

Giacinto Butindaro

**What
we
believe and teach**
(exposed very briefly)

Rome 2005

THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Word of God. It is composed of sixty-six holy books whose names are these: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (or The Song of Solomon), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation. All these books are holy – that's why they are called 'Holy Scriptures' or 'Holy Scripture' – because they are God-breathed (that is, they are given by inspiration of God), for they were not written by the will of man but holy men of God wrote them as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore whatever these books say and teach is true because it comes from God, who cannot lie. Therefore we trust in the Bible with all our heart. The Bible does not contain errors or contradictions.

The Holy Scriptures are complete because they contain all the things those who live far from God need to know to be saved from their sins and be reconciled to God, as well as all the things we Christians need to know to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel (that is to say, to live righteously, godly and soberly), while we wait for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Holy Scriptures are the final and absolute authority in faith, conduct and morals. All teachings, all revelations, and all prophecies, must be examined carefully in the light of the Holy Scriptures to see if they are sound (in this case they must be accepted) or wrong (in this case they must be rejected). Any earthly authority that expressly commands us to break the Word of God must not be obeyed. Therefore, for instance, if the governing authorities command us not to pray God in the name of Jesus Christ or they command us not to preach the Gospel of the grace of God, we must disobey them.

By the Holy Scriptures we are comforted, encouraged, taught, corrected and rebuked, led in the paths of righteousness, and made wise for salvation through our faith in Christ Jesus, the Son of God. Therefore we exhort the saints to meditate on the Word of God continually, to put it into their heart, and to have it ready on their lips, so that they may comfort one another with it and may teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. Furthermore we exhort them to divide the Word of God rightly, that is to say, to interpret it correctly, lest they give place to false doctrines and be put to shame.

GOD

There is one God, whose name is YHWH (Yahweh), which means 'I am who I am'. He is the first and the last, and apart from Him there is no God. God is a living and intelligent Being, with a will, reasoning ability, and emotions. God is spirit, no one has ever seen God or can see Him. He is the Everlasting because He had no beginning and He will have no ending. He inhabits eternity. God is holy, righteous, wise, good, slow to anger, merciful, faithful and truthful. God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

God is the Creator of all things. He created them through His beloved Son, and for Him. In wisdom God made them all and He upholds them by the word of His power. He is the Ruler of the universe, and nothing happens in the whole universe apart from His will. The heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them were made by God in six days (one day = 24 hours). We reject the evolution theory and the gap-theory. God is Omnipotent because He can do

anything. He is Omniscient because He knows all things; and He is Omnipresent because He is everywhere, even though His throne is in heaven. Furthermore, God is unchanging: He has always been the same, and He will be always the same.

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the city of David (which is in Judea), about two thousand years ago. He was born of a virgin called Mary, who was the wife of Joseph who was of the house and lineage of David. Mary conceived in her womb Jesus through the Holy Spirit (before she and Joseph came together), therefore Jesus was born without sin. The birth of Jesus took place in the days of the emperor Caesar Augustus. On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised according to the law of Moses, and when the days of the purification of Mary were completed, his parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.

Jesus was brought up in Nazareth of Galilee, that's why He is called the Nazarene. When Jesus was about 30 years old, He came from Galilee to John the Baptist at the Jordan River to be baptized by him. John was the man whom God sent before Jesus to prepare His way.

After Jesus was baptized, He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and then He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and when those days had ended, the devil came to Him and tempted Him in order to cause Jesus to sin, but Jesus firmly resisted the devil, who (when he had ended every temptation) departed from Him until an opportune time. Then Jesus began to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom in the cities and villages of Galilee (He said: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe in the Gospel'). He began also to heal the sick and to cast out demons. He went also throughout Judea preaching the Gospel, and healing the sick and casting out demons. Jesus healed the sick by the power of the Lord which was present for Him to heal the sick, and He cast out demons by the Spirit of God. He preached to men the salvation which God had promised, which could be obtained only by faith in Him. From His disciples He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles and whom He sent forth to preach the Kingdom, to heal the sick and to cast out demons. Jesus Christ committed no sin nor was any deceit in His mouth. He did only good, yet He was hated, reviled and despised by many in Israel. Several times they sought to kill Him, but they did not manage to kill Him, because His hour had not yet come. The world hated Him because He testified of it that its works were evil. The Pharisees, the scribes and the chief priests, and many Jews hated Him and persecuted Him because He said that God was His Father, and also because He healed the sick on the Sabbath, the day of rest which is holy according to the law of Moses and on which, according to the Jewish tradition, it was not lawful to heal the sick. Then one day Satan entered Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, who betrayed Jesus Christ for thirty silver coins, and handed Him over to the Pharisees, the scribes and the priests, who had Jesus brought before the Sanhedrin and condemned Him as worthy of death.

Then they handed Him over to Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea, who, even though at first he wanted to release Jesus because he found no reason for death in Him, eventually gave sentence that it should be as the Jews requested, that is to say, He gave sentence that Jesus should be crucified. The soldiers of the governor led Him away to be crucified. They brought Him to a place called 'Golgotha', which is in Jerusalem, and they crucified Him. Two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. He died for our sins. After Jesus breathed His last, He was buried. His body was placed in a tomb where no one had ever lain before.

But the third day God raised Him from the dead for our justification, and He appeared to His witnesses; He ate and drank with them and talked with them after He arose from the dead. Between His death and His resurrection, Jesus, by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of

Noah, while the ark was being prepared. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was a bodily resurrection, which means that He took back His body with which He had died, for when Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection the body with which He appeared to them had the nail marks in the hands and in the feet. However that body was immortal, glorious and powerful. Jesus Christ is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Forty days later Jesus was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. He is still there, where He makes intercession for us because He has become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood, therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

The Christ of God

Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God, that is, the Anointed One of God, of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets wrote, who was to come into this world to die for our sins and to rise for our justification. Here are some of the biblical predictions, concerning the Christ of God, which were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

He was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, just as the prophet Micah had said; He was born of a virgin, just as the prophet Isaiah had said; he grew up and was brought up in Nazareth that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets 'he will be called a Nazarene'; when he was about thirty years old He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and began to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick so that the words of the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled; He spoke to the crowds in parables that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Asaph; He committed no sin nor any deceit was in His mouth, just as the prophet Isaiah had said; He was hated without reason and He was betrayed by one of His disciples, just as it was written in the Psalms; two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled; not one of His bones was broken so that the words of David might be fulfilled; the roman soldiers divided His garments among them and cast lots for His tunic, so that the words of David might be fulfilled. He bore our sins, just as the prophet Isaiah had said. His body was placed in a tomb which belonged to a rich man, just as the prophet Isaiah had said; but the third day He rose from the dead and a few weeks later He ascended to heaven at the right hand of the Father, so that the words of David might be fulfilled.

The Son of God

Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God who, before He took the form of a bondservant and came in the likeness of men, existed from all eternity in the form of God with God the Father in heaven. Therefore when we say that Jesus is the Son of God we don't mean that there was a time when He did not exist and then God created Him. Jesus was God before He came down from heaven, and He remained God in the days of His flesh, for He forgave people of their sins and He was worshipped. On several occasions He confirmed that He was God, on one of them He said: "Before Abraham was born, I AM". It pleased the Father that in Jesus Christ all the fullness of the Godhead should dwell.

The Son is at the right hand of the Father and all the angels of God, as well as all the saints who are in heaven, worship Him. This confirms that He is God and He will be God forever. Therefore He is worthy to be worshiped like the Father, and we who are His disciples worship Him. To Him be the glory now and forever. Amen.

The Son of Man

Jesus of Nazareth was a real man. However He was born without sin that He might die on the cross for our sins. Being a real man, He needed to eat, to drink, and to rest. He needed also to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. Being a real man, He was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. He rejoiced in the Spirit, but He was also exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Jesus Christ felt pain in His body when He was scourged, when He was struck on the head and in the face, and when He was nailed to the cross. While He was hanging on the cross, blood and water came out of His body.

The Lord

God made Jesus of Nazareth not only Christ but also Lord. Therefore He is Lord of all. Because He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross, God has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The prophet

Jesus of Nazareth is the prophet about whom Moses spoke to the Israelites, saying: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people". He, being the prophet of God, spoke the words of God, no man ever spoke like Him. He predicted many things, among which there are many events which will happen before His second coming.

Jesus Christ, therefore, is the prophet raised up by God in the last days and in Whom a man must believe to be rescued from the coming wrath of God.

A warning

If anyone comes to you and tells you that Jesus Christ did not exist before He was conceived in the womb of his mother, or that He was not born of a virgin (because God the Father united Himself with Mary), or that He did not come in the flesh, or that Jesus also sinned sometimes, or that He got married, or that He was not the Christ, or that He was not God, or that He was the Son of God by adoption, or that He took on the nature of Satan, or that He was born again, or that He is at once the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; or that He did not feel pain when He was flogged and crucified, beware of such a person and avoid him, for he is a deceiver.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, said to His disciples that after His departure He would send the Holy Spirit to them from the Father. The Holy Spirit would abide with them forever, He would guide them into all truth, He would tell them things to come, He would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all things that He had said to them, and He would convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. And shortly before He was

received up into heaven, Jesus said to them: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you". That is what happened a few days after His ascension, for Jesus, having received from the Father the promised Spirit, poured out the Spirit of God on His disciples. On that day (the day of Pentecost) the promise which the Father had made through the prophets of old and confirmed through Jesus Christ was fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit is a person and not a force, for He speaks, He teaches, He guides, He reveals hidden things, He can be grieved and resisted. He is eternal, good, righteous, and holy. He knows everything, He can do anything, and He is everywhere, therefore He is God. The Spirit gives His gifts to each one individually as He wills. We can call God 'Father' because the Holy Spirit, whom God sent forth into our hearts, cries out, 'Abba, Father'. The Holy Spirit does another very important thing, that is to say, He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. In addition to this, He transforms us into the likeness of Christ because we who are sons of God were predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men. But he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, he is guilty of an eternal sin. The Holy Spirit is called also Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Jesus, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of grace, Spirit of truth, and Spirit of adoption. We do not pray nor sing to the Holy Spirit, for we don't want to go beyond what is written.

THE TRINITY

God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are one God. Therefore the Godhead consists of Three Divine Persons who are distinct yet, at the same time, united. This does not affect at all the oneness of God because the oneness of God, of which the Scripture speaks, is a composite oneness (or compound unity).

Even though the word 'Trinity' is not written in the Bible, the concept of Trinity, that is, the concept according to which God is ONE and TRIUNE, is widely confirmed by the Scripture. The divinity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (that is to say, the fact that each one of them is God) shows clearly that besides being ONE, God is also TRIUNE. Jesus said to His disciples that He would pray the Father and He (the Father) would give them another Comforter, that is, the Holy Spirit; and He commanded them to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit dwell in all those who are sons of God.

Therefore the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are not three titles of the only true God, or three manifestations of the only true God, but THREE DISTINCT PERSONS who have their own personality and individuality.

Whoever denies the Trinity is an idle talker and a deceiver, whose mouth must be stopped and of whom we must beware.

ANGELOLOGY

Angels are heavenly beings who were created by God. They are holy and powerful and they obey His word. Angels exist in exceeding great number; they worship God and the Lamb who is at the right hand of God. They are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation, for God uses angels to keep the saints, to guide them, to supply their needs, to bring them some special messages, to encourage them and to comfort them, and to deliver them from all kinds of dangers, etc. However we must not worship nor invoke angels; we must worship and invoke God. The angels of God may appear to men. Some people, by entertaining strangers, have entertained angels without knowing it.

God created also cherubim and seraphim. The Scripture speaks also of an archangel called Michael.

DEMONOLOGY

Satan (that is, the devil) is a wicked spiritual being which keeps all the world under his power. He is served by wicked spiritual beings, which are these: the principalities, the powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Satan is a liar and the father of lies; he is a murderer; he hates mankind and he always pursues what is evil for mankind deceiving men into breaking the commandments of God (that's why he is called the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience).

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, through His death, destroyed Satan; He triumphed over Satan and all his ministers (the above mentioned spiritual beings) by the cross. Therefore, by faith in the name of Jesus Christ, men can be delivered from the power of Satan.

There are many people who are possessed by demons, that is, evil spirits. Evil spirits cause demon-possessed people to act wickedly against their own bodies and against the other human beings. Demons give supernatural powers to some people, so that they may perform signs and wonders. In the name of Jesus Christ we can cast out evil spirits. Evil spirits know that when they are rebuked and ordered in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of the bodies where they dwell, they must obey. There are some evil spirits that do not go out except by prayer and fasting.

Satan tempts us and he fights against us in order to lead us astray and to cause us to deny the Lord Jesus Christ. In order not to fall victim to the devices of Satan, we must watch and pray without ceasing and we must submit to God and resist Satan; if we do these things, Satan's devices against us will be unsuccessful. We must not make fun of Satan.

One day Satan and all the spiritual beings which serve him will be cast into the everlasting fire, where they will be tormented forever.

MAN AND SIN

Man was made by God on the sixth day. God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. God made man in His image and likeness. After God made man (Adam), He made a woman (Eve) from a rib He had taken out of the man and He brought her to the man. God put man in the Garden of Eden, which was in the East. In that Garden were all kinds of trees, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food, but God commanded man not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that he would eat of it he would surely die. But Adam disobeyed God, for he ate from that tree, and in that day he died spiritually, just as God had said to him. By that disobedience sin entered the world and spread to all men, who are therefore sinners, slaves of various lusts and pleasures. Men give themselves over to evil, and the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. There is no one who does good, no, not one; there is no one who seeks after God, there is no fear of God before their eyes. Therefore men are under God's condemnation. They are on the way which leads to destruction.

SALVATION

Men, being sinners, are slaves of sin (which is the transgression of the law), therefore they need to be saved (or to be set free) from their sins, which are like invisible but powerful chains which hinder them from pleasing God. Being sinners, men are dead in their sins and trespasses, so

they need to be regenerated spiritually, so that they may have fellowship with God. Being sinners, men are in debt to God, who is angry with them because they have broken His Word, and therefore their debts need to be remitted so that they may be reconciled to God. Being sinners, men deserve to be punished with everlasting torment, and therefore they need to be justified so that they may escape the everlasting torment, for when one is justified he receives eternal life.

Salvation from the bondage of sin, spiritual regeneration, remission of debts and justification, can be experienced by men only through repentance and faith, that is to say, only if they repent of their sins and believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for our sins and was raised to life the third day for our justification. Good works, sacrifices, and mortifications, cannot save man from his sins, nor can they regenerate him, nor can they remit his debts, nor can they save him from the everlasting torment, nor can they reconcile him to God. If these things could save man, then Jesus Christ would have died in vain and grace would be set aside by the law of works. Furthermore, if these things could save man, man could boast before God saying that he deserved or gained salvation. Therefore we preach that salvation is obtained by faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of the law. And we urge both small and great, wise and unwise, Jews and Gentiles, to repent before God and to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and to do works befitting repentance.

THE NEW BIRTH

Man is dead in his sins and he is on the way that leads to destruction, and therefore he needs to be regenerated spiritually to enter the Kingdom of God. This spiritual regeneration is called new birth. Jesus spoke about it to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, when He said to him that unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God. The new birth is experienced by a man when he repents of his sins and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say, when he believes that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and was raised the third day for our justification. A person who has been born again feels forgiven by God and reconciled to God; he is sure he has become a son of God because the Spirit of God bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God; and he is absolutely sure he has eternal life, and therefore he is no longer afraid of death, knowing that when he dies he will depart from this world and enter the paradise of God in heaven. Furthermore, he perceives that he has become a new person inwardly, with new wishes and new thoughts. This change is clearly noticed by those who know what kind of person he was prior to his new birth. He has a peace and a joy which he did not have before; this peace and this joy are the fruit of the Spirit that God has put into his heart. By the new birth man becomes a member of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church of God, for he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ; and a new life begins, a life full of divine blessings, but also full of sufferings, through which his faith will be tested. Therefore whoever is born again must stand firm in the faith, being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, in order to stand the various tests and to receive in that day the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

THE ATONEMENT MADE BY JESUS CHRIST

In the fullness of the time Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, He bore our sins in His own body on the cross, so that our sins might be forgiven and we might be reconciled to God the Father through His precious blood.

Therefore Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, by faith in His blood we have received the remission of sins. His atoning sacrifice was foreshadowed by the law of Moses, for according to the law of Moses the priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins and for the sins of the

people. However while the blood of those sacrifices could not take away sins from the conscience of the worshipers, the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience of the man who repents and believes in Jesus and thus it makes him perfect in regard to the conscience.

Therefore it is absolutely necessary for a man to accept by faith the atoning sacrifice of Christ in order to be saved. Any personal sacrifice and mortification and any good work done with the intention of buying or meriting salvation is useless and also blasphemous for it pretends to replace the sacrifice of Christ and thus it sets aside the grace of God, on which the Gospel of God is based. If salvation were by works, grace would no longer be grace. But we preach that salvation is obtained by grace, through faith in Christ Jesus, and not by works of righteousness. All those who rely on the works of the law for their salvation are under the curse of the law, for it is written that everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them, is cursed. On the contrary, those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are blessed with believing Abraham because their faith was accounted to them for righteousness (that is to say, they were justified by faith) and they have nothing to boast about before God, just as our father Abraham had nothing to boast about. That's why we declare to small and great alike that they must repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ, because salvation can be obtained only through faith and therefore by grace; through faith in the Gospel, which is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Circumcision is not that of the flesh, but that of the heart which is done by Christ Jesus when a man repents and believes in the Gospel. Therefore it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship God by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh.

Through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross we have been set free from sin for we died with Christ to sin. Our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with. However that does not mean we have no sin, or we have not sinned, for we all stumble in many things. Nevertheless, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness through the blood of Christ.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and He was buried, and He rose again the third day for our justification according to the Scriptures, and after He was raised from the dead God caused Him to be seen by witnesses chosen before by God.

That is the Gospel, that is, the Good News, we have accepted by faith, in which we stand, by which we are saved and which we preach to all men imploring them on Christ's behalf to repent and to believe in it, that they might be saved. That is the Gospel in which man must believe to be saved and reconciled to God, for it is the word of our salvation Paul and the other apostles of the Lord (as well as all the other servants of Christ) preached during the first century after Christ and by which many Jews and Gentiles were set free from their sins. Whoever says that it is not complete or it is not sufficient for salvation because God, after the death of the apostles, revealed the fullness of the Gospel (which is, as a matter of fact, another Gospel) to Tom or Dick or Harry, is a deceiver, an idle talker, a man disapproved concerning the faith whose end is destruction; such a person is an accursed child. He is a poisonous snake and a ravenous wolf of whom we must beware. We must also beware of all those who after beginning with the Spirit are now trying to reach perfection by the flesh, that is to say, after they believed in the Gospel of grace they began to follow Jewish customs and to force others to do the same, so they began to impose circumcision, the Sabbath day, the Jewish feasts, and precepts about foods written in the law of Moses (to mention just some of the Jewish customs), which are all a shadow of the things that were to come, because the law has a shadow of the good things to come and not the very image of the things. These people set aside the grace of God and make void the faith in Christ, and therefore they must be rebuked sharply.

LAW AND GRACE

The law was given through Moses on Mount Sinai. The law was given so that sin might abound and man might become conscious of sin. The law was not given in order to justify man, therefore by the works of the law a man can't be justified in the sight of God. There is certainly a righteousness which is of the law and which says that the man who does those things will live by them, therefore it is a righteousness which is based on the works of the law, but all those who rely on the works of the law are cursed, for it is written that cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law has been made known; that is, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all who believe; so, as many as believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, and therefore they have peace with God. Therefore a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. All those who think that they can be justified by the works of the law set aside the grace of God and declare implicitly that Christ died in vain. Those who preach that a man is justified by observing the law (or even just a part of it) want us, who were redeemed from the curse of the law (through the sacrifice of Christ, who became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law), to fall under the curse of the law again.

Therefore, let both the Jews and those who are not Jews by birth who think that they can be justified by the law of Moses know assuredly that they are greatly mistaken. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Therefore a man is justified in the sight of God by the law of faith and not by the law of works. What's the law of faith? The law of faith is this: if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says that whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's the Good News of the grace of the blessed God.

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

After God brought the Jews out of Egypt, He made a covenant with them in the wilderness of Sinai. That covenant had ordinances of divine service and an earthly sanctuary which was made by Moses at God's command, according to the pattern shown him on Mount Sinai. That sanctuary was divided into two parts: the first part was called the Holy Place and the second the Most Holy Place. The levitical priests entered regularly into the Holy Place to carry on their ministry, but only the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place, and that only once a year, with the blood of certain animals which the High Priest offered every year for himself and for the people's sins. Therefore that sanctuary was just a shadow of the true sanctuary which is in heaven and which is not a man-made sanctuary, and those sacrifices were a shadow of the true sacrifice Christ would offer in the fullness of the time. They were a shadow because that blood could not blot out sins from the worshipers' conscience. Therefore the Old Covenant was based on imperfect sacrifices which could not cleanse man's conscience from dead works, and in fact in those sacrifices there was a reminder of sins every year. But God promised through the prophets that one day He would make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant He made with their fathers when He brought them out of Egypt, for He would be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins He would remember no more. God made this covenant in the fullness of the time through Jesus Christ His Son, who sanctified us through the sacrificial offering of His body; that is to say, by His precious blood Jesus cleansed our conscience from dead works, which could not be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats. God, because of the blood of Jesus, was merciful to our

unrighteousness and our sins He will remember no more. Therefore Jesus dedicated the New Covenant with His blood which He shed for the remission of our sins. And with that blood He entered – the same day on which the disciples saw Him go into heaven – the heavenly sanctuary, and not a man-made sanctuary like that into which the high priest entered once a year with blood that was not his own, to appear for us in God's presence and to intercede for us always. Therefore we were reconciled to God by that blood, which is the blood of the New Covenant which God predicted He would make with us. I said before that both the earthly sanctuary and the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were just shadows and not the realities themselves; however the High Priest also was a shadow, for he symbolized the High Priest of the good things to come, that is, Jesus Christ. He was a shadow because he himself was also subject to weakness and because of this he had to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people, whereas Jesus Christ was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin, and thus He could bear our sins and offer Himself for our sins. Under the Old Covenant there were many of those priests since death prevented them from continuing in office, but because Jesus lives forever He has a permanent priesthood, therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. In addition to this, the high priests under the Old Covenant became priests without an oath, but Christ became High Priest with an oath by God, so that God might show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel.

Therefore the New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant because it was established on better promises. The New Covenant is much more glorious than the Old Covenant; the Old Covenant is ready to vanish away, while the New Covenant is an everlasting Covenant and through the blood of this Covenant God brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of sheep. To Him be the glory now and forever. Amen.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION

We were predestined by God before the foundation of the world to obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. So we repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ because in His own time God enabled us to repent and to believe (that is to say, because God gave us both repentance and faith), so that it might be fulfilled His purpose, that is, the purpose of God according to election, which does not depend on works but on the will of the One who calls. Is it not written that of His own will God brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures, and that we did not choose the Lord but the Lord chose us? Therefore it does not depend on him who wills, nor on him who runs, but on God, who has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy. However God not only has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, but He also hardens whom He wants to harden. And who are they whom He hardens? They are those He predestined to go to perdition.

Therefore there are vessels of mercy, which God prepared beforehand for glory, and vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. The antichrist, who is coming, is one of the vessels of wrath, for the Scripture says that he is going to perdition. There is no unrighteousness with God, for God does whatever pleases Him and He has the right to do what He wishes with His own things. Who then can say to Him, 'What are you doing?' or 'You have done wrong'? Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? The purpose of God according to election is of fundamental importance in order to understand what it means to be saved by grace, but also to understand why not all men are saved by God.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

We who are Gentiles by birth, and called 'uncircumcised' by those who call themselves 'the circumcision' (that done in the body by the hands of men), were formerly without Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope, far from God and without God in the world. But it pleased God to bring us near to Him through the death of Jesus Christ. For through the death of Jesus Christ the middle wall which separated us from God and the Jews by birth was destroyed, because Jesus abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances. Therefore, by His death on the cross, Jesus reconciled us both (Gentiles and Jews) to God in one body. We were reconciled to God by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Now, therefore, we who are Gentiles in Christ are fellow heirs with those Jews who are in Christ, we are members together of one body, that is, the Church, and partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, that is, the promise of eternal life. We are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone of this spiritual building which is a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit. This mystery was kept hidden in God for ages past, but in the fullness of the time it was revealed to the saints of God, to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

Let us bear in mind this: it was necessary that most of the Jews should disobey God, so that we who are Gentiles might be forgiven by God (that is to say, so that God might have mercy on us) and we might become His people; so we received mercy through the disobedience of the Jews. As we know, in the days of Jesus and in the days of the apostles, most of the Jews refused to accept Jesus as the promised Messiah and thus they disobeyed God (most of the Jews all over the world still refuse to accept Jesus as the Messiah). Then God, disgusted for their disobedience, had the Gospel of grace preached to the Gentiles as well, so that they might believe and obey Him; so that, through the believing Gentiles, He might provoke the disobedient Jews to jealousy. The disobedience of the Jews was predicted by God through His prophets of old, for God said in various ways that He would harden the Jews to cause them to stumble. Therefore they were predestined to stumble; on the contrary, we were predestined to accept the Word of God. Therefore the hardening in part which Israel has experienced is God's work. However this hardening is temporary because one day, that is, when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, God will have mercy on all the Jews, for He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob and will take away their sins.

ISRAEL

The Jews (or Israelites) are descendants of Abraham and are the people whom God foreknew and to whom were committed the oracles of God and with whom God made a covenant after He brought them out of Egypt. However the wrath of God came upon them many times because of the stubbornness of their heart. We can see this very clearly in the Bible. While they were in the wilderness on their way to the land of Canaan, and after they entered the promised land (during the period of the Judges) they broke the commandments of God and God punished them for their transgressions. Even after the Kingdom of Israel was divided in two kingdoms, that is, the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel, the people rebelled against God many times giving themselves over to idolatry and to many other sins. God sent His prophets to them to warn them to forsake their evil works and to return to His Word, but they refused to listen to the prophets. Therefore God punished them by sending foreign armies against them, and many of them were killed and many others were carried away captive (to Assyria and to Babylon). But God in His mercy and in His faithfulness did not forsake the Israelites, for He caused them to return to the

promised land. Afterward, in the fullness of the time God sent Jesus, the Messiah, to Israel to save His people from their sins, but the Jews (or rather most of the Jews) did not recognize Him as the Messiah that God had promised through His prophets of old and they killed Him by the Romans, who at the time were ruling over their country. The people of Israel and the Gentiles did whatever His hand and His purpose determined before to be done. Only a small number of Jews accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote. Most of the Jews who live in Israel (as well as outside Israel) still don't believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; only a small number of Jews believe that Jesus is the Messiah, they are the remnant according to the election of grace whom God appointed to eternal life; the other Jews were hardened by God so that they might stumble over the stumbling stone. However this hardening in part one day will have an end, for the apostle Paul states that a hardening in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. Therefore, even though God has hardened many Jews, He has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Concerning the Gospel they are enemies for our sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers, for the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance.

Therefore let us see that we do not say, 'God has rejected Israel'. And let us not boast against the unbelieving Jews. Let us remember the following things: first, we who are Gentiles by birth were once excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise; second, we were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree through faith in Christ by the mercy of God, who decided to save us; third, the root of this olive tree is a Jewish root. Some branches were undoubtedly broken off because of their unbelief, and we were grafted in by our faith, but let us take heed to ourselves because if we don't continue in the goodness of God we also will be cut off.

We reject Anglo-Israelism.

HOLINESS (SANCTIFICATION)

We who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ were sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God, that's why the Scripture calls us 'the saints'. So, as is fitting for saints, we must perfect holiness in the fear of God hating and fleeing what is evil and clinging to what is good. In other words, just as we presented our members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now we must present our members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. And since we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, which calls evil good, and good evil, we must take heed to ourselves and test all things to understand what pleases the Lord and what does not please Him. We must test all things through the Scripture; the Spirit of God, who dwells in our hearts, guides us into all truth.

As He who called us to His eternal glory is holy, we also must be holy in all our conduct. Therefore we must abstain from the lusts of the flesh and the worldly lusts of this evil age. Fornication, uncleanness, revelries, drunkenness, lewdness, envy, debaucheries, sorcery, jealousies, covetousness (which is idolatry), malice, hatred, murders, contentions, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, slander, and the like, are all works of the flesh from which we must abstain (we must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother, but is a fornicator or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler; with such a man we must not even eat). Those who live according to the flesh are dead even while they live, and from the flesh they will reap corruption. Going to the cinema, to the theatre, to the circus, to the amusement parks, going to the beach to put oneself half-naked in order to get sun tanned or to bathe, going to a soccer match (as well as to a basketball match, a baseball match, etc.), listening to the worldly music, watching television, wearing indecent clothes or costly clothes, to mention just some of the worldly lusts, are all things which are not fitting for the saints, so we

warn believers against these things (as far as the television set is concerned, we exhort the saints not to buy it nor to place it in their houses). Friendship with the world is enmity with God. We must be humble, good, meek, righteous, merciful, patient with all, temperate in all things, hospitable to one another, full of brotherly love (Jesus said that by this all will know that we are His disciples, if we have love for one another), ready to confess our trespasses to one another and ready to forgive as Christ forgave us, and ready to do all kinds of good works as we have opportunity.

Without holiness no one will see the Lord. Fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers, idolaters, liars, murderers, sorcerers, the cowardly, the abominable, and the unrighteous, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

THE DECREES WHICH WERE DETERMINED BY THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS AT JERUSALEM

Around the middle of the first century after Christ, the apostles and the elders met at Jerusalem to consider an important question, that is to say, they came together to decide whether the believing Gentiles had to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses or not. They decided not to burden the Gentiles with anything beyond the following requirements: they had to abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled and from fornication. Therefore we who are Gentiles in Christ Jesus must keep those decrees determined by the apostles and the elders at Jerusalem. So we must abstain from fornication (that is, sexual intercourse with someone one is not married to); from the flesh of those animals which have been strangled; from those meats or things which the heathen offer to their idols, and from blood and any blood-based food.

GOOD WORKS

We Christians, being people who have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, must do works worthy of repentance. These works are called good works and God prepared them beforehand that we should walk in them. Christ gave Himself for us that He might purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Faith without works is dead, just as the body without the spirit is dead. Good works must follow faith, through them we openly confirm our profession of faith, we honour the Gospel and cause people to glorify God for our obedience to the Gospel. God rewards us for every good work we do, because God is righteous.

We are called to do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. We must remember the poor among the saints and visit orphans and widows in their trouble. Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

PERSECUTIONS

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, said that if they persecuted Him, they will also persecute us His disciples. Therefore we were called to suffer for His name's sake. In other words, we were called to partake of Christ's sufferings. However we are not ashamed to suffer as a Christian, rather we praise God that we bear that name. We are fully persuaded that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed in us on the day of Christ. So we endure patiently our sufferings and we commit our souls to our faithful Creator in doing good, because when Christ appears, then we also will appear with Him in glory, and we will be glad with exceeding joy; while those who trouble us will be repaid with tribulation.

Sufferings are useful because suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. That's why we consider it pure joy, when we face various trials for the Lord's sake. We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God.

GOD'S JUDGEMENTS

The Scripture states that he who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. Therefore, if an earthly father disciplines his children for he loves them, how much more will our heavenly Father - who in His great love did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all - discipline us! If God spared us His discipline, which we all need, He would not be a good father but an evil father. Therefore God disciplines us by inflicting His punishments on us, for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness and we may not be condemned with the world. Let us see to it then that we do not despise the chastening of the Lord.

God inflicts His punishments on those who are outside too. He is a righteous judge who expresses His wrath every day. His judgments are in all the earth.

THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING FROM GRACE

A believer can fall from grace and go to perdition. For God says that it is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away – that is to say, if they deny the Lord counting the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified a common thing and insulting the Spirit of grace – to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame; and God says also that the just will live by faith, but if he draws back His soul has no pleasure in him.

Therefore let us see to it that we stand firm in the faith to the end and we do not cast away our confidence, which has great reward, and we perfect holiness in the fear of God abstaining from every kind of evil and doing whatever is good to the glory of God. In this way we will make our call and election sure, we will never stumble, and an entrance will be supplied to us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH

The Church is the Assembly of the redeemed, that is, the Assembly of all those who have been delivered from the power of darkness and conveyed into the Kingdom of the Son of God, in whom they have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Therefore all those who are members of the Church are sure they have been saved from their sins and from everlasting perdition. One becomes a member of the Church through faith in Jesus Christ, who loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. The Church is the Body of Christ and every believer is a member of it; however believers have different gifts according to the grace that is given to them. The head of the Church is Jesus Christ.

The local Church must be ruled by a pastor and a body of elders (or bishops) helped by some deacons. If a man desires the position of a bishop, he must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behaviour, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money; one who rules his own house well,

having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the Church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil; furthermore he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. If a man desires the position of a deacon, he must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. Both the candidate for the position of a bishop and the candidate for the position of a deacon must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as bishops and deacons. The pastor and the elders must shepherd the flock of the Lord (giving the sheep spiritual food to eat, keeping watch over them, comforting them and admonishing them) not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over the flock but being examples to the flock. Deacons must help the pastor and the elders. Those who are taught the Word must share in all good things with those who teach. Those who teach are worthy of this, for the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel. No one goes to war at his own expense. He who tends a flock has the right to drink of the milk of the flock. Those who rule over the flock of God must be obeyed and esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake. Believers must not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

When believers come together as a Church, the worship of God must take place in an atmosphere full of the fear of God and thus in a orderly way. Therefore the preaching, the teaching, the prayers, the songs (which can be accompanied by musical instruments), the testimonies, and the exercise of the spiritual gifts, must be led by a holy fear of God. Frivolities, jokes and buffooneries must not be allowed, nor must be allowed or tolerated the following shameful behaviours: women who teach, the so called 'holy laughter', animal sounds, preachers who push people so that they may fall to the ground, preachers who breathe on people, all kinds of suggestions to induce believers to speak in tongues, theatrical scenes, and anything else which can grieve the Holy Spirit by whom we were sealed. Believers are called to speak the same thing, there must be no divisions among them, they are called to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement. They must be at peace among themselves, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, and uphold the weak. Jealousies and quarrellings must not be tolerated. Believers must greet one another with a holy kiss.

The Church must spread the Gospel of the grace of God all over the world. However the Gospel must be spread not out of envy and strife but out of good will. Furthermore, the Gospel must not be spread by improper means, such as theatrical scenes and rock music, which are used by some to attract people. The Gospel must be preached with power, and with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. Whoever preaches the Gospel must say very frankly to men that they must repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ – that is to say, they must believe that He died for our sins and rose again for our justification – so that they might receive remission of sins and might be saved, and also that if they refuse to repent and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, when they die they will be brought down to Hades (hell), and at the resurrection of the unjust they will be cast into the everlasting fire. The Church must desire and expect the Lord to confirm the Gospel by signs and wonders.

The local Church is independent and must keep her independence. Therefore she must not unite with other Churches to form a denomination with a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a General Council, a Statute etc. Such a form of ecclesiastical organization is not biblical and therefore it must be rejected. The Church must not ally herself with the State nor ask the State for privileges, because the Scripture teaches that the early Church was separate from the State. The history of the Church teaches us that every time the Church has allied herself with the State to obtain some privileges from it, the Church has become corrupted and arrogant and has trampled a part of the counsel of God underfoot.

Among the Church there are some people who cause offenses; these people despise both the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the words of the holy apostles. They are spots and blemishes; they don't serve our Lord but their own belly, they set their minds on the things of the flesh, they are arrogant and bold, and by smooth words and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the simple. They teach things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. Because of these people the way of truth is blasphemed. We exhort the saints to note these people, to expose their evil works and their lies, and to avoid them. Believers must expel the wicked man from among them.

The place of worship is not the house of God, for according to the Scripture the house of God is the Church of the living God.

ORDINANCES

Water baptism

Jesus Christ, before He was received up into heaven at the right hand of the Father, commanded the apostles to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Therefore whoever believes in the Gospel of the grace of God must be baptized immediately – by one immersion – in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is an outward act which attests that the believing person has experienced the new birth: his immersion represents the burial of the old man, while his coming up out of the water represents his resurrection with Christ. Therefore we were buried with Christ, through baptism, into His death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Water baptism is an appeal to God for a good conscience.

Therefore since water baptism follows faith it does not remit sins nor does it regenerate man; and in addition to this it must be said that since baptism must follow faith it cannot be administered to infants.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a rite during which we eat some bread and drink some fruit of the vine in order to proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus Christ till He comes. The bread symbolizes the body of Christ, while the fruit of the vine symbolizes His blood. The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ; the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ. We reject transubstantiation and consubstantiation. This rite was established by Christ Jesus on the night He was betrayed, while He was having supper with His twelve apostles. Before partaking of the Lord's Supper we ought to examine ourselves, lest we be judged by God. Yes, because those who eat or drink in an unworthy manner are struck with sickness or put to death by God.

THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a baptism administered by Jesus Christ to those who believe on His name. Through this baptism a Christian is endued with power from on high, just as the early disciples of the Lord in Jerusalem were endued with power from on high on the day of Pentecost (a few days after Jesus was taken up into heaven) when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. When a Christian is baptized with the Holy Spirit he is filled with the Holy Spirit and

he begins to speak in another tongue as the Spirit gives him utterance, just as it happened to the early disciples on the day of Pentecost. Therefore speaking in tongues is the outward sign attesting that a Christian has been baptized with the Holy Spirit or filled with the Holy Spirit.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an experience subsequent to the salvation from one's sins and the regeneration or new birth (which are experienced by a man when he repents of his own sins and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ). Therefore through this baptism a believer is not saved nor regenerated, but he is just endued with power and enabled to pray and bless God in another tongue, because this is what he who speaks in another tongue does when he speaks in another tongue. When the Scripture says that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God it refers to the praying in other tongues, which is accomplished by believers through the Holy Spirit. A Christian can receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit while he is praying as well as while he is not praying, and through the laying on of hands as well as without the laying on of hands.

THE MINISTRY GIFTS

The Lord Jesus Christ gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ. Whoever has received one of these ministries must use it to serve others and not for his self-interest. He is a steward of the mysteries of God and it is required in him that he be found faithful.

The apostle is one who is sent forth by God to preach the Gospel to a people (or in unevangelized regions) and who founds some Churches; the prophet is one who has received the gift of prophecy and revelation gifts (when the saints come together, let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge; but if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent); the evangelist is one who goes from one town to another proclaiming the Gospel; the pastor is one who was called by God to shepherd the local Church, and the teacher is one who has a very deep knowledge of the Word of God (therefore he knows the doctrines of the Bible very well), and he has a marked ability to teach the Word of God and refute false doctrines.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit distributes His gifts to each one individually as He wills. These gifts are the following ones: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. These gifts also, like the ministry gifts, are given for the edifying of the Body of Christ, and for the perfecting of the saints. And these gifts also must be used by those who have received them to serve others.

The word of wisdom is a revelation of a future event (this gift is expressed not only in foretelling future events, but also in those divine commands and instructions which make for the development of those future events); the word of knowledge is a revelation of an incident which has already taken place or that is taking place; the gift of faith is a special faith through which a believer is enabled to perform some wonders; the gifts of healings enable those who have received them to heal the sick; the working of miracles enables those who have received it to perform miracles; the gift of prophecy enables believers to speak edification and exhortation and comfort to men (when the saints come together, all those who have the gift of prophecy can

prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged); the gift of discerning of spirits enables believers to discern evil spirits in order to expose their diabolical works and to cast them out in the name of Jesus Christ; the gift of different kinds of tongues is the supernatural ability to speak several foreign languages and the gift of interpretation of tongues is the ability to interpret what is spoken in another tongue to God. Yes, because he who speaks in another tongue does speak to God, praying Him, thanking Him and blessing Him or speaking the wonderful works of God. When the saints come together, if anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. We must eagerly desire spiritual gifts.

VISIONS, DREAMS, REVELATIONS

God speaks to men through visions and dreams, or through an audible voice only (in this case, therefore, He speaks to them without a vision or a dream). He speaks to unbelievers to lead them to Jesus Christ, that is to say, to save them from their sins and from everlasting perdition. He speaks to the saints to encourage them, to comfort them, to rebuke them, to teach them, to warn them. God can reveal them an event which is to happen or an event which has already taken place, or the true identity of a person, or He can command them to go to a certain place or to do a particular thing. God can also reveal them the presence of evil spirits in a person or in a place.

God cannot lie, so He can't reveal a future event that will not take place or an event that did not take place. Therefore, if anyone predicts an event and that event does not happen, he who has predicted that event has spoken presumptuously; if anyone says that the Lord has revealed him an event which has already happened, but that event did not take place, that person has told a lie. God cannot reveal doctrines which nullify the Holy Scripture. He cannot reveal another Gospel, or an alleged 'full Gospel' or 'fullness of the Gospel' as if the Gospel which is written in the Bible were incomplete. All the visions and all the dreams and all the revelations which prove to be presumptuous, untruthful and contrary to what the Scripture teaches, must be rejected without hesitation.

Sometimes God guides us even by visions, dreams and revelations. I have said 'sometimes' because God doesn't always use these means to cause us to go to a certain place or to do a particular thing, or to meet someone. In most cases God guides us through the Scriptures, the impulses that the Spirit of God gives us inwardly in one direction or another, and through circumstances which are created and changed by God according to the counsel of His will.

HEALINGS, MIRACLES, SIGNS AND WONDERS

God heals and performs miracles, signs and wonders. Therefore the sick can be healed by their faith in Jesus Christ, the blind can receive their sight, the deaf can hear, the dumb can speak, the lame can walk. The dead can be raised in the name of Jesus Christ. Demons can be rebuked and cast out in the name of Jesus Christ (it is by the Spirit of God that demons are cast out). Through faith in Christ other powerful signs, which are different from those I have just mentioned, can be performed. Through the healings, the miracles, the signs and wonders performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, the Gospel is confirmed, the saints are encouraged and comforted and unbelievers (a part of them and not all of them) believe in Jesus Christ.

Some of the preachers who heal the sick, cast out demons, and perform signs and wonders in the name of Jesus Christ, do not live self-controlled, upright and godly lives, for they are evil workers. We must beware of them and turn away from them.

All the signs and wonders worked by wizards and witches, and by any other minister of the devil, must be rejected and exposed, for they are works of the devil.

PRAYER

We must pray God the Father for our brothers, that God may strengthen them, comfort them, establish them in every good work and word, that they may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they may be fruitful in every good work to the glory of God, that God may deliver them from the evil one and may heal them; to mention just some of the things we have to ask God in our prayers we make for them. In our prayers we must remember our brothers who are in prison and persecuted for the Gospel's sake. We must pray God to send out labourers into His harvest. We must also pray for the labourers who are in the harvest, that God may open to them a door for the Word and He may enable them to proclaim the Gospel with great boldness, by stretching out His hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Jesus Christ; and He may deliver them from wicked and evil men. We must also pray for unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles, that God might save them. We must pray for all who are in authority that God may save them, help them, bless them, and keep them. And let us not forget to thank God for all the good things we receive through the governing authorities.

We must pray for ourselves as well, asking God for both spiritual and material things. We must not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving we must present our requests to God. Our God hears the prayer of the righteous. When we are in distress and in need of something we must call upon God, who promised to answer our prayer. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. We must pray God in the name of Jesus Christ. If we pray God in faith (or believing), we keep His commandments, and what we ask is according to His will, He hears us. It is well to pray on one's knees; it is a most fitting posture for it expresses humility. However God's ears are open to our prayers even when we pray sitting or standing. It is lawful to pray and fast. We must pray without ceasing.

It is a good thing to accompany our prayers, both those we say privately and those we say publicly, with thanksgivings addressed to God in the name of Jesus Christ. Let men lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. Every woman must pray with her head covered with a veil, for woman is the glory of man; she must have a veil on her head because of the angels; the veil is a sign of authority (every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors man, who is the head of the woman). On the contrary, every man must pray with his head uncovered, for man is the image and glory of God (every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, which is Christ). We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. That is what happens when one prays in another language.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is an act through which hands are laid on another person in the name of Jesus Christ, so that he (the one on whom hands are laid) may be healed, or filled with the Holy Spirit, or may be ordained to serve as a bishop or as a deacon, or may be commended to the grace of the Lord for a certain work to which the Lord has called him. Both Jesus and the apostles practiced the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands must not be practiced hastily.

MARRIAGE

God took one of the man's ribs and made a woman from it and brought her to the man and He said: "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh". Therefore marriage was established by God.

A Christian man must marry a Christian woman and not an unbelieving woman because we are not allowed to be yoked together with unbelievers: light has no communion with darkness.

The husband must love his wife just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify her and present her to Himself a glorious Church, a holy and blameless Church. The husband must dwell with his wife with understanding, giving honor to his wife as to the weaker vessel, that his prayers may not be hindered. The wife must submit to her own husband in everything, just as the Church submits to Christ, and she must respect her husband; so she is not permitted to have authority over her husband.

Husband and wife must procreate and they must be willing to accept from the hand of God all the children God has decided to give to them; so they must not hinder conception. The fruit of the womb is a reward. Abortion is a murder, therefore we reject it. We are against medically assisted procreation, for it is an unnatural procreation.

Children must be brought up in the training and admonition of the Lord, they must not be provoked to wrath, lest they become discouraged. Children must obey their parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to God.

Husband and wife are bound by the law to one another as long as both of them are alive, therefore the bond of matrimony is dissolved only by the death of one of them. If the wife commits fornication, the husband can put away his wife but he can't remarry. Whoever puts away his wife and marries another woman, commits adultery. (If a believing husband is left by his unbelieving wife for she is no more willing to live with him, and he marries another woman, he commits adultery). If, while her husband lives, the woman marries another man, she commits adultery. If divorce and remarriage took place before conversion, then the two must remain with God in that state in which they were called. One who divorced and remarried before his conversion cannot become a pastor, nor an elder and nor a deacon.

Widows and widowers are free to marry. A widow should be put on the list of widows if she is over sixty, if she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works, if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

A man can remain unmarried if he has this gift from the Lord. But if he has not received this gift, let him marry because it is better to marry than to burn with passion. Celibacy must not be imposed on anyone; it must be a free choice. He who gives his daughter in marriage does right, but he who does not give her in marriage does even better. Anyone who forbids people to marry teaches a doctrine of demons.

WOMAN

God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs and He made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. Therefore woman was created for the man. However the woman was deceived by the serpent, for he deceived her into eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and she gave some to her husband, who ate it. Both of them, therefore, sinned in the sight of God and on that day they died spiritually. However Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived.

In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, for both the men and the women who have been regenerated by God are all one in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless God made man the head of the woman, and therefore the wife must submit to her husband, just as the Church submits to Christ Jesus. Therefore the authority on which the woman depends is man and the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head because of the angels, and this sign is the veil with which she must cover her head when she prays or prophesies. If a woman prays or prophesies (not only in the place of worship, but also at home and in the open air) with her head uncovered, she dishonors her head.

Women must adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and decency. Therefore they must not wear miniskirts, slit skirts, close-fitting dresses, sleeveless-dresses and low-necked dresses, costly clothing, see-through dresses, trousers, and any other dress which is not proper for women professing godliness. Let them wear long skirts and long-sleeved blouses. Furthermore, women must not braid their hair nor they must wear pearls and any kinds of jewelry. In addition to this, they must not wear make-up nor dye their hair. Let women have long hair, because it is a glory to them. (Men also must adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and decency. Therefore they must not wear shorts, close-fitting trousers and shirts, sleeveless and low-necked T-shirts, costly-clothing, jewelry, etc. Men ought not to have long hair for it is a dishonor to them, and they ought not to dye their hair) Women must adorn themselves with good works, which is proper for women professing godliness.

The woman is not permitted to teach or to have authority over a man, but she must learn in silence with all submission; therefore a woman can't become a pastor and she can't desire the position of a bishop, because both the pastor and the bishop must teach the Word of God. However a woman can desire the position of a deacon because a deacon is not called to teach. When believers are gathered together as a Church, women can pray and prophesy, but they are not permitted to ask questions for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

The older women must be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; then they can train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.

Women will be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in faith, love and holiness, with self-control.

THE SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

There is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, for the Lord's sake, we must be subject to the governing authorities and keep the laws of the country where we live. Whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves. We must, therefore, respect the governing authorities and be subject to them, no matter what political party they belong to or what kind of religion they profess. And we must also pray for all who are in authority, that God may save them, help them, keep them and bless them together with their families. And let us thank God for the good things done by the governing authorities.

We are called to disobey the governing authorities only when they command us to do something which is contrary to the Word of God. In this case we must say the same thing the apostles said before the Sanhedrin, which had commanded them not to teach in the name of Jesus, that is to say, 'We ought to obey God rather than men'.

BONDSERVANTS AND MASTERS

Christians must labor, working with their hands what is good, so that they may supply their own needs and the needs of their own families, and may have something to share with those in need. Lazy people, therefore, must be admonished and exhorted to work in quietness and to eat their own bread.

Bondservants must be obedient to those who are their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Bondservants must not talk back to their masters and they must not steal from them, but they must show all good fidelity, that the doctrine of God may be honored. Those bondservants who are disloyal and deceitful will be punished by God in His own time.

Masters must give their bondservants what is just and fair, and they must give up threatening. Those masters who are unjust and keep back by fraud the wages of their bondservants sin and they will be punished by God in His own time.

ESCHATOLOGY

The state of man after death

Man consists of body, soul and spirit. When he dies, his spirit returns to God who gave it, his body returns to the dust because it was taken out of the ground, while his soul continues to live consciously in another world.

When a Christian dies, his soul goes immediately to Paradise, which is a marvellous heavenly place prepared for the saints, to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. He remains there consciously awaiting the resurrection of life. There he praises the Lord, but he does not intercede for the living who are on the earth. Peace reigns in Paradise, there are no sufferings in Paradise and the glory of God illuminates everybody and everything. That's why to us to die is gain. The dead who die in the Lord are blessed because they rest from their labors. The New Jerusalem, which was seen by John in a vision while he was on the island that is called Patmos, is a real city, a heavenly city.

When a sinner dies, his soul goes immediately to Hades (Greek word which means 'the unseen world'), which is a place of torment located in the heart of the earth. Hades is a place without any order, full of thick darkness, where sinners are tormented by fire, which causes them terrible pains and sufferings. In Hades there is weeping and gnashing of teeth and the wicked await the resurrection of condemnation.

The coming of Christ and our gathering together to Him

The Lord Jesus Christ will come back in His time on the clouds of heaven with power and glory, and with the holy angels. He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive and remain shall be changed by the power of God and we will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. In that day all those who are Christ's will receive a body which will be like the glorious body of Christ. Therefore their bodies will be immortal, powerful and glorious. In that day the redemption of our body, which we are eagerly waiting for, will be fulfilled.

The coming of Christ and our gathering together to Him will take place after the falling away has come and the man of sin (that is, the antichrist) has been revealed. The man of sin will oppose

and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, and will set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God. He will perform all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. In that day the Lord Jesus will consume the man of sin with the breath of His mouth and will destroy him with the brightness of His coming. We reject the doctrine called 'secret rapture.'

The coming of the Lord is near. The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Let us see to it that we abide in Christ, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

The judgment seat of Christ

After Christ has come, we will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Therefore each of us will be rewarded according to his conduct. That's why we must live a holy and blameless life, having a pure conscience before God and men, hating and fleeing every form of evil, because in that day each of us will give account of himself to God.

Every minister of the Gospel must see to it that he builds on the foundation, which is Christ, with valuable things, that is, gold, silver, precious stones, and not with vain things, that is, wood, hay and straw; because the day of Christ will bring to light each one's work, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward; if anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

The millennial reign and the following events

When Christ comes, a thousand-year reign will begin, during which Christ will reign with His saints on the earth. During this reign Satan will not be able to deceive men because when Christ comes he will be bound and cast into the Abyss, which will be locked and sealed over him to keep him from deceiving the nations any more until the thousand years are ended.

When the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, to gather them together to battle. They will go up on the breadth of the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. Then Satan will be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (or the everlasting fire), where he will be tormented forever and ever.

Then the heaven and the earth will be annihilated by God (they will flee from the presence of God and there will be no place for them, and God will create a new heaven and a new earth) and the final judgment will take place. All the sinners will rise and appear before the throne of God and they will be judged according to their works, by the things written in the books. And they will be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, which is the second death, where they will be tormented forever and ever. In that day the angels of Satan will be judged, who went with him when he rebelled against God, as well as the angels who did not keep their proper domain but left their own abode to fornicate with the daughters of men (God cast those angels into a prison called Tartarus, putting them into chains of darkness to be reserved for judgment).

After the final judgment, the Holy City, that is, the New Jerusalem, whose architect and builder is God, which was prepared by God for the elect, whom He has chosen, will come down out of heaven and settle on the new earth in which there will be no longer any sea. And the saints will reign forever and ever. To God be the glory in Christ Jesus now and forevermore. Amen.

OUR POSITION ON VARIOUS THINGS

Foods and beverages

We may eat all things, except things offered to idols, things strangled and blood. For no food is unclean in itself, but if anyone regards something as unclean, then let him abstain from it, but without passing judgement on those who eat everything. He who eats everything must not despise those brothers who abstain from a certain food because they regard it as unclean. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We say grace before eating. It is lawful to drink wine or other fermented drink in moderation. Whoever commands to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth, teaches a doctrine of demons.

Days and feasts

We esteem every day alike. Therefore we don't think we must observe Sunday. If a brother esteems Sunday above the other days and observe it, we don't judge him; however he must not impose his conviction on the others nor judge those who don't esteem Sunday above the other days of the week. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. We don't observe the Sabbath day, nor the feast of Passover, nor the feast of Pentecost, nor the feast of Tabernacles, nor all the other Jewish feasts, because we were not called to observe Sabbaths and feasts. Let no one judge us regarding these things. We reject Carnival, Halloween and Christmas.

Violence and self-defence

We are against every form of violence against our neighbour, even in case of self-defence. We, being disciples of Christ, must be peaceable and gentle, showing all humility to all men, that's why we reject violence. We must not avenge ourselves, for vengeance belongs to God. We must love our enemies and do good to those who hate us.

Military service and war

We are against doing military service because as children of God we must not learn war. If the governing authorities command us to go to war, we must disobey them.

Magic, spiritism, astrology ...

We are against magic, against spiritism, astrology, cartomancy, the coffee cup reading, chiromancy, dowsing, and any other divining art, because they are all works of the devil, who is the enemy of God and the father of lies. All those who practice these things will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. We are against yoga, transcendental meditation, acupuncture, homeopathy, and any other meditation technique and alternative medicine which is based on occult principles and whose purpose is to make man feel one with the so called 'universal energy', that is to say, to induce man to believe that he is God. These things are all works of the devil, who deceives people and hurts them.

Superstitions

We are against every form of superstition, for superstitions are devices created by Satan to frighten and deceive people.

'Sacred' statues and images

We are against making the so called sacred images and statues and serving them because they are idols and any service rendered to them is idolatry; and we must flee from idolatry. All those who worship the so called sacred images and statues worship demons. Demons often perform counterfeit signs and wonders to keep people devoted to idols.

Selling things pertaining to the kingdom of God

We are against selling Bibles, hymnals, books of testimonies, books which contain biblical teachings, etc., for we are convinced that selling things pertaining to the kingdom of God is contrary to the sound doctrine. It is something which introduces corruption into the Church, and furthermore by selling the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, the Church does not give a good testimony to those who are outside. Provided that the laborer is worthy of his wages, we are convinced that all the things which are done to spread the Kingdom of God must be supported by the saints through free-will offerings. Therefore the laborer of the Lord must give freely what he does for the edification of the Church, and those who benefit from his work must support him financially and materially.

If a Christian wants to reproduce and spread the Bible or some parts of it, or a testimony, or a teaching written by a believer, he is free in the Lord to do it.

Tithing and prosperity

We are against imposing tithing on the saints, because tithing is one of those commandments of the law of Moses we must not keep for we are under grace. Every Christian must give for God's work as he purposes in his heart, beware of covetousness. We reject the doctrine which affirms that God wants us to be rich materially (the so called 'prosperity message'), for it is inconsistent with the Scripture, which states that those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Collection of offerings

We are against passing an offering-basket in the place of worship. That's not the right way to collect the money for God's work. An offering-box should be put in a corner of the place of worship and those who are willing to make an offering for the work of God must put their offering inside that box

Running into debts

We are against running into debts, for the borrower is servant to the lender.

Jokes

We are against telling jokes and uttering any corrupt word. Our speech must be always with grace, seasoned with salt. Let us speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The burlesque lie and the 'white' lie

We are against lying even when lies are told to joke or to do good to somebody. For the Scripture commands us not to lie to one another.

Swearing

We are against swearing because Christ commanded us not to swear.

Going to law against brothers

We are against going to law against those brothers who have wronged us. If any of us has a dispute with another about the things of this life, he must take it before the saints for judgment and not before the unrighteous. For Jesus said: "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven".

Ecumenism

We are against ecumenism, because we consider it a device of the devil against the Church to create confusion in the Church of God and to lead the saints astray from the truth. Therefore we refuse to pray, to evangelize and to work together with the Roman Catholics: they preach salvation by works and many other heresies (such as purgatory, penance, mass, the primacy of the Pope, the perpetual virginity of Mary, praying for the dead, etc.) which we confute both privately and publicly. We have no communion with them.

Voting and taking part in politics

We are apolitical, so we do not vote nor take part in politics; and we urge the saints to be apolitical like us, because our Lord and Saviour was apolitical.

Euthanasia

We are against euthanasia because we believe that only God has the right to take our life. He is the One who gave it to us, and He alone can take it.

Organ donation and transplantation

We are against organ donation and transplantation because organ explantation harms the donor. In the case of the transplantation of the heart or of the liver (or of other non-geminus vital organs), the explantation of these organs kills the donor, for his organs are explanted while he is still alive. For the so called brain death, which is certified by doctors before the organ explantation, is not real death because the heart of the donor is still beating.

Cremation

We are against cremation for according to the Holy Scripture the dead must be buried.

Homosexuality, paedophilia, ...

We are against homosexuality, paedophilia, prostitution, every form of pornography, and also against cloning. All these things are an abomination to God.

Taking medicines

We are against taking medicines because we consider it to be a lack of faith in the power of God, who still heals the sick. When a believer is taken ill, he must call for the elders of the Church, who must pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

Hunting and vivisection

We are against hunting for the fun of it, but not against hunting for food. It is lawful to kill animals also when they are a menace to people's life. We are against vivisection, that is, the practice of performing operations on live animals for the purpose of experimentation or scientific research, for the Scripture forbids us to be cruel toward animals.

Smoking, drugs, piercing and tattoos

We are against smoking, against taking cocaine, heroine, hallucinogens, etc., against piercing and against the custom of tattooing one's body, for all these things damage our body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Gambling, ...

We are against gambling, state lottery, soccer pools, horses races, and any other game based on betting, for all these things create a lust for riches and encourage covetousness (which is idolatry), whereas the Scripture commands us to be content with what we have, not to love money nor to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth. Those who have given themselves over to these worldly lusts have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. We trust in God, who has promised He will meet all our needs. To Him be the glory in Christ Jesus now and forevermore. Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all the saints

INDEX

| | |
|---|----|
| THE BIBLE | 1 |
| GOD | 1 |
| JESUS CHRIST | 2 |
| The Christ of God | 3 |
| The Son of God | 3 |
| The Son of Man | 4 |
| The Lord | 4 |
| The prophet | 4 |
| A warning | 4 |
| THE HOLY SPIRIT | 4 |
| THE TRINITY | 5 |
| ANGELOLOGY | 5 |
| DEMONOLOGY | 6 |
| MAN AND SIN | 6 |
| SALVATION | 6 |
| THE NEW BIRTH | 7 |
| THE ATONEMENT MADE BY JESUS CHRIST | 7 |
| THE GOSPEL OF GOD | 8 |
| LAW AND GRACE | 9 |
| THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS | 9 |
| THE PURPOSE OF GOD ACCORDING TO ELECTION | 10 |
| THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST | 11 |
| ISRAEL | 11 |
| HOLINESS (SANCTIFICATION) | 12 |
| THE DECREES WHICH WERE DETERMINED BY THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS AT JERUSALEM | 13 |
| GOOD WORKS | 13 |
| PERSECUTIONS | 13 |
| GOD'S JUDGEMENTS | 14 |
| THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING FROM GRACE | 14 |
| THE CHURCH | 14 |
| ORDINANCES | 16 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Water baptism | 16 |
| The Lord's Supper | 16 |
| THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT | 16 |
| THE MINISTRY GIFTS | 17 |
| THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT | 17 |
| VISIONS, DREAMS, REVELATIONS | 18 |
| HEALINGS, MIRACLES, SIGNS AND WONDERS | 18 |
| PRAYER | 19 |
| THE LAYING ON OF HANDS | 19 |
| MARRIAGE | 20 |
| WOMAN | 20 |
| THE SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES | 21 |
| BONDSERVANTS AND MASTERS | 22 |
| ESCHATOLOGY | 22 |
| The state of man after death | 22 |
| The coming of Christ and our gathering together to Him | 22 |
| The judgment seat of Christ | 23 |
| The millennial reign and the following events | 23 |
| OUR POSITION ON VARIOUS THINGS | 24 |
| Foods and beverages | 24 |
| Days and feasts | 24 |
| Violence and self-defence | 24 |
| Military service and war | 24 |
| Magic, spiritism, astrology ... | 24 |
| Superstitions | 25 |
| 'Sacred' statues and images | 25 |
| Selling things pertaining to the kingdom of God | 25 |
| Tithing and prosperity | 25 |
| Collection of offerings | 25 |
| Running into debts | 25 |
| Jokes | 26 |
| The burlesque lie and the 'white' lie | 26 |
| Swearing | 26 |
| Going to law against brothers | 26 |
| Ecumenism | 26 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Voting and taking part in politics _____ | 26 |
| Euthanasia _____ | 27 |
| Organ donation and transplantation _____ | 27 |
| Cremation _____ | 27 |
| Homosexuality, paedophilia, ... _____ | 27 |
| Taking medicines _____ | 27 |
| Hunting and vivisection _____ | 27 |
| Smoking, drugs, piercing and tattoos _____ | 27 |
| Gambling, ... _____ | 28 |