Christian ought only to marry another Christian. This is in order for the relationship to carry unity. We also encourage marriage within our church covenant to further this working relationship in God's will. Marriage with someone who does not hold the same vision or beliefs will have its strains:

But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so... For God has called us to peace. Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife? (1 Corinthians 7:15-16)

In the marriage relationship, the husband is spiritual head of the wife. He demonstrates this by his love, and she by her submission:

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Colossians 3:18-19)

What are the qualities
of a husband's love?
Why is a wife's submission
upbuilding in the
relationship?

31 Celibacy

It is the call and gifting of some to remain celibate to devote themselves to Christ.

A CELIBATE is someone who has renounced all thought of marrying. We see this as a lifetime decision sealed with a solemn vow. Jesus was celibate for the Lord's sake. He taught that celibacy is a gift which we should seek before considering marriage:

There are eunuchs (meaning celibates) who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it. (Matthew 19:12)

Celibacy is a more favourable gift than marriage because it frees people from the cares of married life. Celibates have undivided devotion to the Lord:

But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain single as I do. (1 Corinthians 7:7-8)

I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. (1 Corinthians 7:32-34)

So that he who marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better. (1 Corinthians 7:38)

Celibates are free to pursue their gifts within the Body of Christ without the distraction of natural family or marital cares. They have opened a door to increased fruitfulness.

In our day, when the single population is growing rapidly, we find that widows and non-virgins are very open to this celibate calling

How can celibates
"advertise" the
richness and
effectiveness of
their gift?

32 Male Leadership

The governing authority within the local Church is vested by Jesus in scripturally-qualified pastor-elders and other ministries for the sake of the well-being of Christ's flock. In accordance with biblical teaching, these are men.

GOD'S LEADERS in the Old Testament were often compared with shepherds leading a flock:

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for My people. (Jeremiah 23:2)

Gifts of leadership are given to the Church by Christ and one of these is the ministry of pastor (or shepherd):

And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11)

**Why should elders
be properly qualified
and be male?**

When the apostle Paul was founding new churches he soon appointed elders who had this pastor gifting. These men shared the leadership in the churches:

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting, they committed them to the Lord. (Acts 14:23)

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. (Acts 20:17)

Elders must have the qualifications listed in the New Testament. Because they carry spiritual authority, Paul is clear that they should be male. Women can also be leaders of other women.

For if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? (1 Timothy 3:5)

33 Deacons

Deacons within the Church are appointed from those scripturally-qualified to serve in practical and administrative tasks.

IN THE beginning, deacons were appointed to help with the administration of the pentecostal community:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distributions. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said... "pick out from among you seven men." (Acts 6:1-3)

Up until then the apostles had been responsible for practical sharing. Now they appointed these seven men to this task. Administrator is one of the gifts which God gives to the church:

And God has appointed in the church... administrators. (1 Corinthians 12:28)

Deacons need to have certain qualifications which prove that they are trustworthy people. In summary they are: serious, not gossips, not drunkards, not greedy for money, and spiritual. When married they should be good husbands and fathers. They are men God blesses:

For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:13)

**How do deacons help
to forward our vision
by their diligence?**

34 Discipline of Leaders

The authority of pastors, deacons and other ministers is to be respected by all members. Where a pastor, deacon, or other minister proves unworthy of office he is to be subject to the disciplines of the Church-Community.

THE BIBLE teaches us to respect our leaders in whatever ministry they serve:

Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. (Hebrews 13:17)

The normal processes of church discipline apply to leaders as to everyone else. However, leaders will receive a more stricter judgment from God:

Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. (James 3:1)

And so leaders must be accountable to the church as men who are examples to others. If leaders persist in sin they are to be rebuked publicly:

Never admit any charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. (1 Timothy 5:19-20)

Why is it right
to expect more
of leaders?

35 Gender in the Church

Male and female are equal in new creation status, both being sons of God in Christ Jesus. In this present age however, they are to be different in role, appearance and dress.

THE WORK of the Holy Spirit makes us God's children. He works on men and women without any distinction in terms

of gender. This makes us one spiritually:

There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

But on our fallen earth there is the need for rulership. This is the responsibility of men in the church. However, it does not change equality of spiritual status, it is God's order for this present age:

I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men. (1 Timothy 2:12)

The bible also teaches that men and women should have different appearances. There should be no unisex. In hairstyles for instance:

Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? (1 Corinthians 11:14-15)

Appearance also applies to the way men and women dress:

A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 22:5)

What are the benefits of practising God's holy ways in the differences between men and women?

36 Special Days

There is no scriptural justification for keeping special days and seasons, though, like the first Christians, we recognise the significance of the first day of the week as the day of the Lord's resurrection.

SPECIAL DAYS were part of the Old Covenant worship. The New Covenant is superior to the Old. New covenant worship is in spirit and truth:

The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. (John 4:23)

Keeping special days appeals to the religious flesh and not the life-giving Spirit of the New Covenant:

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a

Why do we not need to observe the Sabbath day?

sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)

Keeping religious festivals can even become a stumbling block to church growth:

You observe days, and months and seasons, and years! I am afraid I have laboured over you in vain. (Galatians 4:10-11)

The first day of the week we recognise as the day of Christ's resurrection which shattered the old order. On that day we give special attention to meeting together for worship:

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread. (Acts 20:7)

37 Prayer & Fasting

We believe in personal prayer, in personal and corporate fasting, in personal confession of sin to God, and before brethren.

a) Prayer

Prayer is both personal and with the brethren. Jesus taught the importance of personal prayer. His emphasis was on speaking to the heavenly Father. This contrasted with the times in which He lived where prayer was abused:

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they... pray... that they may be seen by men... But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. (Matthew 6:5-6)

The great feature of the revival following Pentecost was the way in which the disciples prayed together:

And they devoted themselves to... the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

b) Fasting

Fasting both individually and together is a valuable source of spiritual power when moving with the Holy Spirit:

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said... Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:2-3)

What must we be careful to avoid in personal prayer and fasting?

c) Confession of faults

Jesus taught that we should confess our sins to God when we pray:

And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive every one who is indebted to us. (Luke 11:4)

And we should confess them to one another:

Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (James 5:16)

38 The Body

Our mortal bodies, though subject to sickness, decay and death, are to be yielded to God. Physical life must be safeguarded from conception to natural death.

OUR PHYSICAL bodies are part of God's old creation. This creation is groaning to be made perfect and free from decay:

The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay... and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:21-23)

Until the redemption of our bodies the Holy Spirit brings life to strengthen their weakness:

The Spirit of Him Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through His Spirit which dwells in you. (Romans 8:11)

And so our bodies must be yielded to God as a living sacrifice in recognition of His rights over us:

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1)

We do not support the destruction of human life through abortion or euthanasia. God gives life and in His will He allows death. Man is not some kind of god able to choose to kill the innocent, the maimed, the terminally ill or the old.

Why is God interested in our bodies?

39 The Last Judgement

The bodies of all shall rise at the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all shall be judged according to the deeds done in the mortal body, those in Christ to eternal life and those outside of Him to everlasting death.

JESUS TAUGHT that there would be a resurrection of all men on the last day:

The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:28-29)

This resurrection will coincide with the second coming of Christ:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command... And the dead in Christ will rise first. (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

All men will be judged by the deeds done in their life:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

And on the basis of the judgment there will be blessing or punishment:

“Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to Me. And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”. (Matthew 25:45-46)

Does the thought of
the last judgement
have any effect on
how you live?

40 Statement of Faith

We believe that the truths contained within this statement of faith and practice are in accord with the revelation of scripture and are witnessed to by the Spirit of truth. We remain open to the Spirit's guidance in their practical application and to further revelation from the Scriptures.

WE HAVE seen how all aspects of our Statement of Faith are based firmly on biblical teaching. The Bible is our reference for truth and using it we can check out the principles behind things which are not directly written about in scripture such as abortion and euthanasia. Sound revelations of scripture through the Holy Spirit depend on people having spiritual minds and not unspiritual, worldly ones:

And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:13)

The interpretation of scripture by men and women of unspiritual minds has led to the many heretical sects we have today. The principles which guard against this are:

- 1) Interpretations must be judged by the witness of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) They must be viewed in the light of the body of Christian practice in history.
- 3) They will never add anything extra but bring out the depth of revelation and emphasise the need to practise it.
- 4) Interpretation can be confirmed by comparing scripture with scripture.
- 5) The New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament truths.

**Why must we not
be defensive about
what we believe?**

The Creeds

The Jesus Fellowship accepts the established creeds of the Christian Church - the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed.

The Apostles Creed

This is the oldest of the historic creeds, and probably was originally a confession of faith used at baptism.

This creed does not directly mention the Trinity. Do you notice any other significant omissions?

“ I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Spirit), born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick (living) and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost (Spirit); the holy catholic (universal) Church; the communion (fellowship) of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. ”

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed (probably dating from AD 381) is based on the Apostles Creed, with a few amplifications. These especially cover the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus:

“ I BELIEVE in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under

Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. ”

Which phrases stress the divinity of Jesus, and what do they mean?

The Athanasian Creed

This creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. It was prepared to assist the Church in combating errors concerning the Trinity and the nature of Jesus. This translation is that used by the Lutheran Church.

“WHOEVER WISHES to be saved must, above all else, hold to the true Christian Faith. Whoever does not keep this faith pure in all points will certainly perish forever.

Now this is the true Christian faith:

We worship one God in three persons and three persons in one God, without mixing the persons or dividing the divine being. For each person - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - is distinct, but the deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, equal in glory and coeternal in majesty.

What the Father is, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.

The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated; The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal; Any yet They are not three who are eternal, but there is one who is eternal, just as They are not three who are uncreated, nor three who are infinite, but there is One who is uncreated and One who is infinite.

In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Spirit is almighty; And yet They are not three who are almighty, but there is One who is almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; And

Why is it necessary to spell out the basics of the Christian faith in such detail?

yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord; yet They are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually to be God and Lord, so the true Christian faith forbids us to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is neither made nor created, nor begotten of anyone. The Son is neither made nor created, but is begotten of the Father alone. The Holy Spirit is neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeds from the Father and the Son. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And within this Trinity none comes before or after; none is greater or inferior, but all three persons are coequal and co-eternal, so that in every way, as stated before, all three persons are to be worshipped as one God and one God worshipped as three persons.

Whoever wishes to be saved must have this conviction of the Trinity.

It is furthermore necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh.

Now this is the true Christian faith:
We believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and Man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and He is man, born in time from the nature of His mother; fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh; equal to the Father, as to His deity; less than the Father, as to His humanity; and though He is both God and Man, Christ is not two persons but one; one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God; one, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person; for just as the reasonable soul and flesh are one human being, so God and man are one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty, and from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming all people will rise again with their own bodies to answer for their personal deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, but those who have done evil will go into everlasting fire.

This is the true Christian Faith. Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved. ”