

*Introducing the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God
Of the Americas*

A Study Manual

Patrick L. Frazier, Jr.
Editor/Author/Compiler

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this manual to set forth in an orderly fashion the distinctives of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas. It is designed to be as complete a teaching tool as possible as most of the Scriptures are written in full. It is my hope that it will be a useful tool to all who may exercise themselves thereby. The questions at the end are only suggestions.

My thanks to Sharon, my wife, Tera, my eldest daughter, Tonya, her friend, for their assistance, and to my entire family.

My thanks to the Pastors of the Greater Eastern North Carolina District for their encouragement to do this project, especially to Rev. Billy Thompson, Sr. and Rev. Lester Powell, Jr., and to Macedonia.

Patrick L. Frazier, Jr.
Editor/Writer/Compiler
Greater Eastern North Carolina District
Wilmington, North Carolina
October 1990

INTRODUCING THE FIRE BAPTIZED HOLINESS CHURCH OF GOD 1

A STUDY MANUAL.....	1
PREFACE	2
PART 1.....	5
<i>OBJECTIVES OF INTRODUCING</i>	6
<i>THE FIRE BAPTIZED HOLINESS CHURCH OF GOD OF THE</i>	
<i>AMERICAS</i>	6
ARTICLE I – NAME.....	7
OBJECTIVES.....	7
ARTICLE 1. NAME.....	8
HISTORY OF THE F.B.H. CHURCH	9
OBJECTIVES.....	9
HISTORY OF THE FIRE BAPTIZED CHURCH.....	10
ARTICLE II. OBJECT AND DESIGN.....	15
OBJECTIVES	15
ARTICLE II. OBJECT AND DESIGN.....	16
BASIS OF UNION	21
GENERAL OBJECTIVES.....	21
ARTICLE III. BASIS OF UNION	22
<i>Basis of Union</i>	24
<i>Section 1</i>	24
<i>Basis of Union</i>	27
<i>Section 2</i>	27
<i>Basis of Union</i>	29
<i>Section 3</i>	29
<i>Basis of Union</i>	31
<i>Section 4</i>	31
<i>Basis of Union</i>	33
<i>Section 5</i>	33
<i>Basis of Union</i>	36
<i>Section 6</i>	36
<i>Basis of Union</i>	39
<i>Section 7</i>	39
<i>Basis of Union</i>	41
<i>Section 8</i>	41
<i>Basis of Union</i>	60
<i>Section 9</i>	60
<i>Fellowship</i>	60

<i>Basis of Union</i>	61
<i>Section 10</i>	61
<i>Marriage</i>	61
<i>Basis of Union</i>	64
<i>Section 11</i>	64
PART 2	65
INTRODUCING OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT	66
<i>Objectives</i>	66
INTRODUCING OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT	67
JOB DESCRIPTIONS	68
<i>Overview</i>	68
AUXILIARIES OF THE F.B.H. CHURCH	69
GENERAL CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES.....	71
ARTICLE IV.....	72
GENERAL RULES	72
<i>Objectives</i>	72
<i>Preface to General Rules</i>	73
<i>General Rules</i>	74
PART 3	77
OBJECTIVES.....	78
THE NEW BIRTH.....	79
SANCTIFICATION	80
THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	81
THE LORD’S SUPPER	82
WATER BAPTISM.....	83
PRAYER.....	84
YOUR BIBLE.....	86
HOW TO STUDY SCRIPTURES.....	89
CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP	91
FAMILY MINISTRY	93

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

**OBJECTIVES OF INTRODUCING
THE FIRE BAPTIZED HOLINESS CHURCH OF GOD OF THE
AMERICAS**

1. To set forth the historical background of the F.B.H. Church.
2. To provide a teaching tool for the instructions of new members (Doctrine, church government, and service).
3. To introduce the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas to others.
4. To help new members understand how the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas operates on the national, district, and local levels.
5. To teach members how to serve within the organizational structure of the church.
6. To teach the functions of the institutions and auxiliaries of the national, district, and local bodies.
7. To teach the responsibility of each of the national, district, and local officers.
8. To deepen the spiritual lives of our members through the disciplines of Bible study, prayer, fasting, fellowship, and service.
9. To encourage loyalty among church members.
10. To perpetuate the doctrine of justification by faith.
11. To perpetuate the doctrine of sanctification as a second definite, instantaneous work of grace in the heart of the fully justified believer.
12. To perpetuate the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.
13. To point out and combat all doctrines contrary to the Word of God.

**PART 1
WHO WE ARE**

Article I – Name

Objectives

1. To set forth with clarity the identity of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas in a manner which glories God.
2. To provide and clarify the Biblical basis for that identity.
3. To provide and clarify the theological and ethical basis for that identity.

**PART 1
WHO WE ARE**

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The organization shall be called the FIRE BAPTIZED HOLINESS CHURCH OF GOD OF THE AMERICAS.

Some may ask why use the words “Fire Baptized” – St. Luke 3:15 and 16. “And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the [HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE].

We believe that it is just important to have Fire as the Holy Ghost. Hebrews 12:29 says, “For our God is a consuming fire”. Fire is un-compromising. Fire Baptized Saints will not compromise with the wrong in themselves. Fire will do four things: First, light up; Second, warm up; Third, purge; and Fourth, purify. Fire Baptized folk are lit up, warmed up, purged, and purified. When we use “Fire” in our name we use it as a symbol of the uncompromising God...

Preface, Tenets
FBH Church

History of the F.B.H. Church

Objectives

1. To give a brief background of some of the persons and events leading up to the Holiness Movement.
2. To give a brief history of the doctrinal background of the Holiness Movement.
3. To give insight into the founding of the modern day Pentecostal Movement.
4. To introduce Bishop W.E. Fuller, Sr., the founder of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas – his life, struggles, and triumphs.
5. To introduce the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas.

HISTORY OF THE FIRE BAPTIZED CHURCH

The emergence of twentieth century Pentecostalism was no accident. The pietist movements of centuries gone by have played an important role in the sweep of the Holy Spirit in these latter days. Some prayers were quietly but persistently made while there were also those who preached faithfully, the Word of God at the peril of life and limb.

In the history of Christian faith, there have been periods of great doctrinal controversies. These have been followed by and sometime have come along with the practical living of the faith.

The pietist movements have shown four general traits: (1) its experiential character-pietists are people of the heart for who Christian living is the one concern; (2) its biblical focus-pietists are, to paraphrase John Wesley, “people of one book” who take standards and goals from the pages of scripture; (3) its perfectionist bent-pietists are serious about holy living and expend every effort to follow God’s law, spread the gospel, and provide aid for the needy; (4) its reforming interest-pietists usually opposed what they regarded as coldness and sterility in established church forms and practices.

Philipp Jakob Spener is often called the father of pietism. August Hermann Francke used the University of Halle and his home as a base for the practice of pietism. He opened his own home as a school for poor children and founded an orphanage. He also established an institute for the training of teachers, a publishing house, a medical clinic, and other institutions. The City of Halle became a center of bold missionary endeavors.

Spener and Francke influenced Count Nikolas von Zinzendorf, head of the renewed Moravian Church. Moravian pietism became known literally around the world.

John Wesley, in the Anglican Church in England, encouraged men to seek a life-changing crisis experience. Wesley formed Methodist societies within the Anglican Church, which strove to guide men into holy living through prayer, Bible study, and the study of other devotional materials i.e. William Law’s A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.

In America, men like Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, of the Puritans, D.L. Moody and Charles Finney, of the more modern era, preached the practical living out of the Christian faith.

Alongside these greatly used men of God, we must place the likes of W.J. Seymour, Charles H. Mason, and William Edward Fuller, Sr.. These men blazed a trail of doctrine and pietism not soon to be grown over and forgotten.

It is generally agreed among Pentecostal historians that the nineteenth-century American Holiness Movement gave birth to the Pentecostal Movement of the twentieth century. The Pentecostal Movement seems to have broken out among those already active in the

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

search of a religious experience lacking in their churches. This new experience was manifested by speaking in tongues.

The background of Methodism is the prominent modern tradition for us to study if we are to understand Pentecostal history. It comes out of the quest for an instantaneous experience of sanctification or a second work of grace subsequent to justification. Then came Pentecostalism's centering of its aspiration in an instantaneous experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit subsequent to justification. It became important to view John Wesley as the main sower. This allows for the influence of others as well.

Many denominations outside of Methodism have been affected by Methodist influence. Churches belonging to the Holiness tradition include one or more of the following terms in their denominational title: Holiness, Nazarene, Church of God, Pentecostal, or Assemblies.

Holiness groups contend that many larger denominations have departed from the true faith in teachings and practice and have compromised with modern secularity.

The Holiness Movement stems from Wesley's doctrine of sanctification from which certain Methodist churches felt the general stream of his followers had departed. It is said that the extreme left wing of perfectionism developed into the Pentecostal Movement. Under the direct influence of Jeremy Taylor, William Law, and Thomas A. Kempis, Wesley was driven to strive after "purity of intention" which was the core of his later doctrine. In 1766, he wrote his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, which is recognized as the doctrinal foundation of the Holiness Movement.

In 1764 Wesley wrote:

1. There is such a thing as perfection; for it is again and again mentioned in Scripture.
2. His is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to go on unto perfection. (Hebrews 6:1)
3. It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. (Philemon 3:15)
4. It is not absolute. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels, but to God alone.
5. It does not make a man infallible; none is infallible while he remains in the body.
6. Is it sinless? It is not worthwhile to contend for a term. It is salvation from sin.
7. Is it perfect love? (I John 4:18)
8. It is improvable ... one perfected in love may grow in grace...
9. It is omissible, capable of being lost....
10. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a gradual work.
11. But is it in itself instantaneous or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step.

And to this Wesley says in reference to the doctrine of perfection:

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

“Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention. In one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is giving to God all our heart: it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ”.

The Calvinists of Wesley’s day detested Wesley’s teaching of man’s ability to fall from grace. In Calvinistic thought the stress was always on God and His role in the preservation of the saints. In Calvinism man was reduced to nothing.

It was Charles Finney who popularized sanctification more than any other American revivalist. Through the preaching of Finney and D.L. Moody toward the latter part of the nineteenth century and holiness camp meetings, the Pentecostal Movement came into existence. Sperry reminds us that the Holiness Movement in which the Pentecostal Movement has its main roots, was a Puritan reaction against a supposedly stiffening institutionalism and secularism in the other American churches.

John A. Hardon states that two names stand out, Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour. Parham ran Topeka Bible School in Topeka, Kansas where Agnes Ozmas received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues.

William J. Seymour was invited to the church of Pastor Neeley to conduct a meeting. When he preached that a person could receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, she invited him to leave.

Seymour moved to a former stable on Azusa Street. He has often been described as a one-eyed, unattractive Black preacher who sat with his head covered until time for him to preach. He wanted every one to be sure that he was not using mass hypnosis because it caused such a stir that newspapers came to report the event.

Hollenweger raises the question, “Why did Pentecostalism begin within the Black community”? His answer, “Theologically, one must answer that it was God’s providence. As He chose the despised children of Israel to bring blessings to the whole world, He chose again Black people to bring blessings to the church universal”.

The Black community in the United States has made two important contributions to the universal church: (1) religious music of spirituals and spontaneous Gospels in addition to Blues and Jazz (the influence of the Gospel is very evident in today’s music of rock and soul etc.); (2) and the Pentecostal spirituality, which, since its beginnings in a humble Black church in Los Angeles in 1906, has swept across the world in grandiose revival; it numbers today somewhere between 25 and 40 million.

God in His providence used all of the aforementioned means of preparation (Wesleyan Methodism and Black experience) and emptied them into the heart of one William Edward Fuller, Sr.

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

Less than a half-century after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln, there was born in Montville, South Carolina, a tiny boy whose preaching was to influence thousands.

Bishop Fuller grew up under the influence of his parents and grandparents, Richard and Mahulda Fuller. Along with his sisters, Jessie, Annie Laurie, and Carrie; brothers, Oscar and Charles, he walked five miles each way to a log-cabin schoolhouse. Miss Foster taught him from a blue-black speller. Although the school session lasted only three months, he was a bright pupil.

In his late teens, Fuller moved to Fountain Inn, South Carolina, where he found work on the Jenkins' Farm. He had a room to himself in the upper level of the barn. Shortly after arriving in Fountain Inn, he received word that his mother had died and he returned to Mountville to live with his grandmother Hurley and Aunt Ida. Aunt Ida fixed a place in the attic at the old homestead.

He was saved under the preaching of Brother W.J. Burgess at New Hope Methodist Church and joined the church. He became a class leader and a steward. He was called to preach and was licensed by Elder Lyte. Aunt Ida often recounted the difficulties he had preaching the gospel. He preached on the street, in homes, and in churches. He married Martha Wright in 1895 and to this union was born three sons and two daughters.

Brother Fuller was sanctified in 1895 in a cornfield near his home place. While playing in a brass band, he realized he needed something more. He went out to that same cornfield and prayed until God sanctified him wholly.

In 1897, he began to read a circular called "The Way of Faith" edited by J.M. Pike. He read about a man who was sanctified in Iowa and baptized by the Holy Ghost in Nebraska. Not too long afterwards upon leaving his job, he went to the cornfield and agonized until he was baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, not even knowing where it was written in the Bible.

Brother Fuller worked hard at odd jobs to take care of his growing family. He worked on the railroad and the Vanderbilt Estate among others. When he was asked to work on Sunday, he quit vowing to starve rather than dishonor the Lord's Day.

He read in "The Way of Faith" that the Fire Baptized Holiness Association was meeting in Anderson, South Carolina 1 August 1898. He borrowed his brother-in-law's wagon, hitched up his old gray mule, and drove forty miles.

On the way to the tent, he heard the singing and shouting. He ran the rest of the way. They preached against all worldliness. Some Black ministers urged him not to join but he stepped out like Abraham. He joined and was ordained the same time by B.H. Irvin, J.H. King, T.J. Mackleroy, and Brother Craft. He was the only Black man in the crowd. He returned home, gave up his membership, class leadership etc., and declaring "I'm Fire Baptized". He had a hard time, sometimes only earning 25 cents a day.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Later he moved to Abbeyville, South Carolina to live and work on the Haverson College Campus. Dr. Amos, president of the college, taught Brother Fuller English and Bible. He became known for preaching the blood, fire, and dynamite gospel.

Some of the churches and auxiliaries founded under the leadership of our great founder are:

- 1899 Abbeyville, South Carolina – New Zion (rural)
- 1900 Zion (City) Abbeyville, South Carolina
- 1903 Greenwood, South Carolina – St. Paul
- 1904 Belton, South Carolina
- 1904 Greenville, South Carolina – St. Peter
- 1905 Seneca, South Carolina – Mt. Zion
- 1905 Greer, South Carolina – Mt. Zion
- 1906 Spartanburg, South Carolina – Bethel
- 1906 Royston, Georgia – Daniels Tabernacle
- 1907 Gainesville, Georgia – Gethsemane
- 1908 First General Council
- 1909 “True Witness” – Church Publication
- 1910 First Sunday School Convention – Greenville – New Zion
- 1912 Fuller Normal Organized in Atlanta, Georgia
- 1916 The Sister’s of Charity Organized
Sister Caroline Williams Phelps, First National Chairlady
Mother L.E. Chiles, First President

ARTICLE II. OBJECT AND DESIGN

OBJECTIVES

1. For the deepening of our spiritual life, so that all our members may attain and impress every Christian believer to seek the highest Christian experience possible in this life (Matthew 5:14-16; II Peter 1:4-9).
2. To ordain Elders, Pastors, Evangelists, Missionaries, and Teachers divinely called and set apart according to their gifts and calling who shall be required to teach and preach the doctrine set forth in the Basis of Union (Acts 14:23; Romans 10:15; I Corinthians 7:20; Titus).
3. To enforce the sacraments enacted by Christ and practiced by the Holy Apostles and fathers of the early church, such as baptism (Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 8:12-39), and administration of the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:22-26; I Corinthians 11:23-34) followed by ordinance (1) washing the saints' feet (St. John 13:4-11), (2) solemnizing matrimony (Titus 2:4-5; I Peter 2:13-15; St. John 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:4), (3) burying the dead and other ordinances.

ARTICLE II. OBJECT AND DESIGN

Solomon declares that, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven...”. There must be a purpose in life and there must be a purpose for the existence of an institution or organization.

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church sets forth its purpose in three major objectives.

1. For the deepening of our spiritual life, so that all our members may attain and impress every Christian believer to seek the highest Christian experience possible in this life (Matthew 5:14-16; II Peter 1:4-9).

Matthew 5:14-16

The life of every believer should bring glory to God. William Barclay says that it may well be said the greatest compliment paid to the individual Christian for we are commanded to be what Jesus Himself claimed to be. Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:5). Jesus commanded his disciples to be like Himself when He commanded them to be the lights of the world.

Jesus uses a term familiar to the Jews. They spoke of Jerusalem as a “light to the Gentiles”. They did not speak in terms of their being the source of the light. The Jews were sure of one thing, that no man kindled his own light. Jerusalem may have been a light to the Gentiles, but God lit Israel’s lamp. Jesus does not demand that we produce our own light. We must reflect His light. The radiance, which shines from the Christian, is lit by the presence of Christ in the life of the believer.

What did Jesus mean when He said that we must be the light of the world?

- 1.1 Light is meant to be seen. Being light is risky business. Putting a light under a bushel takes away the risk and the light. Because lamps were often difficult to light, when the family left home they took the lamp from its stand and placed it under an earthen bushel measure to reduce the risk of fire.

“There can be no such thing as secret discipleship, for either secrecy destroys the discipleship or the discipleship destroys the secrecy”. Our Christianity must be alive in the marketplace of life as well as in the four walls of the church. It should be clearly visible as we move among men of our world.*

- 1.2 A light is a guide. The purpose of a lighthouse is to guide ships through safe channels of water. A Christian has a responsibility to show others the way.†
The world needs a guide to righteousness – a righteousness beyond man.
- 1.3 A light can often be a warning light. Light has the ability to warn of danger ahead. It is sometimes the duty of a Christian to warn his fellow man. It is said of Florence Allshorn, the famous teacher and principal, that if she ever had

* The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I. Barclay William. The Westminster Press Philadelphia, 1958. pp. 119,120

† The Gospel of Matthew, p.120

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

occasion to rebuke her students, she did it “with her arm around them”. If our warnings are given, not in the desire to hurt, but in love, they will be effective.[‡]

Men must see our deeds for two important reasons.

- Men must see our good deeds in their attractiveness. There must be a winsomeness in Christian goodness. There must be delight and warmth in our goodness.
- Our deeds are meant to draw attention to God not to ourselves. Jesus is totally repulsed by theatrical goodness – “goodness to be seen of men”. When Moses’ face shone he did not know it.[§]

II Peter 1:4-9

Because we don’t have the resources to live full of “glory and virtue” God makes us partakers of His divine nature to keep us from sin and help us live for Him. When we are born again, God, by His Spirit empowers us with His own moral goodness (John 3:6; 14:17-21; II Corinthians 5:21).^{**}

This becoming partakers of the divine nature is the same as expressed by Paul when he relates how a convert is freed from the world through baptism into the body of Christ, is clothed in Christ, and becomes a new man (Romans 6:5; Ephesians 4:22 ff). But the believers will have to avoid that corruption prevalent in the world, which is lust!

Faith is more than belief in certain facts. It must result in action, growth in Christian character, and moral discipline, or it dies away because it does not demonstrate a truly transformed life (James 2:14-17). Peter lists several of faith’s actions: learning to know God’s will and loving others. These actions do not come automatically; they require hard work. They are not optional; all of them must be a continual part of the Christian life. We don’t finish one and start on the next, but we work on them all together. God not only empowers and enables us, but he also assigns us the responsibility of learning and growing.

False teachers were saying that self-control (temperance) is not needed because works do not help the believer anyway (2:19). It is true that works cannot save us, but it is absolutely false to think they are unimportant. We are saved so that we can grow to resemble Christ and so that we can serve others. God wants to produce His character of active love in us. To do this He demands discipline and effort from us. As we obey Christ, who guides us by His Spirit, we will drink.

Our faith must go beyond what we believe; it must become a dynamic part of all we do, resulting in good works and spiritual maturity. Salvation is not dependent upon good works, but it results in good works. A person who claims to be saved while remaining unchanged does not understand faith or what God has done for him.^{††}

[‡] Barclay, pp. 120, 121

[§] Barclay, pp. 121, 122

^{**} Life Application Bible (KJV) Tyndale House Pub. Inc. (Wheaton, III, 1989. notes on II Peter 1:4 p. 2208

^{††} Life Application Bible notes on II Peter 1:6,9 p. 2208

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

2. To ordain Elders, Pastors, Evangelists, Missionaries, and Teachers divinely called and set apart according to their gifts and calling who shall be required to teach and preach the doctrine set forth in the Basis of Union (Acts 14:23; Romans 10:15; I Corinthians 7:20; Titus).

Acts 14:23

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed”.

Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in spite of the opposition they had encountered in those cities. Their purpose was to organize the churches' leadership. They were not just following up on a loosely knit group; they were helping the believers get organized with spiritual leaders who could help them grow. Churches grow under Spirit led leaders, both lay person and pastors.^{‡‡}

Every Christian should pray for, encourage, and support their church leaders. If you are called upon to lead in your local church or district, you should prayerfully and humbly accept. The apostles took very seriously the setting aside of leaders in the church. There was prayer and fasting in order to receive direction from the Lord. This also impresses upon those chosen the seriousness of their new responsibility.

The apostles did not depend solely upon the natural wisdom and abilities of these men. These four (4) men were “commended to the Lord”. They were to be instruments in the hands of the Almighty as they functioned to carry out their duties.

Romans 10:15

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Those that are sent forth must have a sense of a calling from God. There must be a compelling from within. The message of salvation must be taken to others so that they will have the opportunity to be saved.

Here, in this verse, Paul gives us a sense of calling. “How shall they preach, except they be sent?” He also gives the message to be preached “...the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things”. It is truly good news that a new and perfect way has been made for the redemption of man. God has done away with the shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system through the reality of the sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot.

Good news! No longer bound! Nor more chains holding me!

^{‡‡} Life Application Bible, notes on Acts 14:23

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

I Corinthians 7:20

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called”.

Each individual Christian should abide in his own calling. Often we are so concerned about looking other than where we are or our present involvement that we lose sight of the spiritual possibilities right under our noses.

Every position is Christian work when we realize that our purpose is to glorify God in every area of our lives. We must honor, serve, and speak out for Christ wherever we are. Can you serve God where you are right now? Look for opportunities.

Titus (Entire Book: 1:5 key verse)

“For this cause I left thee in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee.”

The book of Titus was written in order to provide guidelines to Titus as he supervised the churches on the Island of Crete. It was his responsibility to see that the churches had proper leadership.

Qualifications were specified for the officers of the body. Paul briefly describes some qualifications the “elders” or “bishops” should have. He gave Timothy a similar set of instructions for the church in Ephesus (see I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:22). Notice that most of the qualifications involve character, not knowledge or skill. A person’s lifestyle and relationships provide a window into his character.

The Apostle Paul then warns Titus against false teachers – those whose message is not consistent with the Word of God. Some false teachers are ignorant – they speak without taking the doctrine up in the Word. Then, there are those false teachers whose motives are unrighteous – they pretend to be Christians only because they can get more money (“filthy lucre”), additional business, or a feeling of power from being a leader in the church. Jesus warned the apostles repeatedly against false teachers (see Mark 13:22; Acts 20:29; II Thessalonians 2:3-12; II Peter 3:3-7), because their teachings attack the foundations of truth and integrity upon which the Christian faith is built.

False teachers will (1) focus more attention on themselves than on Christ; (2) ask you to do something that will compromise your faith, de-emphasize the divine nature of Christ and/or the inspiration of the Bible, or (3) urge the church to make decisions based more upon human judgment than on prayer and biblical guidelines.^{§§}

3. To enforce the sacraments enacted by Christ and practiced by the Holy Apostles and fathers of the early church, such as baptism (Matthew 3:16-17; Acts 8:12-39) and the administration of the Lord’s Supper (Mark 14:22-26; I Corinthians 11:23-34) followed by the ordinances (1) washing the saints’ feet (St. John 13:4-11), (2)

^{§§} Life Application Bible, notes on Titus 1:10-14 p. 2145

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

solemnizing matrimony (Titus 2:4-5; I Peter 2:13-15; St. John 2:102; Hebrews 13:4),
(3) burying the dead and other ordinances.

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas recognizes two sacraments. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were transformed from their common use of Christ's time into representations of the new life in Christ. Baptism was a cleansing rite for Gentiles coming into Judaism, which Christ transformed into a representation of our identity with Him – with His death, burial, and resurrection. The last Passover meal that Jesus ate with His disciples was transformed from a celebration of deliverance from slavery in Egypt to a celebration of deliverance from sin through the blood of the true paschal lamb – Christ. These and the others will be talked about in more detail, along with the other ordinances as we progress in our studies.

We believe that we must observe these for a complete Christian life – complete in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

BASIS OF UNION
GENERAL OBJECTIVES

To present a clear statement of the doctrinal position of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas with regards to:

- I. Salvation
 - A. Regeneration
 - B. Justification
 - C. Sanctification
 - D. Baptism of the Holy Spirit
- II. Divine Healing
- III. Eschatology
- IV. Various Cults and False Teachings
- V. Areas of Fellowship
- VI. The Sanctity of Marriage

ARTICLE III. BASIS OF UNION

Section 1.

We believe Jesus Christ shed His blood for the remission of sins that are past (Romans 3:25; I John 1:7), for the regeneration of penitent sinners, and for salvation from sin and from sinning (Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 John 3:5-10).

Section 2.

We believe, teach, and firmly maintain the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone through the blood (Romans 3:24-25; Romans 5:6-9; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

Section 3.

We believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood for the complete cleansing of the justified believer from all in dwelling sin and from its pollution subsequent to regeneration (John 17:17; Acts 26:18; Romans 6:6; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12; I John 1:7-9).

Section 4.

We believe that sanctification is a second definite instantaneous work of grace, obtainable by faith on the part of the fully justified believer (Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 20:7-8; St. Luke 24:50-51; Hebrews 10:9-14).

Section 5.

We believe that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire is obtainable by definite act of appropriating faith on the part of the wholly sanctified believer, and that the initial evidence of the reception of this experience is speaking with other tongues as the spirit give utterance (Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 9:14-17; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:6).

Section 6.

We believe in divine healing as in the atonement (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:14-15; Acts 8:7; James 5:14-15).

Section 7.

We believe in the imminent personal pre-millennial second coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:14-18; Titus 2:13; II Peter 3:1-14; Matthew 24:20-44), and we love and await for His appearing (II Timothy 4:8).

Section 8.

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas is utterly opposed to the teachings of Christian Scientists, Mohammedism, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Universalists, and Mormons. We deny as false the teachings of the Seventh Day Adventists (Galatians 3:11; Colossians 2:16-17), Annihilation of the Wicked, Conditional Immortality and Anti-nomianism, Absolute Perfection, teaching against an organized church, the Resurrection Life, the Redemption of Glorification of the body in this life, and the doctrine of restitution of all things as set forth in Millennial Dawnism, Jehovah Witness

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

and the false teaching that we are not born of God until we are sanctified wholly (Mark 9:43-45; Revelation 20:10-14), Roman Catholicism (Matt. 17:5), the belief systems and practices of the Occult, Sorcery (Exodus 20:3; Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:10-13; Acts 8:9-24; Acts 16:16-19; Galatians 5:20), Witchcraft (1Samuel 28:8-19; Micah 5:12), Psychics, Psychic telephone lines, Numerology, so-called New Age practices and the teaching of Jesus only (Matthew 28:19-20; 2John 7-11). We shall not fellowship with those who teach these doctrines.

Section 9.

No member shall fellowship with those who leave the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas and attempt to destroy it.

Section 10.

The Lord says marriage is honorable in all the bed undefiled, and the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas FIRMLY HOLDS THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN RELATONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE which are strictly private, according to the Word of God, and into this sacred privacy no one has any right to inquire (I Corinthians 7:15; Hebrews 13:4).

Section 11.

No subsequent General Council shall have the authority to change the Basis of Union of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas without a full representation from local churches.

Basis of Union

Section 1

We believe Jesus Christ shed His blood for the remission of sins that are past (Romans 3:25; I John 1:7), for the regeneration of penitent sinners, and for salvation from sin and from sinning (Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 John 3:5-10).

Romans 3:25 (Read Romans 3:24-25)

We believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood for the remission of sins that are past. The slate, as it were, is wiped clean. In verse 24, we see that we are “justified freely”, which means to be declared not guilty. All past charges are removed from the record. It is as if we had never been accused. When God forgives our sins, our record is wiped clean. It is as though we had never sinned.

What makes this possible? Is it our goodness? Does God weigh our good against our bad? We were guilty before God beyond a shadow of doubt, but another took our place. Paul declares “...whom God hath set forth to be propitiations through faith in his blood... to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past...”. Christ is our sacrifice of atonement. We once stood under the sentence of death, but the death of Christ satisfied divine requirements. Christ’s sacrifice brings pardon, deliverance, and freedom.^{***}

At this point, we may have questions about the Old Testament saints. How are they forgiven? God forgave all human sins at the cross of Jesus. Old Testament saints looked, by faith, to Christ’s coming and were saved by faith. We, unlike those before Christ, must appropriate faith in what has already been done for the forgiveness of our sins.

I John 1:7

John reinforces the fact of the atoning blood of Christ. “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin”.

Just how does this take place? Old Testament believers symbolically transferred their sins to an animal, which they then sacrificed (Leviticus 4). The animal died in their place to pay for their sins and to allow them to continue living in God’s favor. God’s grace was extended to them because of their faith in Him, and because of their obedience concerning the sacrifice. Those sacrifices anticipated the coming of the Lord Jesus and His sacrifice to remove sins. Real cleansing taketh away the sin of the world (I John 1:29). Sin, by its very nature, brings death that is a fact as certain as the law of gravity.

Jesus did not die for His own sins; He was sinless. Instead, by a transaction we may never fully understand, He died for the sins of the world. When we identify ourselves with Him, His death becomes ours. We discover that He has already paid the penalty for

^{***} Life Application Bible notes from Romans 3:24,25

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

our sins; His blood has cleansed us. ... for the regeneration of penitent sinners, and for salvation from sin and from sinning (Ephesians 2:1-10; I John 3:5-10).

Ephesians 2:1-10

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience....”.

We who were spiritually dead are made alive by Christ. Man was doomed to death because of Adam’s disobedience. Our rebellion put us across God’s boundary. Our departure from the way of righteousness brought death. We should also note that failure to do what is right is also sin (Romans 14:23).^{†††} However, when we come to Christ in repentance and receive Him as our personal savior, we are converted and He regenerates us. He imparts life to us. We are born again – from above. We do not bring about regeneration; the Holy Spirit produces it. Regeneration is instantaneous. It takes place at a specific moment.

Regeneration is not a product of human effort. Regeneration is not effected by the will of man (John 1:13). At the moment of receiving Christ, we become children of God.^{†††} Paul declares “...If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). We are new on the inside. The Holy Spirit gives us new life – we are not the same anymore. We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated. We are new creatures.

I John 3:5-10

“And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither know him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeh sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother”.

John makes it very clear that Jesus came to take away our sins. Jesus could take away sins because there was no sin in Him. Those who accept Christ and abide in Him do not practice sin. Those who claim to know Christ and continually lead a life of sin deceive themselves. They do not know Him.

Righteousness is not an ideal or philosophy to be debated or discussed – it is doing right. We are not to do wrong and make attempts to justify our actions. We cannot make a practice of sinning or become indifferent to the moral law of God. As a Christian we may sin but we are admonished by the Word of God – “Shall we continue in sin that

^{†††} Paul Ennis, The Moody Handbook of Theology (Chicago: 1989), p. 310

^{†††} Paul Ennis, The Moody Handbook of Theology (Chicago: 1989), pp. 338-340

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

grace may abound? God forbid! How can we that are dead to sin live any longer therein” (Romans 6:12)? We do not practice sinning because we are new creatures. The life of God has been imparted in us.

If there is a prevailing sin in your life (one that you are seriously trying to eliminate from your life) you should seek victory by:

- Seeking power from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God
- Fleeing lustful desires^{§§§}
- Consulting the body of Christ – accountability to others and the prayers of others
- Fasting if necessary

^{§§§} Life Application Bible notes on John 3:8-9 p. 2219

Basis of Union

Section 2

We believe, teach, and firmly maintain the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone through the blood (Romans 3:24-25; Romans 5:6-9; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

When we are justified it is not because we have worked for it, deserve it or somehow gained it. The righteousness of Christ is imparted to us when we come in repentance and by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ. God looks at us through the perfect righteousness of His Son Jesus as though we have never sinned.

John Wesley defined faith as more than an intellectual assent and insisted that the sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ and receives Him, obtains “a deliverance from the power of sin, through Christ formed in his heart. So he who is justified, or saved by faith, is indeed born again. He is born again of the Spirit into a new life”.**** There is a change in the person. Wesley also made a strong distinction between justification and sanctification.

Romans 3:24, 25

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”.

We are declared righteous by a holy God. He has provided a means whereby sinners may come into harmonious relationships with Himself. This is God’s free gift. It becomes a reality when we put our trust in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:7

Now, our justification is not automatic. When we come in obedience to the Word of God, our sins are forgiven.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:7).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

When we obey these Scriptures, empty ourselves of our wrong doing and trash them, confess our guilt and ask forgiveness for our past actions, there is nothing left for which we are responsible, and God forgives these confessed sins. By the time we do this, God has also done His work and we have peace with God. We are promised peace with God as a result of justification.†††

**** Alan F. Johnson, Robert E. Webber, What Christians Believe.. (Grand Rapids: 1989) p. 315

††† G.W. Lane, Doctrine of the N.T. in Ten Great Subjects (Cincinnati: ND) p. 29

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Our salvation has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. We were on the auction block, sold out to sin, but Jesus paid the full price of our redemption. We stand forgiven – just as though we had never sinned.

Basis of Union

Section 3

We believe that Jesus Christ shed His blood for the complete cleansing of the justified believer from all in dwelling sin and from its pollution subsequent to regeneration (John 17:17; Acts 26:18; Romans 6:6; I Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 13:12; I John 1:7-9).

The blood of Jesus Christ was for the cleansing of man from sin – all sin. The first Adam got us into trouble. He marred the human family through his disobedience. No matter what man did the sin of the first Adam continued to be a problem. Only the appearance of the second Adam could do away with its polluting effects. When the first Adam died, he died polluted. When the second Adam died, he died pure. His blood could atone for the sin of man – not only for the sins of mankind but also for the sin of mankind.

There is an act of salvation following regeneration.

John 17:17

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth”.

The Old Testament meaning of conversion is to turn. It is turning from one direction and going in the opposite direction. The New Testament meaning of conversion is to have a change of mind. At the last Passover in John 13:9-11, Jesus declares all of His disciples to be clean except Judas. They had turned and they had a change of mind. Yet, in John 17:17, Jesus prays that they (and all believers after them) be sanctified. If Jesus declares the disciples to be clean and then prays their sanctification then sanctification must follow justification.

All of the following Scriptures give indication of an experience following justification:

Acts 26:18

“...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me”.

The apostle Paul relates his call to King Agrippa as to the words spoken to him by the risen Christ.

Romans 6:6

“...Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence forth we should not serve sin”.

Paul declares the power of sin broken in the life of the believer. The old man is crucified; we are no longer servants of sin. The power given sin by Adam’s tragedy is broken.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

I Thessalonians 5:23

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

Paul prays for the complete sanctification of the saints at Thessalonica. They were already believers. He prayed that the sanctifying power of God invade their whole beings. He prayed for their complete sanctification.

Hebrews 13:12

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffering without the gate”.

Jesus died for the cleansing of our sins through His blood, shed as a common criminal outside the gates of Jerusalem.

I John 1:7-9

“...But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.

We do not understand how the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin, but the Word of God declares that it does. It is the only real cleansing from sin that there is. The Old Testament sacrifices for sin never took away sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses our sins.

Basis of Union

Section 4

We believe that sanctification is a second definite instantaneous work of grace, obtainable by faith on the part of the fully justified believer (Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 11:44-45; Leviticus 20:7-8; St. Luke 24:50-51; Hebrews 10:9-14).

It is generally agreed that sanctification means more than one thing. It means: (1) To set apart to a sacred or religious use, (2) To observe, (3) To make free from sin or purify.

These meanings of the word sanctification must be used in their proper setting in order to avoid confusion. Often we are likely to ignore one meaning of sanctification in order to prove the other. This is not necessary.

Genesis 2:3

“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made”.

Here is an instance of setting apart for holy purpose the seventh day. Other instances of things or persons being set apart or sanctified are Exodus 13:2 – setting apart or sanctifying of firstborn of man and beast; Exodus 19:23 – the sanctifying of Mt. Sinai Leviticus 11:44 – the setting apart of the people from creeping things.

In this manner we can sanctify ourselves in this age. Those who speak mostly of “walking in the light” or observance must be careful to remember that sanctification is not only something we do ourselves, but it is also a phase that comes as an experience of grace.

If sanctification were only a setting apart for religious use, or observance, the early Christians were sanctified before the death of Jesus, because they had separated themselves from the world and were observing the commandments of the Lord. Jesus, praying to the Father, said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”. He also said, “I have given them the words which thou gavest me; and they received them”. Jesus affirms that they are set apart and they are observing. The former statement also proves that they were forgiven, and had passed from death unto life. After all of this, Jesus sees a need in their lives and we hear Him speak in John 17:9-11,13,15,17, and 19. Through these Scriptures we see that Jesus is praying for an additional blessing. They were enjoying the fullness of a sanctified life. They were separated, and were observing the truth as it came to them, but there was another phase of sanctification that the Father was being called upon to bring about in their lives.

Sanctification through the “truth” in verses 17 and 19 does not mean altogether the acceptance and following of the given word, for the disciples had done this to this time. This is explained in John 14:6, John 1:4,10 and 14.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

It is clear by the above scriptures that the Word and Truth mentioned is Jesus, thus it is easily understood that sanctification brought about by the offering of the body of Jesus. Further proof is seen in Hebrews 10:10; 13:12, and II Corinthians 5:21.

This experience is definite and as such has a definite beginning after the experience of justification, and also shows its effect in the lives of the followers before the day of Pentecost.††††

What does sanctification do in the lives of men?

††† G.W. Lane pp. 33-37

Basis of Union

Section 5

We believe that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire is obtainable by definite act of appropriating faith on the part of the wholly sanctified believer, and that the initial evidence of the reception of this experience is speaking with other tongues as the spirit give utterance (Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 9:14-17; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:6).

The bible teaches that the coming of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of men was prophesied. Joel declared, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28,29).

John the Baptist also declared, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire (Matthew 3:11). John the Baptist here speaks of the Holy Ghost as an experience received which is separate from water baptism unto repentance.

Jesus also speaks of the sending of the Holy Spirit, "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you... And I will pray to the father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14:2, 16, 17).

Jesus tells His disciples that He is going back to heaven to prepare a place for them and that He will pray to the Father to send another Comforter. He also makes it known that the Comforter has dwelt with them, but then shall be in them. There is a difference in the Holy Ghost being in you and being with you.

In John 15:26,27; Jesus indicates that the Holy Spirit would talk when He came "...He shall testify of me."

In the following Scriptures, John 15:26,27; 16:7-16: Jesus declares that the Holy Ghost would talk when He came. This is a point to remember, as this becomes a "bone of contention" in discussions of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

In Acts 1:4,5,8,9; Luke 24:49-53: we see the prophecies of the Holy Ghost on the verge of coming to pass. They will, of course, come to pass. They will be enacted as we go farther into our discussion.

John the Baptist spoke to the people who came to him for water baptism, and who had repented, telling them that there was a baptism to follow, which was greater than any he could administer unto them.

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

Jesus also was talking to His followers who had left the things of the world and were now considered “not of the world”. Their sins had been forgiven and they were walking in the light. He told them that the “world cannot receive” this experience; therefore it is settled that it is for the people who already have an experience with God. In the above Scriptures we see Jesus blessing His disciples as He ascended to heaven, they received great joy, and in this attitude they returned to Jerusalem from Bethany where they went to the upper room, tarrying for seven days, praising and blessing God before the Holy Ghost came. It cannot be denied that these people were saved and sanctified, because the prayer for joy and oneness, which is to be a part of sanctification, as recorded in John 17:11 and 17:13, was in evidence in their lives. In the above Scriptures we see them with “great joy” and they are seen in oneness in Acts 2:1, “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Thus it is concluded that they had received the experiences of “past sins forgiven” and sanctification, prior to the day of Pentecost when they received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:1-8 is the account of that great and glorious day. These Scriptures also see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel.

It would be useless for anyone to deny the experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost as an actual occurrence, or any part of it, because the above Scriptures are too clear to be denied; however, attempts have been made to discredit the experience and to keep man from believing in a reception of the experience. The thought has also been advanced that only the Twelve Apostles were recipients of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, in answer let us look at Acts 1:15; “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty)” and Acts 2:4; “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:39; 9:17; I Corinthians 14:18, further shows that this experience was received on the day of Pentecost and can be had today.

Paul was not even saved or forgiven on the day of Pentecost, but rather a great persecutor of the church. He has now met the Lord and received the Holy Ghost, as they did on the day of Pentecost (I Corinthians 14:18).

There are others, both Jew and Gentile, who even at a later date received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Read Acts 10:22, 24-28; 10:34, 35; 10:44-47; 19:1-7. The above Scriptures show different people at different times receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost: First, on the day of Pentecost; next, Saul of Tarsus; Cornelius with kindred and friends and then disciples at Ephesus. It is interesting to note that on each of these occasions the people spoke with tongues, thus fulfilling the prophesy of Jesus, “He will testify of me, and ye shall bear witness.”

Many today claim to believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but will not accept the teaching of speaking with tongues, even though it is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

We are often told that Paul's letter to the Corinthian church was a condemnation of speaking with tongues, and we are cited to the 14th Chapter of I Corinthians for proof, but no Scripture in this chapter supports this argument. Paul's purpose is to instruct the church how to "excel to the edifying of the church".

We must note that the Apostle is talking about the gift of tongues and tongues as the initial evidence of the reception of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I Corinthians 14:1-4, is an explanation of the difference in benefits gained by prophesying or speaking with tongues. Both are edifying, but one edifies the individual speaker, the other edifies the church.

Paul wants the church to understand that tongues does not take the place of preaching and the purpose of our gathering in church is to edification. Therefore he says, "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church".

Basis of Union

Section 6

We believe in divine healing as in the atonement (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3; Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:14-17; Acts 8:7; James 5:14-15).

God is able to heal men without the aid of natural means and without medical technology. Adam's sin brought sickness and ill health into the human race but God has made provisions for our healing.

The word atonement describes the restoration of the harmonious relationship between God and man. Man was separated by sin but God in His mercy provided a covering for man. He also satisfied the love and holiness of God in the atonement.

Exodus 15:26 "... And said, If thou wilt diligently harken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these disease upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: For I am the Lord that health thee."

Here, at the bitter waters of Marah, God assures His people that He would not cause the disease of the Egyptians to over take them. He declares Himself to be their healer. Many of the moral laws that He gave them later were designed to keep them from sickness. For example, following God's laws against prostitution and homosexuality would keep them free of venereal diseases.

Psalm 103:3,4 "... Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy disease; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

David praises God for all His benefits toward Him including his healing. He recognizes that God forgives all of our sins and heals all of our diseases. There is no sin or illness that we cannot take to God.

Isaiah 53:4-5 "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with His stripes we are healed".

God pulls back the curtain of time for Isaiah and allows Isaiah to see Christ dying for our sins – actually bearing the punishment we deserved. In seeing this, it is also revealed to him the results of the suffering of the Suffering Servant. Our sin is taken away and we are healed.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Matthew 8:14-17 “And when Jesus was come into Peter’s house, he saw his wife’s mother laid, and sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bore our sickness”.

In these verses we see Jesus at work healing the sick. A single touch makes Peter’s mother-in-law whole. Her healing is so complete that she is able to serve guests. At His word the demonic forces, which invaded the bodies of others bringing sickness and torment, were cast out. Matthew sees Jesus moving in fulfillment of prophecy, as he heals the sick.

Acts 8:6,7 “And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Phillip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies and that were lame, were healed”.

While Jesus was with His disciples, He sent them out by two’s to minister in the surrounding villages. They returned rejoicing that even devils were subject to them. They were warned that their joy should come from having their names written in the Lamb’s book.

Phillip, who was not one of the twelve, is witness to the same experience as he ministers the Word in Samaria. He experienced that power at work in his life that was promised with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Phillip healed the sick and cast out demons through the power of the Holy Ghost just as Jesus and the Apostles did.

The power to heal the sick comes with the Holy Ghost. Now, there is a specific gift of healing as spoken of by Paul in I Corinthians 12:9,10, however, the Bible also teaches that God hears and answers the prayers of His children – period.

James 5:14,15 “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed any sins, they shall be forgiven him”.

James refers to someone who is physically ill. In Scripture, oil was both medicine (Luke 10:30-37) and a symbol of the Spirit of God (as used in anointing kings, I Samuel 16:1-13). Thus oil can represent both the medical (physical) and spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not separate the physical and the spiritual – Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Members of the body of Christ are not alone. They should be able to count on others for support and prayer, especially when they are sick and suffering. The leaders (lay and clergy) should stay alert to pray for the needs of all its members.

“And the prayer of faith”, does not refer to the faith of the sick person, but to the faith of the church. God heals, faith doesn’t, and all prayers are subject to the will of God. But our prayers are part of God’s healing process. God waits to hear us pray on behalf of members of the body.

James also alludes to the fact that our healing is in the atonement. Through the prayer of faith, not only is the infirmity removed but, if there is any sin, that is also removed at the same time. This affirms that we have both, forgiveness of sin and healing in the atonement.

Basis of Union

Section 7

We believe in the imminent personal pre-millennial second coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:14-18; Titus 2:13; II Peter 3:1-14; Matthew 24:20-44), and we love and await for His appearing (II Timothy 4:8).

I Thessalonians 4:15-18 “For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words”.

Because Jesus Christ came back to life, so will all who believe. All Christians, including those living when He returns will live with Jesus forever. Therefore, we need not despair when loved ones die or world events take tragic turn. God will turn our tragedies to triumphs, our poverty to riches, our pain to glory, and our defeat to victory. All believers in the very presence of God will be safe and secure. As Paul comforted the Thessalonians with the promise of the resurrection, so we should comfort and reassure one another with this great hope.

Titus 2:13 “...Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ”.

We live the Christian life in hope and with great expectation. We must live in such a manner that we do not dread His coming. We must live morally and ethically pure in this present world.

II Peter 3:1-14 In this passage Peter warns the saints against scoffers – those who say, “We’ve heard that all our lives”. He reminds us that God has His own time set. He does not need time. Time was created for mankind. God is eternal and will not be threatened by the words of mortal men.

The coming of the Lord will be sure and sudden. Presently, He is patiently waiting for more men to be saved. The Spirit of the Living God pleads with men to heed the call of God.

When His patience has run out with evil men He will come, He will judge, and He will punish.

Matthew 24:20-44 In these verses Jesus Himself speaks of the character of His coming. He spoke of the Great Tribulation, the false cries of His coming, and how to determine His true coming. It will be swift and sudden. There will be no time for afterthought, last

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

minute repentance, or bargaining. The choice that we have already made will determine our eternal destiny.

Jesus' purpose in telling about His return is not to stimulate predictions, calculations, or debates, but to warn us to be ready.

[For a fuller discussion of our Lord's second coming read Eschatology: A Compilation of Selected Readings, the Rt. Rev. W.E. Fuller, Jr., Editor]

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Basis of Union

Section 8

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas is utterly opposed to the teachings of Christian Scientists, Mohammedism, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Universalists, and Mormons. We deny as false the teachings of the Seventh Day Adventists (Galatians 3:11; Colossians 2:16-17), Annihilation of the Wicked, Conditional Immortality and Anti-nomianism, Absolute Perfection, teaching against an organized church, the Resurrection Life, the Redemption of Glorification of the body in this life, and the doctrine of restitution of all things as set forth in Millennial Dawnism, Jehovah Witness and the false teaching that we are not born of God until we are sanctified wholly (Mark 9:43-45; Revelation 20:10-14), Roman Catholicism (Matt. 17:5), the belief systems and practices of the Occult, Sorcery (Exodus 20:3; Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; Leviticus 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:10-13; Acts 8:9-24; Acts 16:16-19; Galatians 5:20), Witchcraft (1Samuel 28:8-19; Micah 5:12), Psychics, Psychic telephone lines, Numerology, so-called New Age practices and the teaching of Jesus only (Matthew 28:19-20; 2John 7-11). We shall not fellowship with those who teach these doctrines.

**PART 1
WHO WE ARE**

Christian Scientists or Church of Christ, Scientist

This organization was founded in 1876 by Mary Baker Eddy as the Christian Scientist Association and in 1879 chartered the Church of Christ Scientist. The present form of the church came about in 1892. The first Church of Christ, Scientist of Boston is known as the mother church and the others branches, although each is governed independently. The tenets and by-laws of the church were incorporated by Eddy into the church manual of 1895.

Theologically, the Church of Christ, Scientist does not concur with the basic tenets of historic orthodox Christianity. Although it uses the theological vocabulary it has different meanings. The sources of authority for the church are the Bible and Eddy's writings. Members accept Eddy's writings as divine revelations and interpret the Bible allegorically through her works. The authority for the church is Science and Health, which was published in 1875 and regularly revised until Eddy's death in 1910. She claimed it contained the perfect word of God, and thus divine and infallible.

Christian Science's view of God is that God is divine principle, not a supreme being. God is mind, and mind is all. Nothing possesses reality or exists which is not mind. The characteristics and attributes of god become God. The Trinity is constituted by the threefold nature of divine principles (God), life, truth and love. God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are not persons. The Christology of Christian Science denies a physical incarnation of Christ and insists Mary conceived Christ only as a spiritual idea. Since God is mind and spirit, and nothing exists which is not spirit, there can be no matter of flesh; these are only illusions. Thus Christ did not possess a body and did not die on a cross. The need of an atonement is nullified. Sin, evil, sickness, and death are delusions, no reality. God is good and nothing can exist which is not good.

Christian Science teaches man is created in God's image as spirit, mind, and good; thus man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death. Man is placed on a plane of equality with God in his origin, character, and eternity. They insist that heaven and hell are present states of man's thoughts, not real future dwelling places.

Christian Science church services are simple and uniform worldwide. They focus upon the uniform lesson – sermons that are read aloud from the Bible and Science and Health by readers elected from the congregation. There is no clergy or priesthood. The sacraments are not special rites. Baptism means the spiritual purification of daily life and the Lord's Supper is spiritual communion with God. No visible elements are used. Salvation to Christian Scientist is the gaining of the understanding that man's life is wholly derived from God the Spirit, and is not mortal and material.

P.G. Chappell

Walter A. Elwell, ed. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids:1984)

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Islam

Islam is not a cult, but a major world religion distinctly different from Christianity. Islam is included because they are very zealous missionaries.

Islam has its own vocabulary to describe its beliefs. Let us look at some of its terminology.

Islam is the name of the religion, which came out of the revelations and teaching of Mohammed. Islam is the Arabic term for “submission”.

Muslim is the name given to one who adheres to the religion of Islam. It means “one who submits”. The Muslim submits to the will of Allah as revealed by Mohammed. Allah is the Islamic name for God and cannot easily be translated into English. One Muslim writer described it thusly” “The word means unique to God who possesses all the attributes of perfection and beauty in their infinitude”. Muslims feel strongly that the English word “God” does not convey the real meaning of the word “Allah”.

Mohammed was the common name of an Arabic man born in the city of Mecca in A.D. 570 (d632). He claimed that he was the prophet to restore true religion and the praise of Allah throughout the world, just as Jesus Christ was prophet in His time for His people. Mohammed means “the one who is praised”.

Quran or Koran is Arabic for “the recitation”, and refers to the collection of revelations supposedly given by Allah through his archangel to Mohammed and preserved as Islamic Scriptures. Muslims believe in the Law of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the Injil, or gospel of Jesus Christ. However, they believe that those Scriptures are superseded by the scripture given through Mohammed and that the Bible used by Christians and Jews is a distorted version of those other scriptures. Wherever the Bible contradicts Islam, the Muslims say the Bible is incorrect. Surah refers to the divisions within the Quran, and roughly corresponds to our chapter. The shortest revelations appear first and the longer one last. There is no chronological arrangement in the Quran. Hadith refers to the “collected traditions”. These customs provide source material for the intricate political and social structure of Islam. Caliph is Arabic for leader and refers to the main leaders of Islam, especially the immediate successors of Mohammed. Ayatollah refers to a spiritual master of leader in Islam.

At first glance, Islamic beliefs appear to almost be compatible with Christianity and/or Judaism. Often people claim that the Muslims believe in the same God as Christians: “They just don’t accept Jesus Christ”. However, the Muslim god is not like the Christian God. Islam rejects the biblical doctrines of the Trinity and Deity of Christ.

God. For the Muslim, Allah is the only true God. There is no such blasphemous thing as the “Trinity”. Jesus Christ is a prophet of Allah; he is not the Son of God or God himself (Surah 4:171). The Muslim god is unapproachable by sinful man. He is so perfect and holy he can only communicate with mankind through a progression of angels and

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

prophets. The Muslim god is a god of judgment, not grace; a god of wrath rather than love. The Muslim's desire is to submit to the point where he can hold back the judging arm of Allah and perhaps, through the capricious whim of Allah, inherit eternal life in an earthly paradise of gluttony and sexual gratification. Muslims have no concept of God as a loving and compassionate father.

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, to the Muslim, is just one of many prophets of Allah. Jesus Christ was the prophet for his people in his day. The prophet Mohammed supersedes Jesus Christ. Jesus is not the Son of God or a part of any Trinity. Jesus Christ did not atone for anyone's sins, although he himself was sinless. Jesus Christ did not die on the cross. Various Muslim traditions say that he miraculously substituted Judas Iscariot for himself on the cross, or that God miraculously delivered him from the hands of the Romans and Jews before he could be crucified. Most Muslims believe that Jesus Christ was taken bodily into heaven without having to die (Surah 4:147).

Sin and Salvation. Sin and salvation in Islam is associated with two concepts: works and fate (kismet). Muslims who hope to escape the judgment of Allah must fulfill the works of the Five Pillars of Faith (Surah 10:109). These include:

1. Recitation of the Shahadah ("There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet")
2. Five daily prescribed prayers include genuflection and prostration in the direction of the holy city, Mecca;
3. Almsgiving (Zakat), which is unlike tithing since Muslims are only required to give one-fortieth of their income as charitable contributions.
4. Fasting (Saum or Ruzeh) during the entire month of Ramadan, when Muslims are supposed to fast from all food and drink from sunrise to sunset for atonement for their sins over the previous year (however, after sunset many Muslims enjoy a feast and some get up before sunrise to eat some more before the sunrises and the fast begins again).
5. A pilgrimage (Haji) to Mecca, the holy city, at least once in a Muslim's lifetime.

Holy war (Jihad) used to be a condition of faith, and early Muslims believed it was their sacred duty to murder anyone who would not embrace the one true faith. Contemporary Islam is much more moderate, although some Shia'ites talk of restoring Jihad as one of the essentials of Islamic faith.

There are three topics to consider when approaching a Muslim with the gospel nature of God, the identity and deity of Jesus Christ, and salvation by grace alone apart from works.

The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Spiritualists (Spiritism)

By far the oldest form of religious cult in existence today, and one of the deadliest where the certainty of divine judgment is concerned, is that of Spiritism. The term, “Spiritualism” is used in order to be understood in today’s vernacular.

According to Dr. Marcus Bach, a liberal scholar who has investigated a great deal of spiritistic phenomena concludes that, “for those who believe, spiritualism leads to God”. Nothing could be further from the truth. The direct testimony of Scripture teaches us that Spiritism is the masquerade of demonic forces who pretend to be departed spirits with the intent of deceiving through the power of Satan those foolish enough to believe the testimony of demons in preference to the authority of the Word of God. One need only to read I Samuel 28 to learn that King Saul’s encounter with the medium of Endor brought divine condemnation and Saul’s death for God interrupted the séance, shocked the medium (verse 2) who was expecting the usual counterfeiting of personalities to speak to Saul of God’s displeasure and coming wrath.

All psychic or spiritistic phenomena cannot be dismissed as fraudulent. There is a spiritual dimension, which cannot be ignored. Serious spiritists draw their power from the one the Bible calls “a roaring lion” who seeks “whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8), who is Satan. Spiritism, as we shall see, directly contradicts the Bible, God’s Word. As well as constituting something akin to consumer fraud, spiritism also constitutes Biblical heresy.

Our sensitivity to the supernatural is so acute and complete that Duke University set up a special division for the study for extrasensory perception. There are other such centers for psychic research and the study of perception, which transcends the normal senses, but all are calibrated to achieve the same end – exploration of the psychic dimension.

The greatest of all source books on the subject of Spiritism is the Bible, which gives a historical outline of Spiritism in a most concise and dependable form.

Beginning in Exodus, Scriptures reveal that the ancient Egyptians were practitioners of occultism of magic sorcery and necromancy, which were utilized by the priests of the demon god of Egypt to duplicate the miracles of Moses when he appeared before Pharaoh with the divine command (Exodus 7:11,22; 8:18).

The attitude of God towards those who practice the forbidden sin is also clearly outlined in Scripture. The Lord ordered the death penalty for all sorcerers as recorded in Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:27, to cite two specific instances. The Old Testament also named as those cursed by God, persons consorting with “familiar spirits” and “wizards” (Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6), in our language demons and mediums.

Daniel the prophet often speaks of the magicians, sorcerers, soothsayers, and astrologers (Daniel 1:20; 2:27; 4:7; 5:7), who specialized along with the Chaldeans, in the art of interpreting dreams and visions. The prophet Isaiah also speaks of ancient spiritists as

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

casting sorceries upon Israel (Isaiah 8:19; 19:; 47:9), and King Saul, before his apostasy, under God's command drove such practitioners from Israel (I Samuel 28:3,9) as did the righteous King Josiah after him (II Kings 23:24,25).

The Bible also bears record that Manassah's downfall came about as the result of his delving into Spiritism (II Kings 21:6; II Chronicles 33:6) and his ensuing practice of idolatry in defiance of the command of God. The Bible then presents a devastating resume of man's forbidden desire to uncover the hidden spiritual mysteries of the universe, even if witchcraft, divination, or enchantments must be employed to farther his unholy quest. The Babylonians, Chaldeans, and the Canaanites, the Scriptures tell us, all practiced Spiritism and in some form has continued to this day. The modern rebirth of Spiritism began in 1848 in Hydesvill, N.Y., in the persons of Kate and Margaret Fox.

The "Seven Principles" of Spiritism are set forth as:

- I. The Fatherhood of God
- II. The Brotherhood of Man
- III. Continuous Existence
- IV. Communion of Spirits and Ministry of Angels
- V. Personal Responsibility
- VI. Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for Good and Evil Done on Earth
- VII. A Path of Endless Progression

Spiritism is opposed to all of the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith. It is deceptive and it is practiced by persons who willfully ignore God and His declared way of making men holy (through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ).

The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Unitarians

The Unitarian Universalist Church is more properly designated by Biblical Christians as a non-Christian cult. The Unitarians and Universalists merged in 1959. The organization has liberal and humanistic attitudes, beliefs, and practices.

The central theme of Unitarianism is that there is but one God, a solitary entity, who has revealed Himself through various means, men, and in the Bible, which is considered to be one among a number of divine books. The writings of Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, Lao, and Vedas and Upanishads are sources of revelation, none of which are infallible, but all of which contribute something to religious growth and development of mankind. Salvation is progressive in that it is essentially a matter of character development, joined with faith in God and good works, which are counted as means toward an end of final redemption.

Unitarians generally like to trace their history to apostolic times, especially to the council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) where the great Arian heresy enunciated a semi-Unitarian theme by denying the New Testament doctrine of the full Deity of Jesus Christ. In American history the Unitarian faith made itself known through work of such preachers as Jonathan Mayhew, 1720-1766, pastor of the West Church in Boston; Joseph Priestly 1774, Hosea Ballou, 1771-1852; William Ellery Channing, 1803, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1838.

Dr. Carl M. Chorowsky's statement of March 9, 1955 issue of Look magazine entitled "What is Unitarianism?" is an official statement of Unitarian theology.

1. The Doctrine of god and the Person of Christ.

In general, a Unitarian is a religious person whose ethic derives primarily from that of Jesus, who believed in one God, not the Trinity...Unitarians hold that the orthodox Christian world has forsaken the real, human Jesus of the Gospel, and has substituted a Christ of dogmatism, metaphysic, and pagan philosophy. Because Unitarians refuse to acknowledge Jesus as their Lord and God, they are excluded from the National Council of Churches of Christ.

Unitarians repudiate the doctrine and dogma of the Virgin Birth... Unitaritans do not believe that Jesus is not the Messiah, whether of Jewish hope or of Christian fantasy. They do not believe he is "God Incarnate", or the second person of the Trinity, as the final arbitrator at the end of time, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

2. The Doctrine of Sin and Redemption.

Unitarians recognize evil and man's responsibility for most of it...Because of the total depravity of man, supposedly, God sent His only begotten Son to the world to die for sinful men. Such doctrine Unitarians find UNBIBLICAL, even immoral. It is certainly inconsistent with the nature of God or the dignity of man, whom the Eternal One created in the image of God, to love with an everlasting love.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Unitarians believe in salvation of a character... God's help is not likely to come to those who cast all their burdens on the Lord. There is practical wisdom in the saying, "God helps those who help themselves"... If by heaven, you mean an abode of eternal light, where the saved and redeemed enjoy everlasting bliss, and if by hell, you mean the devil's eternal darkness, where the wicked suffer unending torment – then Unitarianism emphatically repudiates such beliefs.

The doctrine of revelation of the absolute and indisputable authority of the Bible is alien to Unitarian faith and teaching.

The Kingdom of the Cults Walter Martin

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Mormons

The Mormon church claims to possess the priesthods of Aaron and Melchizedek. They maintain that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdey received the Aaronic priesthood at the hand of John the Baptist on May 15, 1829, and that the “Melchizedek priesthood was conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdey through the ministration of Peter, James, and John shortly after the conferring of the Aaronic order”. These priestly orders are considered one and “without beginning of days or end of years”.

The Mormon concept of the priesthood, holds that God has placed in the church, presidents, apostles, high priests, seventies, elders, authorities. There is great stress placed on the priesthood, but it is not the priesthood described in the Bible.

There are two main branches, the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, organized from Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, based in Independence, Missouri. In addition to these a number of “fundamentalist” groups exist also.

The church was first organized on April 6, 1830, at Fayette, New York by Joseph Smith. From there they moved to Kirtland, Ohio, and then Jackson County, Missouri, because of opposition. They finally settled on the Mississippi River in Illinois.

On July 12, 1843, Smith received a revelation allowing for polygamy, which caused four disillusioned converts to organize an anti-Mormon newspaper. Smith was denounced on June 7, 1844, in this paper, the Nauvoo Expositor, in its single publication. For that the brothers of Smith burned down the newspaper office. Joseph and Hyran Smith were placed in Carthage, where on June 27, 1844, they were brutally murdered when a mob stormed the jail.

The majority chose Brigham Young as their leader. A minority rallied around the legal wife and family of Smith to form the Reorganized Church. Under the leadership of Young, the Mormons left Nauvoo in 1847 and went to Utah. For more than thirty years, he led the Mormon Church.

The dual foundation of Mormonism is that Joseph Smith received the golden plates upon which the ancient scriptures were alleged to have been written. Smith claims to have translated them and published them as the Book of Mormon in 1830. The substance of these continuing revelations is to be found in the Mormon publication The Doctrine and the Covenants, while Book of Mormon is to be found in The Pearl of Great Price. The Pearl of Great Price also contains the text of an Egyptian papyri which Joseph Smith claimed to have translated plus his translation of certain portions of the Bible. Together, The Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price form the basis of Mormon continuing revelation.

Mormonism teaches that God the Father has a body and that man’s destiny is to evolve to Godhood. This teaching is summed up in the popular Mormon saying, “As man is, God

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

once was: as God is, man may become". This belief includes a notion of preexisting souls who gain a body on earth and become human as part of the probationary experience which determines their future heavenly existence. Contrary to the teachings of the Bible, man's rebellion against God, known in Christian theology as the fall, is considered necessary. Mormon theology teaches that if Adam had not eaten the forbidden fruit, he would never have had children. Therefore to propagate the race and fulfill his heavenly destiny, Adam had to disobey God. Thus, in a very real sense it is the fall of man, which saved man. This doctrine is built into an evolutionary view of eternal progression, which reflects popular thinking and scientific speculation at the time of Joseph Smith. In keeping with the idea of probationary state the doctrine of justification by faith is rejected in Mormon theology in favor of salvation by works as the basis of determining one's future mode of existence. The purpose of Christ's atonement is then said to be the assurance that humans will be raised from the dead. At the resurrection, however, human beings will be assigned a place in one of the three heavenly realms according to the life they lived on earth.

The Mormon Church claims to be the only true church, because its leaders continue to receive revelations from God. In addition, it claims to possess the power of the priesthood of Aaron and Melchizedek into which its male members are expected to be initiated.

As a social organization the Mormon Church exhibits many admirable qualities. It promotes extensive welfare programs for members, operates a large missionary and education organization, and promotes family life. Mormons are expected to participate in what is known as "temple work". This involves proxy baptism for deceased ancestors and "celestial marriage". Mormons believe that in addition to temporal marriages, church members may be sealed to their families "for time and eternity" through a process known as celestial marriage.

During the 1960's the Mormon community was troubled by its denial of the priesthood to blacks. However, in 1978, the president of the church declared that he had received a new revelation which admitted blacks to the priesthood. Today one of the most troublesome issues within the Mormon Church is the place of women, who are also excluded from the priesthood.

As a new religious movement Mormonism represents a dynamic synthesis that combines frontier revivalism, intense religious experience, and popular evolutionary philosophies with a respect for Jesus and Christian ethics. This combination of beliefs holds strong attraction from many people uninterested or unschooled in Christian history or theology.

The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin
Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, Walter A. Elwell, editor

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Seventh Day Adventists

Seventh Day Adventism sprang from the period of the “Great second advent awakening” which shook the religious world just before the middle of the nineteenth century, when a reemphasis about the second advent of Christ was rampant in Britain and on the continent of Europe. Before long, many of the Old World views of prophetic interpretation crossed the Atlantic and penetrated American theological circles.

Primarily based on the books of Daniel and Revelation, the theology of the Advent Movement was discussed in newspapers as well as in theological journals. New Testament Eschatology competed with stock market quotation for front-page space, and the “seventy weeks”, “twenty-three hundred days”, and “the abomination of desolation” (Daniel 8,9) were common subjects of conversation.

Following the chronology of Archbishop Ussher, and interpreting the 2,300 days of Daniel as 2,300 years, many Bible students of various denominations concluded that Christ would come back about the year 1843. Of this studious number was one William Miller, a Baptist minister and resident of lower Hampton, New York. The great Second Advent movement, which swept the United States in the 1840’s, stemmed largely from the activities of William Miller, who confidently taught in the year 1818, that in “about” twenty-five years, i.e. 1843, Jesus Christ would come again. As Miller himself put it, “I was thus brought in 1818 at the close of my two year study of Scriptures to the solemn conclusion that in about twenty-five years from that time all affairs of our present state would be wound up”. Miller further wrote:

“I believe the time can be known by all who desire to understand and to be ready for His coming. And I am fully convinced that sometime between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation of time, Christ will come and bring all His saints with Him; and that then He will reward every man as His work shall be.”

At length, his associates set October 22, 1844, as the final date when Jesus Christ would return for His saints, visit judgment upon sin, and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

One need only read the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to realize that Miller was teaching in contradiction to the Word of God. Jesus said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36; also 24:42; 24:44; 25:13).

The Gospel of Mark also shows that dates cannot be set, for in verse 33 of chapter 13 our Lord stated, “Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is”. He rebukes those who set dates: “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” (Acts 1:17).

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

In order to understand the background of Seventh-day Adventist history and theology, we must look at the three segments of Millerism, which eventually united to form the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. Each of these groups held a distinct doctrine.

The group headed by Hiram Edson in western New York proclaimed the doctrine of the sanctuary as “embracing a special or final ministry of Christ in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly”, thus giving new meaning to the message, “the hour of God’s judgment has come”. The second group, headed by Joseph Bates, whose main following was in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, advocated the observance of the seventh day Sabbath “as involved in the keeping of the commandments of God”. The third group, in Maine, emphasized the “spirit of prophecy” or the “testimony of Jesus”, which they believed was to be manifested in the “remnant” (Revelations 14:6-12; also Revelations 12:17; 19:10), or “the last segment of God’s church of the centuries”. Between 1844 and 1847, the thinking of these three groups crystallized and was actively declared and promulgated in the writings of Hiram Edson, O.R.L. Crosier, Joseph Bates, James White and Ellen G. White.

According to the Tenets of the F.B.H. Church of God of the Americas, we indict Seventh-Day Adventism on four main counts:

1. They deny the Bible doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the only means of man’s salvation* (See footnote).
2. They teach that the Lord Jesus inherited a sinful nature⁺.
3. Seventh-Day Adventist believe in soul-sleep after death and conditional immortality.
4. They try to force the believer back under the law, and so away from grace, by their Sabbath teachings.

Our repudiation:

1. We have scriptures to confirm the complete atonement:
Hebrews 9:22 – Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.
Leviticus 17:11 – “The blood maketh atonement for the soul”.
I Peter 2:24 – Who His own self bore our sins in His body on the tree.

* According to Kingdom of the Cults author, Walter Martin, in their own statement they deny this misunderstanding concerning the atonement. They declare, “Seventh-Day Adventists do not believe that Christ made but partial or incomplete sacrificial atonement on the cross.” (III “The Atonement” 1,2,3.)

⁺ In their own statement of faith, they declare; “He was perfect and undefiled by sin, He was without spot or blemish...”. This was an error made by L.A. Wilson in March 1927 in “Signs of the Times” for which he was chided. He admitted to this in a letter dated April 26, 1957.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

I Peter 1:19 – Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

I John 1:7 – The blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth us from all sins.

2. God and Christ are one (John 10:30). How could Christ inherit a sinful and fallen nature? What a contemptuous denial of the Scripture. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. How could He at once be holy and undefiled and at the same time partake of our “fallen nature”, inherit what we as sinners inherited and be without sin?

Hebrews 7:26 – For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heaven.

Hebrews 4:15 – For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.

3. Will someone tell us the meaning of “natural immortality”, and who will preach it when we see folk dying around us every day? Will they tell us what Paul meant when he said, “absent from the body, present with the Lord”, and “to be with Christ”, which is far better?

The Bible says, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal”.

4. The Scriptures teach our position of freedom from the law. “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Romans 6:14.

Colossians 2:16 – Let no man therefore judge you... of a Sabbath day.

Again we read in Colossians 2:4, that the “handwriting of ordinance” was blotted out and nailed to Christ’s cross (as old bills were nailed to the doorpost when paid), for Christ has fulfilled the law on our behalf, met its every claim.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Annihilation of the Wicked and Conditional Immortality

One of the laws of science is that matter cannot be destroyed; how unthinkable is the annihilation of a spirit? Conditional Immortality when used by the Annihilationist means that life beyond the grave is conditional on accepting Christ. If one is in Christ at the resurrection, he rises to “Put on” Immortality, never more subject to death. If not in possession of salvation either before or after the resurrection, the soul ceases to exist, is annihilated or exterminated.

We utterly oppose this doctrine based on the Word of God. The Scripture clearly states that all will be raised (John 5:28,29), not all at one event, but in stages (I Thessalonians 4:16).

Revelations 6:9-11 – And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto everyone of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Revelations 20:12-15 – And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books ere opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Jehovah's Witness

Charles Taze Russell was the founder of what is now called Jehovah's Witness, an energetic administrator that brought about its far flung organization. The name Jehovah's Witnesses was given at Columbus, Ohio in 1931, to differentiate between the Watchtower and the true followers of Russell as represented by the Dawn Bible Students and Laymen's Home Missionary Movement.

C. Russell was born on February 16, 1852, the son of Joseph L. and Anna Eliza Russell, and spent most of his early years in Pittsburgh and Allegheny, Pennsylvania, where at the age of 25, he was known to be manager of several men's furnishing stores. At an early age, he rejected the doctrine of eternal torment, probably because of the severe indoctrination he had received as a Congregationalist, and as a result of this act entered upon a long and varied career of denunciation aimed at "Organized Religions".

In 1870, at the age of 18, Russell organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, which in 1876 elected him as "Pastor" of the group. From 1876 – 1878, the "Pastor" was assistant editor of a small Rochester, New York, monthly magazine, but resigned when a controversy arose over Russell's counter arguments on the "atonement" of Christ.

In 1879, Russell founded The Herald of the Morning, which developed into today's The Watchtower. In 1884, he incorporated the "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which in 1886 published the first in a series of seven books (Russell wrote six by himself), now entitled Studies in the Scriptures and originally published as The Millennial Dawn.

In 1917, following the death of Russell, The Finished Mystery was published. This caused a split in the organization, the larger group following J.L. Rutherford, the smaller remaining by itself. This group became "The Dawn Bible Students Association". Under Rutherford's leadership, the "Society" became known as "Jehovah's Witnesses". Rutherford was born in 1869 and died in 1942. Much of its present methodology is due to his leadership.

In 1981, the Jehovah's Witnesses were shaken by a series of schisms, which led to a large number leaving the organization. The leader of the opposition to the Brooklyn headquarters group was Professor James Penton, a Canadian, whose family had been among Russell's earliest converts. Penton and those who sided with him sought to reemphasize the doctrine of justification by faith and return to its original interest in Bible Study. The intention of Penton and other Witnesses who shared his ideas appears to have been to reform the group from within. The Brooklyn leadership strongly rejected their arguments and expelled anyone who supported their views.

In 1950, the Witnesses produced their own translation of the Scriptures. They have yet to name the translators or prove their credentials as competent scholars. What we find is a rendering of the Bible in terms of the theology of the organization (The New World Translation).

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Let God be True is a good introduction to their theology.

- 1) They reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity
- 2) In their view the atonement is a ransom paid to Jehovah by Jesus Christ which removes the effects of Adam's sins, laying the foundation for a new righteousness and enabling men to save themselves by their good works.
- 3) They teach that Jesus was resurrected a divine spirit after offering this ransom to God.
- 4) At death humans either sleep until the resurrection or, if they are evil, suffer annihilation.
- 5) In their view Jesus Christ returned to earth spiritually in 1914 and is now proceeding to overthrow Satan's worldly organization and to establish a theocratic millennial kingdom. This kingdom will arrive in the near future with the battle of Armageddon.
- 6) After Armageddon, true believers will be resurrected to life on earth while a select group of 144,000 will rule in heaven with Christ.

In addition to holding these doctrines, Jehovah's Witnesses reject a professional ministry and until recently, the idea of church buildings. They are pacifists and call on their members to have nothing to do with worldly politics.

See: Tenets of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas
The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin
Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, W.A. Elwell, editor

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Roman Catholicism

We are opposed to the fundamental teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

1. They discourage the reading of the Scripture among adherents.
2. They teach and believe in transubstantiation. They maintain that when the priest blesses the wine and bread during the Lord's Supper, that it is transformed into the actual body and blood of our Lord. I Corinthians 11:24 – Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of me”.
3. They believe in the Immaculate Conception or that the Virgin Mary was conceived without sin just like Jesus.

There is no Scripture to uphold this view. They pray to Mother Mary and ask her to intercede for them. However, the Bible makes it clear that “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

They also believe in the infallibility of the Pope. When he speaks concerning the church or laws of the Church (Ex-cathedra), his words are infallible.

We believe that there is no human being that is infallible and that God is the only absolutely perfect, infallible being.

In most uncompromising language the Roman Catholic Church deliberately teaches, despite the statement of Scripture to the contrary, that in the sacrifice of the mass the priest makes a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people. The Scripture says, “By this man after He offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right had of God” (Hebrews 10:12).

We abhor the doctrine of purgatory. The priest may be summoned to the bed of a dying man, administer to him the last rite of the church, extreme unction, and solemnly pronounces full and final absolution; and yet after the man is dead money may be paid by friends or relatives so that masses will be said to shorten the period of his torment in purgatory.

This is utterly absurd and has no Scripture to warrant such a belief. All we fail to do while we are living to gain salvation cannot be done after we are dead. We believe that at death the spirit or soul of the believer goes into Divine presence, and is forever with the Lord. Paul declares “that to depart to be with Christ, which is far better”. There is not any chance for repentance after death for anyone. The wicked dead will only be raised to appear for the final judgment.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

Antinomianism

Antinomianism is the belief that a church organization is not necessary and that records should not be kept. This belief would undermine the whole structure of the Christian church. The Bible plainly teaches us that in business be men, and how could we carry on the business of the church without an organization or records?

So-called Resurrected Life

This is another way of expressing reincarnation. We die and return in some other form in a resurrected life. The Bible teaches – “It is once appointed unto man to die and after death the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Absolute Perfection

Absolute perfection is one of the attributes of God that cannot be transferred to man. Only God is absolutely perfect. Man may attain Christian perfection. That is to say, he can live all he knows and that is Christian perfection. Absolute perfection is one of the immutable attributes of God and cannot be transferred to man.

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

There are other doctrines, which are dangerous to the faith because they are in error.

The teaching of Jesus only is in error. While we do not find the word Trinity in Scripture, the concept is there and is clearly seen. Jesus himself told His disciples to “baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19-20). While they argue that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are titles, not names, the command of Jesus is very clear. Neither person in the Trinity can be denied His rightful place in the plan of redemption as God set it up in the eternity before the creation. John declares, that if we abide in the doctrine of Christ, we have both the Father and the Son (II John 7-11).

Please note the following:

1. The plural noun Elohim (God) with a singular verb (bara) created in Genesis 1:1.
2. The expression “Let us make” in Genesis 1:26.
3. The priestly benediction in Numbers 6:24-27.
4. The Tersanctur or Trisagion in Isaiah 6:3 and Revelations 4:8.
5. The formula of baptism in Matthew 28:19.
6. The Apostolic benediction in II Corinthians 13:14.

Outline Studies in Christian Doctrine by George P. Pardington

**PART 1
WHO WE ARE**

Basis of Union

Section 9

Fellowship

The Scripture teaches us that no two can walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3).

Basis of Union

Section 10

Marriage

The Bible clearly expresses God's intentions for marriage. In marriage, a man and a woman are meant to find fulfillment that is both spiritual and sexual. This relationship was marred by mankind's fall into sin. The history of Israel tells of changes that effected marriage because the Israelites chose to accept the degrading practices of their ungodly neighbors.

Jesus reaffirmed what marriage means. He rebuked the Jews' attitude toward divorce, and challenged marriage partners to live in harmony with one another.

We should notice these Bible passages that describe the purpose of marriage. Scripture gives a full-orbed view of the privileges and duties of the marriage bond.

Marriage is Divinely Established. God first created a pair of human beings, a man and a woman. His first command to them was, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

By putting this couple together, God instituted marriage, the most basic of all social relationships. Marriage enabled mankind to fulfill God's command to rule and replenish the earth.

God made both the male and the female in His image, each with a special role and each complemented by the other. Genesis 2, tells us that God created the man first. Then, using a rib from the man, God made a "help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). When God brought Eve to Adam, He joined them together and said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24).

God intended marriage to be a permanent relationship. It was to be a unique covenantal commitment of two people that excluded all others from its intimacy. God expressly forbade the breaking of that union when He gave the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). The New Testament reaffirms the uniqueness of the marriage bond. Jesus said that a man and his wife "are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew `9:6).

Paul beautifully compared the love of man for his wife to the love of Christ for His church (Ephesians 5:25). He said that Christ's love was so deep that He died for the church, and in the same way a man's love for his wife should overcome any sense of the imperfections she may have.

PART 1 WHO WE ARE

Marriage is more than a contract that two people make for their mutual benefit. Because they make their marriage vows in God's presence and in His name, they may draw power from God to fulfill those vows. God becomes a supporting party to the marriage. Proverbs reminds us of this when it says that God gives wisdom, discretion, and understanding so that marriage partners can avoid being lured into unfaithfulness (cf. Proverbs 2:6-16). New Testament writers understood that Christian marriage is created and maintained by Christ.

Marriage Marked by Love. Above all else, love is to mark the union. Note the simplicity with which Scripture describes the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah: "(He) took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her" (Genesis 24:67). Love, based on true friendship and respect, seals and sustains the marriage bond. Peter calls husbands to "dwell with them (your wives) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life" (I Peter 3:7). When this kind of love exists between a man and wife, it purifies their marriage relationship.

The Bible says that husband and wife are equal as persons before God, since both have been made in God's image. Both can be saved from their sins through Jesus (Genesis 1:28; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:10-11). Together they receive God's gifts and blessings for their marriage (Romans 4:18-21; Hebrews 11:11; I Peter 3:5-7). When they join in marriage, they both have the obligations, though they may have varying degrees of ability to perform the responsibilities they share.

Marriage is Sexually Fulfilling. Another factor in the marriage relationship is the sexual union of the partners. Sexual union consummates marriage on the basis of a mutual matrimonial commitment. The expression, "he knew his wife" (Genesis 4:1,25, and other places), is the Bible's straightforward way of referring to sexual intercourse. But the Bible treats this act with dignity, calling it honorable and undefiled (Hebrews 13:4). Scripture calls on God's people to keep their sexual relations pure. They are not to use sex to fulfill lustful passions, as the ungodly do (I Thessalonians 4:3-7). Scripture encourages a married man to delight in the wife of his youth all his life (Ecclesiastes 9:9). He is to be "ravished always with her love" (Proverbs 5:15-19).

Marriage is a Spiritual Symbol. Marriage symbolized the union between God and His people. Israel was called the Lord's wife, and the Lord Himself said, "I was a husband unto them" (Jeremiah 31:43; cf. Isaiah 54:5). Prophets declared that the nation had committed "fornication" and "adultery" when it turned from God to idols (Numbers 25:1; Judges 2:17; Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:17; Hosea 1:2). They said that God had divorced His "Unfaithful wife" (Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8) when He sent Israel away into captivity. Yet God had compassion on His "wife", Israel, and called "her" back to be faithful (Isaiah 54). As a bridegroom delights in his bride (Isaiah 62:4-5), so the Lord delights to make Israel the "holy people", His redeemed ones (Isaiah 62:12).

The New Testament describes the church as the bride of Christ, preparing herself for life in the eternal kingdom (Ephesians 5:23). This image underlines the truth that marriage

PART 1
WHO WE ARE

ought to be an exclusive and permanent union of life and fidelity. Husbands should love their wives as Christ loves His ransomed bride, and wives should submit to their husbands, as they submit to Christ.

**PART 1
WHO WE ARE**

Basis of Union

Section 11

The Basis of Union of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas is like the Constitution of the United States of America. It cannot be changed by the local church, annual convention, or even the General Council alone. There must be representation from each of the local churches in order to consider a change in the Basis of Union.

PART 2

HOW WE FUNCTION

Introducing Our Church Government

Objectives

1. To introduce the Episcopal form of church government in its simplest form.
2. To explain in simple form the duties of various district officers.
3. To explain the functions of the auxiliaries of the local church.
4. To explain the local church's responsibilities to the general church.
5. To explain the general church's responsibilities to the local church.

Introducing Our Church Government

The form of church government that our organization takes is that of an episcopacy. An Episcopal form of church government has as its human head officers called bishops. These officers have the responsibility of providing spiritual and temporal leadership in the work of the church in general.

There is no right of succession of bishops in the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas. They make no claim of being successors to the apostles. They only perform the functions of the apostles in the sense that they appoint men and women, according to their gifts, to serve and carry out the Great Commission. They also have the responsibility of investing general monies in such a manner that they will do the greatest good.

The area over which a bishop presides is called a diocese. The diocese is divided into districts, which are headed by presiding elders.

We feel that no matter the name given to the officers this is the functional pattern of leadership from New Testament times. We see such a pattern in the pastoral epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles.

The Bishops of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas also preside at the meeting of the Quadrennial Council and the Annual Conventions.

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

Job Descriptions

Overview

Elder

It shall be the duty of the Ruling Elders to preach the Word, giving their time, talent, and influence for the spreading of the Fire Baptized Holiness Doctrine throughout their respective districts...

District President

The work of the District Missionary President shall be to visit or write to encourage active and inactive missionary fields; see that missions are properly organized; conduct meetings, etc.

Y.P.I. Supervisor*

It shall be the duty of the District Y.P.I. Supervisor to direct the evangelism of youth across the district. The Ambassadors for Christ shall assist her in this work.

Directors of Junior Missionaries

The Directors of Junior Missionaries shall direct the projects of the national junior missionaries on the district. She shall also assist the local chapters in performing their local duties.

Directors of Religious Education (D.R.E.)

Shall assist the Presiding Elder in the development of a district religious educational program. The D.R.E. shall preside over the organization of the H.Y.P.U. Convention⁺ with the District President and Y.P.I. Supervisor assisting.

District Editor

It shall be the duty of the District Editor to report all newsworthy items on the district to the Editor of the True Witness.

District Evangelist

Shall be at the disposal of those who feel the need. Under the direction of the Presiding Elder he/she may be called upon to establish churches. The Presiding Elder may assign other duties.

Ambassador for Christ

Shall assist the Y.P.I. Supervisor in whatever manner she determines will fill the greatest need for the winning of souls of youth.

* Y.P.I. – Young People’s Institute

⁺ H.Y.P.U. – Holiness Young People’s Union

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

Auxiliaries of the F.B.H. Church

The Trustee Board has the responsibility of seeing that the church's property is properly deeded according to state law and in accordance with denominational policy. These papers should be kept in a safety deposit box so that they will not be lost or otherwise misplaced. They should be made readily available for inspection by a new pastor or presiding elder.

The position of trustee is one of function more than authority. Where certain decisions must be made concerning the church's property the pastor may bring the board of deacons into the picture. There are some decisions, which may require the input of the entire local church, district, or general church. In such cases of the body (local, district, or general) they always report promptly to the proper party or parties.

It is the responsibility of the trustees to take care of the church's property. They should see that all facilities are well kept and see that the funds are raised to support the facility. Of course trustees cannot do these things alone. We must all contribute in all ways possible.

The Mother Board assists in enforcing the rules and regulations of the church. They assist in the instruction of younger women. They also prepare and assist with the Lord's Supper.

The Deacon Board has the responsibility of assisting the pastor as he/she carries out his/her spiritual and temporal duties. The deacon also has the responsibility of enforcing the rules and regulations of the church. He should bring charges where there are infractions in order to encourage members to lead holy lives.

The Finance Board has the responsibility of taking care of the pastor and visiting ministers. It is the duty of this board to see that the pastor's needs are taken care of according to the fullest extent of the ability of the local congregation in question. The finance board should care for the church's ministerial guest or special occasions i.e. bishop's visits, elder's official visits, district president, revivals, and other special occasions. The finance board also takes care of general days.

The Sunday School is the primary educational agency of the church. It deserves and requires the attendance and attention of all members of the body. Sunday School is an expression of our stewardship of the Word of God. We learn how to lead a soul to Christ, how to cheer a brother, how to encourage a sister, and how to live lovingly in the body. The Sunday School also assists the missionary department in its support of Fuller Normal School.

The Missionary Department is dedicated to the support of education and missionaries. Missionaries are essential to the spread of the gospel. The missionary department supports the training of young minds and the training of ministers and Christian workers.

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

The missionary department along with the Sunday School department supports the Fuller Normal School in Greenville, South Carolina.

The training arm of the missionary department is the Junior Missionary Department (for persons 35 years and under). It is important that the young learn to perform missionary work and to do it.

The H.Y.P.U. and Y.P.I. Departments are training and outreach organizations. The Holiness Young People's Union is an organization designed to interest young people in the things of Christ. The Y.P.I. sponsors a leadership-training institute (Youth Congress) annually at Fuller Normal School in Greenville, South Carolina. The H.Y.P.U. teaches saved young people the principles of holiness and all phases of F.B.H. Church work.

You may want to have a Kitchen Committee if your church has a fellowship hall. This committee supervises the general operation of the fellowship hall. They see that appliances, equipment, tables, and floors are left clean after each use. This committee also bears the responsibility of seeing that all utensils and equipment remain in the fellowship hall.

The original purpose of the Pastor's Aid Board was to assist the pastor in the purchase of books and other material needed for ministry. Today, it has expanded into all areas of assistance to the pastor, which enable him/her to do a better job.

The Usher Board is important to the image of your church. Properly attired, warm, friendly ushers are the first line of defense against visitors feeling lost and unaccepted. These front line people have the ministry of hospitality and help maintain orderliness during worship.

Choirs have a ministry of praise and worship. They assist the pastor in his/her worship leadership. Singing in the choir should never be taken lightly.

The Benevolent Committee assists the pastor and congregation in helping bereaved families deal with the death of a loved one. They come to the scene or home as soon as possible to lend spiritual, emotional and physical support where necessary. They also assist with the purchase of flowers or other condolences. These persons should be carefully chosen.

General Church Responsibilities

Annual and Sunday School Conventions

Elders, pastors, ministers, and district officers report to the Annual, and Sunday School conventions. Churches also report to these conventions.

Sisters of Charity Convention

The district president and churches report to the Sisters of Charity conventions.

Youth Congress

A district contestant competes on the national level at the Youth Congress. Each district also contributes penny-a-day money collected from each church on the district.

General Days

There are general days on the church's yearly calendar. Monies raised on these days are sent to the general church to support certain national church programs, Fuller Normal School (Founder's Day), and the General Council (every four years). These days are usually set at the Annual convention.

The General Church has the responsibility of providing leadership at all levels of clergy participation including pastoral. Nowhere in Scripture is the local church told to choose its own pastor. Paul give Titus the qualifications and the authority to appoint men of God to lead the flock.

Missionaries are sent out under the auspices of the general church. It is our way of "going into all the world". Very few of our local churches could support missionaries, but pooling our resources through the general church makes it possible.

Sometimes local churches are helped financially by the general church.

Article IV.
General Rules

Objectives

1. To encourage all of our members to lead disciplined Christian lives.
2. To encourage all members to study Scriptures in order to properly conduct themselves.
3. To encourage our members to live in such a manner that we bring glory to Christ.
4. To encourage our members to dress modestly.
5. To encourage our members to honor the Lord's Day.
6. To teach our members how to conduct themselves in the body of Christ.
7. To teach our members how to conduct themselves outside the body of Christ biblically and according to Fire Baptized distinctives.
8. To teach our members to tithe.
9. To teach our members to witness – not just how to witness but to witness.
10. To set forth the requirements of a practical holiness.
11. To keep members reminded of their spiritual, moral, and ethical responsibility to the body of Christ.

Preface to General Rules

A church having rules today is thought by the world to be something out of the Middle Ages. Such a church is thought by other churches to be bringing men back under the law. The rules of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas are biblical. These rules are intended to assist the Christian in his drawing near to Christ and in his presenting himself as a witness, without spot, before the world.

The Bible presents all we need to know to live a changed life, to witness effectively in this present world, and to have eternal life in the world to come. In light of man's disregard for the Word of God, we feel it necessary to bring to the attention of the believers, specifically some things which point out man's propensity to live to the flesh and his clamoring for the things of the world. Not only do we feel it necessary to point out some specific inclinations but we feel those things should be eliminated from our lives.

Membership in the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas is predicated upon a person's having received Christ as his personal savior. Water baptism or the study of the catechism does not make one a Christian. As important as these things may be, a person must be born again (John 3:5).

There are those who feel they can be Christians with "selective" obedience to God's word. We believe that God gave His word for man's good and that man is at his best when he lives in subjection to God's word. It is a necessity that we take the word of God as our rule of conduct. "Why call me Lord, Lord and do not the things I say". It is not unthinkable that the church should involve itself in the lifestyles of its members in order that the light of Christ should shine through without shadow (Acts 15:19,20).

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas stands without apology against things such as membership in secret societies, gaudy and inappropriate dress, worldliness, and false doctrines.

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

General Rules

Section 1.

No one shall be admitted to membership of this church who is not in full accord with the teachings of the same as set forth in the Basis of Union.

Section 2.

No one shall hold office in this church who is not a member.

Section 3.

Provision is hereby made for those that are in the experience of scriptural justification with fruits. They may become a member of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas with the common consent of the church, endorsed by the pastor of the same, provided the applicant is seeking sanctification and agonizing after the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire.

Section 4.

In accordance with these professions, all who remain with us shall take as their rule of conduct the word of God (Galatians 5:16-17), and shall conform outwardly as well as inwardly in their daily walk and observation to its simple teachings (Deuteronomy 22:5).

Section 5.

We are commanded in God's word not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and to have no communication or fellowship with the unfruitful workers of darkness, such as oath bound secret societies (James 5:12; II Corinthians 6:14-17), social clubs, and corrupt partisan politics (Ephesians 5:11; II Timothy 3:1-5). Not to be conformed to this world, but to be separate (II Corinthians 6:17), and to even turn away from those who have the form of Godliness but denying the power thereof (II Timothy 3:5). To cleanse ourselves from filthiness of the flesh and spirit (II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:18; I Corinthians 3:16), such as smoking, chewing tobacco, dipping snuff. No intake of narcotics, nor intoxicants whatsoever. Refrain from filthiness of speech, showing the wrong spirit, foolish talking, jesting or the use of profane and slang language (Ephesians 5:1-13), and the practice of homosexuality (Genesis 19:5,13; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13,15,16; Deuteronomy. 23:17, Romans 1:24-32, I Corinthians 6:9, II Corinthians 6:19). To abstain from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:23), and to do all we do to the glory of God and in the name of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 10:31-32; Colossians 3:17). To wear no outward adorning such as earrings, bracelets, necklaces (unless a cross is attached) (Genesis 35:4; Hosea 2:13, I Timothy 2:9; I Peter 3:3-4).

Women should not wear short skirts nor short-sleeved dresses, but are to dress in modest apparel. The wearing of pants in any form (long, short, or in-between) is prohibited unless employment requires this manner of attire for protection. A change in attire must take place before leaving the employment area (Deuteronomy 22:5; Ephesians 5:1; I Corinthians 6:12-15).

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

Saints of God must never enter gambling casinos, dancing halls, movies, nor houses of ill repute. No member of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God is permitted to attend any kind of sports activity on the Lord's Day. We must refrain from following after anything that is calculated to destroy our spirituality (I Corinthians 10:23-24; I John 2:14,16). Mothers, Deacons, Pastors, and Elders are to be held responsible for the enforcing of the rules.

Section 6.

Every member of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas shall be required to observe the Lord's Day according to the teachings of Jesus and Holy Apostles, and to abstain from doing their own pleasure thereon such as buying or selling on Sunday, etc., except that it be absolutely necessary to the glory of God (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2). Every minister shall abstain from manual labor on the Lord's Day and Deacons likewise, except it be absolutely necessary for the glory of God, and the good of the cause and of the person(s) concerned.

Section 7.

To abstain from mentioning the faults of an absent person, and to refuse to listen to those who do except it be absolutely necessary for the glory of God, and the good of the cause and of the person(s) concerned.

Section 8.

The tenth is the Lord's and each member shall be responsive to paying his or her tithes and to giving a liberal offering. Thus saith the Lord! (Genesis 28:22; 14:20; Leviticus 27:31; Malachi 3:8,12; Matthew 23:23; Numbers 18:21,24; Deuteronomy 14:28,29)

Section 9.

All members are required to be patterns of frugality, diligence, faith, and charity, taking up the cross daily and living true to the abiding baptism of the Holy Ghost (Genesis 41:35-36; John 6:12; I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Peter 3:14; Genesis 39:6; II Kings 12:15; Daniel 6:4).

Section 10.

To witness on all suitable occasions, even if it costs our lives, to what the Lord has done for us, especially to sanctification, divine healing, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire (Isaiah 43:10; John 15:27; Acts 5:20; Acts 18:19; Titus 2:15).

Section 11.

Anyone who has two living husbands or wives, not living with either, can become a member. Divorce does not justify anyone with a living mate to marry again (Matthew 5:31-32; Romans 7:1-6).

Section 12.

In accordance with the scripture "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas is opposed to abortion and mercy killing (Deuteronomy 5:17; Proverbs 6:16-17; Jeremiah 1:5).

PART 2
HOW WE FUNCTION

Section 13.

All Elders, Pastors, Evangelists, and Workers are charged with the responsibility of thoroughly informing all members of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas of everything set down, directly or indirectly in the General and Judiciary Rules, and shall deal faithfully with everyone (Titus 2:1-10).

Section 14.

Any Pastor neglecting charges given to him/her or deserting the same shall be dealt with as neglect of duty.

Section 15.

The pastor shall be called in question at the Annual District Convention as to how he/she has sustained the General and Judiciary Rules. If they are not sustained by him/her, he/she shall be dealt with as neglect of duty.

These are the General Rules of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas, and we believe them to be in accordance with the teachings of God's Word and are, therefore, for the good of our souls and for the glory of God.

PART 3

OUR WALK AND OUR WORK

Objectives

1. To explain the meaning of the New Birth concisely.
2. To concisely explain the meaning of sanctification.
3. To concisely explain the meaning of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.
4. To explain the meaning and importance of water baptism.
5. To explain the meaning and importance of the Lord's Supper.
6. To introduce the discipline of prayer with a view to developing a lifelong habit of prayer.
7. To introduce the discipline of Bible Study with a view of growing from milk to meat.
8. To teach members how to make Bible Study meaningful.
9. To encourage respect of the deepest kind for the Bible as the Word of God.
10. To teach all members the discipline of total stewardship.
11. To teach our members to tithe and give a generous offering.
12. To teach our members to serve in the body of Christ.
13. To teach our members the stewardship of witnessing.
14. To promote a healthy biblical regard for family life among ourselves and others.
15. To provide specific tools for witnessing.

The New Birth

Conversion has the meaning in Scripture of turning from the direction traveled or a change of mind. The change is so radical that it can only be described in terms of a new birth.

The phrase “born of God” is found primarily in the writings of John (John 1:13; I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18). The new birth is not brought about by any natural process. It is God working through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who believe and receive the Son (John 1:12-13). The new birth makes us children of God and transforms us morally. One that is born of God does what is right (I John 2:29). Scriptural righteousness is spoken of only in terms of doing right. We may fail at times, but no one who is born of God keeps on sinning. When we keep on sinning we are sinners. New life is implanted within our hearts the seed of God.

Another expression of new life is found in our love for one another (I John 4:7; 5:1-2). Love and purity of life must follow the new birth. We who have become God’s children through faith are destined to grow into Christ’s likeness.

There are and have been many religions. Of them all, Christianity is the only one that definitely makes virtue, purity, honesty, justice, unselfishness, charity, love, and service integral parts of the religious system. It is not only a new faith, a new relationship but a new life.

A Christian has made the following changes:

- From unbelief to belief
- From disobedience to obedience
- From unforgiven to forgiven
- From alien to child of God
- From one with neither promise nor hope to one with a hope definitely based on God’s promise
- From one out of Christ to one in Christ
- From lost to saved
- From death to life

In light of this changed life we must live a transformed life in this present world (Romans 12:2).

We have a new standard. No one has ever found a flaw in Christ. It is he who is our standard. We are to strive not just to be Christians but, to be Christ-like. We are to measure our behavior by “What would Christ do?”

We have a new hope, a new outlook, a new incentive, a new purpose, a new reward, new duties and responsibilities, and new obligations.

Sanctification

Sanctification is the second definite instantaneous work of faith in the fully justified (or born again) believer. It is a definite experience like being born again. Inborn sin is destroyed in the soul, and the heart completely cleansed from sin. (Hebrews 10:4-9)

In sanctification, the born-again believer is cleansed by the Holy Spirit with the blood of Christ. We see in I Thessalonians 5:23 that it is Paul's desire that God sanctify the believers thoroughly. The writer of Hebrews argues that the blood of Jesus sanctifies within.

Paul says that the saints' whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved unto the coming of the Lord (I Thessalonians 5:23). An adequate understanding of the doctrines of sanctification is necessary for living our faith in this present world. Our bodies must be cleansed so that they become temples of the Holy Spirit.

There are those who contend that sanctification is a progressive work. To them we say, If Paul says for the preservation of the saints' spirits, souls, and bodies, they could not be preserved blameless in the process. That would negate our "blameless" standing. If we are preserved blameless, we must be blameless before preservation. We do not speak in terms of sinless perfection for this is a quality that can only be associated with God Himself. We must attain Christian perfection.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a definite experience like conversion and sanctification and the initial evidence of the reception of this experience is speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4).

The Bible shows conclusively that a person must be sanctified in order to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Peter said, speaking before the Jerusalem Council, of the Gentile Pentecost at Caesera, “And God which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8,9). The word purifying in the original text is the aorist tense, which denotes definite completed action. Rendered literally it is, “... having purified their hearts by faith”.

A person receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost will initially speak with new tongues. This does not mean that the person will continuously speak in tongues throughout his life nor does it mean he has the gift of tongues. In cases where persons claim the gift of tongues, there must be interpretation or silence in the public (I Corinthians 14:26-28).

The Lord's Supper

The New Testament teaches that Christians must partake of Christ in the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-32; Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-23; Mark 14:22-25). In a remarkable discourse Jesus said that His disciples had to eat of Him if they were to have eternal life (John 6:53-57). Jesus used the occasion of the feeding of the five thousand to tell the multitude that they should not be as concerned about perishable food as that which lasts forever. That food would be His body and blood – not literally but symbolically and sacramentally. Through faith in Him and partaking of Him they would live forever.

The setting for the institution of the Lord's Supper was the Passover meal that Jesus celebrated with His disciples in remembrance of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Matthew 26:17; John 13:1; Exodus 13:1-10). In calling the bread and the wine His body and blood, and saying "Do this in remembrance of me", Jesus was naming Himself the true lamb of the Passover whose death would deliver God's people from the bondage of sin. Thus Paul writes, "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed" (I Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29).

In Luke 22:20, Jesus declares that, not only does he introduce a new covenant, but He also lets it be known to His disciples that it is for them that He sheds His blood.

After the Passover meal with the disciples, Luke records that Jesus gives a discourse on servant hood (Luke 22:24-30). John records that Jesus became the object lesson of the discourse by girding Himself with a towel and performing the task usually set aside for the lowest servant in the house – He washed their feet (John 13:4-17).

In recognition of the atoning work of Christ every Christian should take the Lord's Supper. This symbolic representation is not to be taken lightly. The Apostle Paul warned the Corinthian saints against taking the Lord's Supper lightly (I Corinthian 11:23-32). He admonished them to self-examination and an attitude of love and sharing. The consequences of not doing this were already evident among them – sickness and physical death.

Water Baptism

The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas believes that water baptism is necessary to perfect obedience in the life of the believer. We do not believe that the Scriptures teach baptismal regeneration – that is we are born again when we are baptized in the water.

We believe that baptism is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost according to Matthew 28:18,19. This is the formula that Jesus gave to his disciples before he went back to heaven. In the apostolic church baptism automatically followed acceptance of Christ in obedience to His command.

The English word baptize comes from the Greek verb “baptizo” which implies immersion since it is derived from “bapto” meaning “to dip in or under”. When this particular form of the word is used it carries with it the idea of immersion. John baptized in the river Jordan (Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5) and “in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there” (John 3:23).

Baptism is symbolic of Christ’s death and resurrection. Jesus’ suffering, death and burial (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50), and subsequent resurrection are represented by baptism (Romans 6:3-5). We identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ through baptism.

Prayer

Prayer is vital to the life of the Christian. It is not one of those things we can take or leave. The possibilities and necessity of prayer, its power and results are manifested in the revelation of God's power in the answer.

Prayer can be understood as both a gift and a task. God takes the initiative (Ezekiel 3:1-2; Psalms 50:3-4), but man must respond. Prayer is a very personal matter and at the same time a dialogue between two persons. It entails revealing our innermost selves to God but also God's revelation of His desires to us (Proverbs 1:23).

Prayer cannot be contained in formulas and techniques. True prayer bursts through all forms and techniques. This is because it has its grounding in the Spirit of God, who cannot be encased in a sacramental box or a ritualistic formula.

In the Scriptures petition and intercession are primary, though adoration, thanksgiving, and confession also have a role. Petition is found in every form of prayer. Biblical prayer is crying to God out of the depths; it is the pouring out of the soul before God (I Samuel 1:15; Psalms 88:1-2; 130:1-2; 142:1-2; Lamentations 2:19; Matthew 7:7-8; Philippians 4:6; Hebrews 5:7). Prayer may take the form of importunity, passionate pleading to God, even wrestling with God.

God's ultimate will is unchanging, but the way in which he chooses to realize His will is dependent on the prayers of His children. We share our needs and desires with God so that we might be more fully conformed to His ultimate will and purpose.

Christian prayer is both corporate and individual. We find God in solitude but we never remain in this state. We seek to unite our sacrifices of praise and our petitions and intercessions with those of the company of fellow believers. The man or woman of prayer may find God in solitude and in fellowship. Even in solitude we believe that we are not alone but surrounded by a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), the saints and angels of the church triumphant whom we meet in the Scriptures.

We are called to present personal and individual needs to God, but at the same time we are urged to intercede for the whole company of the saints (John 17:20-21; Ephesians 6:18) and also for the world at large (I Timothy 2:1-2). Biblical spirituality entails not withdrawal from the turmoil of the world, but identification with the world in its shame and affliction. Personal petition would become egocentric if it were not held in balance with intercession, adoration, and thanksgiving.

The goal of prayer is not absorption into the being of God, but the transformation of the world for the glory of God. We yearn for the blessed vision of God, but even more we seek to bring our wills and the wills of all people into conformity with the purposes of God. We pray not simply for personal happiness or for protection, but for the advancement and extension of the Kingdom of God.

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

Jesus felt it necessary to pray during His earthly ministry. At various strategic points in His ministry, Jesus prayed. Jesus prayed at His baptism (Luke 3:21,22). Jesus prayed before selecting His apostles (Luke 6:12-16). Jesus was in prayer when the transfiguration took place (Luke 9:28, 29). He spoke with Moses and Elijah concerning His coming death on the cross. In the immediate shadow of the cross, Jesus prayed (Matthew 26:36-42).

Jesus' life was one of intercession. He came down to man, to die at the hand of man for the sake of man. It is no wonder that we have John 17, Jesus' prayer of intercession for His own and all who would believe through them.

The development of a prayer life in today's busy world may be difficult, but must not be neglected. Just as we develop a relationship on the human level through communication, we must do the same in the spiritual realm through prayer.

Choose a time and place of prayer. This will help you get into the attitude of prayer more easily, especially for the new Christian. Do not worry about "getting it right" at first. The important thing is to be at that appointed place talking with God. Learn to pray by reading the great prayers found in the Scriptures and by conversation with more mature contemporary saints. In addition to developing your personal prayer life attend prayer meeting and Bible Study at your local church. You must not only draw nigh to God as an individual, but also in your place as a member of the body of Christ.

Your Bible

From the account of creation in Genesis to the Apocalypse of John, the Bible gives us an overall picture of God's dealings with man. It does not record primarily what man thinks about God, but what God has to say to man – about sin and its consequences, about God's justice and mercy and love, and about His Son.

Christians should need little reminding of the centrality of the Bible in their lives. While we readily recognize the importance of the Scripture in our heads, our hearts are far from it. If we are to grow into full maturity, we must take seriously the Word of God. We must allow it to permeate our entire beings.

The Bible is important because our beliefs must be determined by the message of the Bible. We must also be able to see some things we believe to be biblical are in fact not true to Scripture. We must not conform to the standards of the times in spite of the pressures we may feel. Our behavior must be molded by Scripture. The clear rights and wrongs are to be obeyed as surely today as the day they were written.

The Bible is described as a lamp, milk, a sword, and a seed. The psalmist declares, "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalms 119:105). God's Word gives light for the path of life. It gives us guidance for daily living. The writer of Psalms 119 was talking about a little oil lamp – not a floodlight. His lamp was one that would show you enough of the way ahead on a dark night for a few steps at a time in safety. That is usually the way God guides us – step by step.

Peter invites us to "be like newborn babies, always thirsty for the spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may grow up" (I Peter 2:2). The spiritual milk of which Peter speaks is the Bible. He pinpoints the main thing about milk – it is food for growth. Milk is the first and most important food for every child. It is balanced. It enables healthy growth for the bones and muscles. In the same way, the Bible is balanced food for the muscles of our faith. It helps us grow spiritually strong and mature. We should not stay like babies in our faith and knowledge, but we should always have a baby's appetite – always thirsty, never satisfied for long, always coming back for more.

The Apostle Paul describes the Word of God as a sword: Take the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). A sword was meant to be kept sharp. The Bible can be like that when we allow it to get close to what we are really like inside. So we need to read it honestly. We should be prepared to face up to what it may show up in us – things we may not like to admit, and even things we have not been aware of before. We can then bring things before God for Him to set them right.

Jesus declared "The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11). Jesus said these words as He explained the parable of the sower. It has great potential. Seed in itself is not very exciting stuff to look at (just as many people mistakenly think the Bible is a bit dull), but

PART 3

OUR WALK & OUR WORK

its secret lies in what it can do. Once it is planted, it germinates. It grows and eventually it bears fruit. A seed has within itself the potential of the full-grown plant.

Christians should know the Bible for many reasons, but the primary one is because God is its author. All Bible students know that God is Creator (Genesis 1:1); Redeemer (Isaiah 60:16); and Judge (Genesis 18:25), but do we think of Him as the author of the Bible. Human writers feel it vital that we need their books; it is much more important that we read God's book, the Bible.

About fourteen centuries before Christ, our Bible had its beginning in the Sinai desert. In this arid place, God spoke to Moses, who had once been a prince in Egypt and was nearly 120 years old at the time. At the Lord's command, Moses picked up his pen and began writing Scripture's first five books, Genesis through Deuteronomy. More was completed on a lonely wind swept island in the Mediterranean Sea by a former fisherman, John the Apostle. From Genesis through Revelation, there are sixty-six divinely inspired books. Over the centuries, approximately forty men and women – representing varied backgrounds and writing styles – served as channels for God's Word. Yet, in spite of these variations, in time and talent, the completed work displays a marvelous historical, theological, geographical, topical, and biographical unity.

The Bible's practical benefits for us may well be summarized under two headings: knowing and growing. The Bible proclaims the good news of the gospel that we might know God; it explains the will of God that all of us may grow spiritually before him.

Scripture also reveals our place within God's program and answers crucial questions pertaining to our origin, purpose, and destiny. Because God has revealed His unchanging truths, the Christian faith provides real answers and guidance to every generation. Although we cannot grasp how individual events fit into God's program (Ecclesiastes 11:5), we can understand God's basic plan in order to come to know and serve Him. Few joys can compare with realizing our places in God's program and working to fulfill our destinies.

1. How God's Word Came to Us – Revelation of God's Word (Deuteronomy 29:29); Inspirations of God's Word (Isaiah 59:21); Illumination of God's Word (Proverbs 6:23).
2. What God's Word Does – God's Word Convicts (Nehemiah 8:9); God's Word Corrects (Psalms 17:4); God's Word Cleanses (Psalms 119:9); God's Word Confirms (John 8:31); God's Word Equips (Proverbs 22:21).
3. How we Benefit from God's Word – We know God through God's Word (Daniel 11:32); We know God's Will through God's Word (Psalms 40:8).
4. What God's Word tells Us About God's Program – God's Work in the Past (Deuteronomy 32:7); God's Work in the Present (Psalms 139:14).
5. What God's Word tells Us about God's Covenants –
 - The Edenic Covenant (Genesis 2:15-17);

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

- The Adamic Covenant (Genesis 3:14-21);
- The Noahic Covenant (Genesis 9:1-19);
- The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3);
- The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5-8);
- The Palestinian Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:10-15; 30:11-20);
- The Davidic Covenant (II Samuel 7:4-17);
- The New Covenant (Jerimiah 31:31-34).

The Bible is divided into two major segments – Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament, which covers two-thirds of the Bible, is further broken down into the historical, the poetic, and prophetic. The Old Testament covers a period of approximately 4,000 years. This time period is covered in 39 books. We are moved from the beginning of the world in the Garden of Eden to the end of the distinct voice of God speaking to His covenant people in Malachi.

In the New Testament, we have twenty-seven books covering about one hundred years. It is divided into three segments; gospels, Acts, and epistles. The gospels tell us of the person and work of Christ – the Word made flesh. The Acts tells us of the Word made flesh at work in the hearts of men carrying on the work of Christ. In the epistles, God uses men to combat false doctrine, correct misconceptions, chastise, encourage, and prepare for labor in the Lord's vineyard (sometimes under great persecution), and for His imminent return.

How to Study Scriptures

The Scriptures come to us having been written in times past by men of God moved by the Holy Spirit. If we are to get the message we need to ask the right questions as we study for our edification. We must begin with the original context of a passage then go on to what God is saying to us now.

God does not change. By seeing how God spoke and acted in the past, we get a fuller picture of what He is like. This will help us to know what God is saying to us today – which is the whole point of reading the Bible. Our greatest desire as Christians is not just to know the Bible, but also to know God.

If we take seriously the original meaning of a passage, it will prevent us from twisting it to suit ourselves. Some say that you can make the Bible mean anything you like. We don't take such liberties when we understand the original meaning.

Here are some of the questions we need to ask as we study the Bible:

What is the background of the passage?

The passage must be seen in its original context before we can determine its meaning for our lives.

Who was the author of the passage?

This question leads to other questions like:

- What was the writer's interest and purpose in writing this?
- Was he writing it for a particular person or people?
- Why did he put it like this?
- What was his occupation?
- Did it influence the way he wrote?
- What kind of writing was this?

The Bible is not really a single book, but a library of books. The word comes from the Greek word "biblos", which means library. There are different kinds of writings in a library. Questions we need to ask are:

- Is it plain narrative?
- Is it teaching I should be learning?
- Is it commanding or challenging, calling for obedience?
- Is it prophetic or promising, calling for faith?
- Is it poetic, or worshipful calling for purpose or adoration?
- Is the writer using symbolic or pictorial language?
- Is there plain and obvious meaning behind his words?
- What is God saying to me through this passage?

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

To get the most out of your Bible study:

- Read the Bible regularly.
- Read for understanding.
- Read it systematically.
- Read the Bible as a whole – get the big picture.
- Take notes as you read if possible.
- Respond to what you read.

Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Do not fall prey to the following:

- Don't try to read the Bible from cover to cover right away.
- Don't worry if you don't understand a passage immediately.
- Don't look for complicated and obscure meanings.
- Don't use the Bible like a horoscope.
- Don't limit your reading to passages of blessings and promises but also of rebuke, warning, and exhortation.

Christian Stewardship

A steward is a person “entrusted with the management of the household or estate of another”. Stewardship is “the position, duties, or service of a steward”. Christian stewardship is “man’s responsibility for and use of everything entrusted to him by God—life, physical being, time, talents, abilities, material possessions, opportunities to be of service to others, and his knowledge of truth”. Stewardship involves the wise and unselfish use of life.

Let us look at four general areas of stewardship. We are stewards of and with all our strength and with all our mind (Luke 10:27). We must develop our physical and mental powers to the best of our ability and opportunities and in so doing to bring honor to God and prove a greater blessing to our fellow man.

We are stewards of our abilities. Each of us has special abilities. One may be a musician another may have other abilities. Some may make friends easily while others may be apt in more solitary pursuits.

Every talent can be used to glorify the possessor of the talent or the one who gave it. A person can diligently perfect a talent for God’s glory, or for personal self-seeking glory.

The wise and purposeful use of time brings glory to God. We are admonished to work heartily in the Master’s service. “Whatever you do work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for man, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24 NIV).

We must not behave “not as fools” but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:15,16). Time is a precious gift and must not be wasted. We must spend time with God. We must help our fellow man and we must win souls for Christ.

We are stewards of our material possessions. We must realize that all things come from God (James 1:17). God is the one who gives men power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18).

Though all things belong to God He has set aside the tithe for himself. The tithe is “holy to the Lord” (Leviticus 27:30,32). When God calls for the tithe, He makes no appeal to gratitude or generosity. Although gratitude is a part of all our expressions to God, we tithe because God has commanded it (Malachi 3:10).

Tithing is not a part of the law of Moses in its original form. Abraham (Genesis 14:20) paid tithe to Melchisedeck. Jacob also vowed tithe to the Lord (Genesis 28:22).

In the New Testament Jesus approved of tithing and condemned those who violated its spirit (Matthew 23:23).

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

Originally, the tithe took care of the priestly tribe of Levi. Their only purpose was worship ministry in the sanctuary and instructing the people in the law of the Lord (Numbers 18:21-24). The Apostle Paul upheld this principle in I Corinthians 9:11-14. The tithe supports the ministry and spreads the gospel.

Grateful Christians cannot limit their contributions to the church to the tithe alone. The tithe is what belongs to God: what He has set aside for Himself. We have not really expressed our thankfulness to Him until we have given a generous offering.

In Israel the tabernacle, and later, the temple were built from freewill offerings (Exodus 36:2-7; I Chronicles 29:14). Special offerings covered the maintenance expenses of these places of worship (Exodus 30:12-16; II Kings 12:4,5; II Chronicles 24:4-13; Nehemiah 10:32, 33). The Israelites contributed as much as 25 to 30 percent of their income to religious and charitable purposes. Today, the Lord still calls for liberal giving as He has prospered us.

Family Ministry

Objectives

- Facts:** To help students to understand God's pattern for Christ-honoring relationships within the home.
- Principle:** To help students recognize that the Christian home is to function according to the principles laid down in God's Word.
- Application:** To help the students as Christian family members to bring their lives into conformity with God's principles.

Introducing the Lesson

The family is in trouble these days. Even Christian homes are not immune from divorced and shattered relationships between parents and children. The testimony of many Christians is destroyed by bad family relationships.

One reason for trouble in the home is that God's principles are not known. But even many of those who do know God's principles do not apply them. Popular thought does not always agree with what God has expressed in His Word. This week's lesson provides a test for the student's true allegiance to the authority of the Bible in their lives. God means what He says. Be fair in your discussion of this lesson text, but do not back down from its precepts. Yield to God's way and receive a blessing.

Developing the Lesson

1. Setting the tone (Ephesians 5:21). The tone for the whole gamut of Christian family relationships is set by this verse. Read I Corinthians 13 to your class. Focus your attention on verse 5. Ask a volunteer to comment on the relationship of that verse to Ephesians 5:21.

Selfishness is destructive in any relationship. The Christian attitude of a family member should be one of submission. Consider the example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet (John 13:4-6). Family relationships should be built upon a foundation of mutual respect and submission to one another. In this respect, the command to be submissive applies to the husband as well as to other members of the family.

2. Wives to husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24). The Bible is very clear on the matter of the husband's being the head of the home. The Greek word translated "submit" is primarily a military term meaning "to rank under" (Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Revell).

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

The divine directive for the wife to submit to her husband is well documented in other passages of Scripture. Ask members of the class to read I Peter 3:1-5 and Genesis 3:16.

3. Husbands to wives (Ephesians 5:25-33). Husbands are directed to love their wives. This directive is woven into a discussion of Christ's love for the church. Ask your class to find characteristics of the kind of love that husbands should have for their wives in the example of Christ's love for the church.

Notice that Christ's love involved the giving of Himself (Ephesians 5:25). Ask class members to discuss ways in which husbands might give of themselves for their wives. Though the husband is clearly established by Scripture as the head of the home, it is important for him to realize that selfish authoritarianism is wrong. Home leadership is a matter of sacred stewardship before God; it is not simply a means for the man to fulfill his desire to control and dominate.

The love of a husband should have a purifying and refining effect on his wife (Ephesians 5:26-27). How can the sincere, self-sacrificing love of a husband make a better person out of a wife? This question should lend itself to fruitful discussion in your class.

The love of the husband can be expressed in the way he shows priority to his wife over the relationships he has with others. Many a marriage relationship has been damaged by the refusal of the marriage partners to leave home emotionally. How can a marriage be weakened by a husband who devotes too much of himself to parents and siblings? Parents could help many marriages by encouraging married children to give their own families top priority. They should discipline themselves not to interfere with delicate relationships within their children's families.

The concept underlying the exclusive love that the husband and the wife are to have for each other is intimacy. They are to be bound together by intimacy even as Christ and His church are bound together in mutual love (Ephesians 5:30-31; cf. I Corinthians 12:27).

4. Children to parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). The Scripture is very clear on the obligation of children to be obedient to their parents. A home in which children are habitually disobedient and disrespectful does not glorify God. Ask a class member to read I Timothy 3:4-5. These verses refer specifically to the homes of church leaders, but an orderly home is God's will for all Christians and not just the church leadership.

The Bible has some things to say about enforced obedience to parents. Have a class member read Proverbs 13:24. This verse does not justify child abuse. Discipline of children is never to be the expression of a parent's anger or

PART 3
OUR WALK & OUR WORK

emotional weakness. Christians certainly concur with those in our society who decry the abuse of children, but at the same time we should not shy away from child discipline.

A classic example of children who did not learn obedience at home is the sons of Eli (I Samuel 3:12-24). God held Eli responsible for the discipline of his children. This principle applies in the Christian era as well.

5. Parents to children (Ephesians 6:4). There is a sense in which parents are even supposed to have a submissive attitude in regard to their children. Selflessness is a Christian trait that should find its way into all our relationships.

Misuse of authority can result in deep frustration on the part of the person under authority. Frustration can lead to deep anger that is apt to vent itself in destructive ways. Ask the class to suggest some ways in which a father might misuse his authority in such a way as to bring about this deep-seated, destructive anger.

Sometimes a child will become angry because he is disciplined. This is an expression of the old nature in that child. But discipline administered in fairness and in genuine love will reduce frustration and anger. Children as well as adults should learn that anger is not the acceptable way of dealing with problems (Ephesians 4:31).

The alternative to bringing up frustrated and angry children is to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). This is the positive side of child rearing. Ask members of your class for their ideas as to what this directive means.

Christian education is a vitally important parental responsibility. Active participation in church and Sunday School can contribute much to the spiritual sensitivity of children. Christian education that takes place in the home is even more important. Not only should parents teach scriptural content and concepts in their children, but also they should model the Christian life before their children. Children are more apt to assimilate what they see than what they hear.