



Becoming a Member

of the

Bunkertown Church of the Brethren

Mission Statement:

“In Christ’s love, we follow, serve, and reach out”

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www.bunkertownchurch.org

New Membership Study Guide

Bunkertown Church of the Brethren

Authorized by the Church Board

Developed by the Christian Education Committee

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Last Revision: August 4, 2017

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Chapter 1. Learning about the Bible

LEARNING ABOUT GOD

How well do you think you know God, as presented in the Bible? Just for fun, test your present knowledge of God as revealed in the Bible by matching the Letter of Scripture with the descriptive word in the right column. You may use an open Bible while doing this exercise. For an additional challenge, please know that one scripture and one keyword have no matches.

A. 1 Samuel 2:2	_____	burning bush
B. John 10:11	_____	everywhere
C. Psalm 90:2	_____	love
D. Numbers 13:29	_____	shepherd
E. Jeremiah 23:24	_____	everlasting
F. Exodus 3:4	_____	avenger
G. Deuteronomy 32:4	_____	jealous
H. Romans 12:19	_____	holy
I. Malachi 3:6	_____	rock
J. Exodus 34:14	_____	unchanging
K. 1 John 4:8	_____	deliverer

Descriptions of God are endless. Christians and Jews have been trying to characterize God since they first started reading their Bibles. God is revealed as a: *Supplier*, Genesis 22:8; *Healer*, Exodus 15:26, *Rock*, Deuteronomy 32:4,18,31; *Redeemer*, Job 19:25; *Shepherd*, Psalm 23:1; *Mighty One*, Isaiah 1:24; *Savior*, Isaiah 43:11; *Potter*, Jeremiah 18:6; *Branch*, Zechariah 6:12; *Father*, Mark 14:36; *Merciful One*, Luke 17:13; *Sanctifier*, John 17:17; *Mighty One*, 2 Corinthians 6:18; *Eternal King*, 1 Timothy 1:17; and *Lord God Almighty*, Revelation 15:3.

But how does a person learn how to acquire knowledge about God? The best way to learn about any subject is to chart a pathway, and the Bible will be the starting point. Let us use the following words of the Psalmist for this Membership course.

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path,” Psalm 119:105

Our Membership course pathway will begin with the Bible, from which we will focus on Jesus, who in turn will explain God the Father. Our pathway is: Bible > Jesus > God. There are no shortages of biblical verses wherein God takes the opportunity to reveal Himself to those genuinely seeking Him. *“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him,”* 2 Chronicles 16:9. We need to be diligent in our quest to know God, for divine knowledge is granted through the faith of the one seeking, Hebrews 11:6. We need to be faithfully seeking along biblical pathways to learn about God, *“Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths,”* Psalm 25:4.

Many people look to the night sky with a sense of wonder, mixed with the usual questions and assumptions. Their astronomy enlightened friends look to the same heavens but with different eyes. For, they know 88 constellations are visible to unaided eye, the galaxy Andromeda is classified as M31, and can be found in the constellation Pegasus. How do they know all this? In a similar yet unspiritual way, they have also chosen a path! A pathway into the disciplined science of interstellar space, relativity, and quantum theory. Curiosity was the engine driving their pursuit. The desire to know the unknown is what fills in the gaps of human knowledge. Prayer was not a component of their quest but it is absolutely essential to knowing God. Unlike secular pathways which search for data and correlations, the believer is searching for a person who is knowable and who desires to be found, 1 Chronicles 28:9. This is a remarkable if not inestimable difference. It is crucial that we seek to know God through prayer.

It will come as a welcome comfort to know that God is seeking for us. When Adam and Eve sinned, it was God who sought reconciliation with them. When Cain was disheartened by the dismissal of his sacrifice, it was God who sought reconciliation with him. When the Israelites were complaining in the wilderness, it was God who sought reconciliation by giving them the Law. When King David sinned with Bathsheba, it was God who sought reconciliation with him through Nathan. God deemed fallen humanity to be an enemy, Romans 5:10, but sought reconciliation through the atoning blood of Jesus. Saul was contributing to the deaths of Christians, but it was God who sought for reconciliation through Ananias. One could almost say the Bible is a story that reveals the continuing attempts of God to seek communion with us.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and tragically plunged the entire future of humanity into separation from God known as the plight of original sin. There was no force in their process of decision making. Choice was their prerogative. In our quest to learn more about God, there is one issue that is rarely mentioned. How does God feel, *when He is hurt*? Discussions usually center on how we are hurt and what role God may have played in it, but God also hurts. One of the most ironic interplays on this matter is between Baruch, the scribe of Jeremiah, and God. Baruch is lamenting (chapter 45) the suffering that he must endure while serving as a scribe. What tragedy befalls Jeremiah befalls Baruch. Does this sound like us? Verse 4, *“The Lord saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land... And seekest thou great things for thyself? ...seek them not.”*

In other words, God is asking Baruch to assess the matter from God’s perspective. He has spent centuries building this nation only to agonize over tearing it all down. He lovingly planted a chosen people, diligently invested time and effort, but now they will be plucked up and sent to Babylon. God has been deeply hurt on a magnitude that makes human suffering look miniscule. If there is one attribute to first learn about God, it is consistency. We are given choices for which there can be reward or punishment. It is our choice to select the correct pathway.

Let us go back in time. *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you, life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live,”* Deuteronomy 30:19. Moses and the Israelites are camped on the east side of the Jordan River, preparing to enter the Promised Land. God says, I have set two roads

before you; one to life with blessing, and the other to death with cursing or rebuke. It is sadly evident that they preferred to travel the wrong road, in spite of repeated warnings from God through prophet after prophet after prophet. Yet, God's love will always prevail, because it is God's inner nature to love. To know God is to know love. *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him,"* 1 John 4:16. The depth of the love of God is unfathomable and unexplainable.

The greatest example of God's love is Jesus, who gave His own life as a ransom for us. *"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,"* Mark 10:45. *"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him,"* 1 John 4:8.

Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, did not arrive here on earth in a flaming chariot. He did not step off a cloud. He was not beamed down by aliens. He came to us through the birth of a little baby. *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins,"* Matthew 1:21. To learn about God is to listen to Jesus, for the Son reveals the Father to us. *"All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him,"* Luke 10:22.

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet" is our key phrase for learning about God. We learn about God through the explanations given by Jesus the Son, and we receive those explanations by reading the Bible. A life without the Bible is a life without God.

COMMENTS

1. Describe your different impressions about God as you have grown spiritually.
2. Share the disappointments and triumphs along your pathway of faith.
3. What is the greatest attribute of God?
4. Explain your concept of God as both the Father and Jesus the Son?

OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Someone made the observation: “*The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and that, the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.*” Both complement each other. We cannot fully appreciate the power of grace through the ministry of Jesus without knowing His roots from the Old Testament, and conversely, we cannot fully understand the Old Testament without the enlightenment of God’s revelations concerning it within the New Testament.

Perhaps the greatest enlightenment thrown on the Old Testament comes from the lips of Apostle Paul who best summarized it in Galatians 3:24-25, “*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”*

Schoolmaster (KJV) or Tutor (NASV) Greek (παιδαγωγός, *paidagogós*; “leader of children” from [παις, *país*] “child” and [αγωγός, *agōgós*] “leader.” In ancient times, the pedagogue was originally an older slave who led the master’s children to school and returned them at the end of classes. Gradually over the years, the pedagogue became more of a teacher himself, especially among wealthier families. Much to the advantage of the children, he would often interject personal life experiences along with the lessons. This promoted a much earlier development and maturity for the children because they benefited from the awareness of life particulars which they would not otherwise anticipate until they grew much older, and perhaps then, experienced some of them tragically. A pedagogue was a valuable *pathway* to maturity.

Apostle Paul is telling us that the Old Testament was a *spiritual pedagogue* leading the Israelites to a greater experience with God that would be anticipated in the work of Christ. Now that Jews and Gentiles may richly benefit from personally knowing Christ, the Old Testament has finished its purpose of leading. It now exists as a reminder of that process whereby God introduced us to the need of faith. Habakkuk 2:4, “*Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*” There are two types of persons represented in this scripture, the first is the proud and arrogant who did not and will not recognize the obvious truths of God. Conversely, the second has benefited from God’s instructions and is ripe to learn about faith instead of legalism. “Shall live” does not imply an extended corporeal life because everyone must eventually die. It refers to the manner in which we conduct our lives each day. Thus, we determine to live accordingly to a life that is centered on faith in God.

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus shared Old Testament passages with two people that pointed to Himself. “*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself,*” Luke 24:27. Perhaps the following were a few of them: Genesis 3:15, 9:26, 49:10; Numbers. 24:17-19; Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 16:10, 22:1-31, 34:20, 35:11, 41:9, 69:21, 110:1, 118:25-26; Proverbs 30:4; Isaiah 7:14, 40:3, 53:1-12, 63:9; Daniel 7:22, 9:25; Hosea 11:1; Micah 5:2; Zechariah 9:9, 11:12, 12:10. Isaiah contains the most predictions of the Messiah followed by Psalms and then Zechariah.

J. Barton Payne in his monumental *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* listed 574 verses that have direct messianic foretelling. Jewish convert to Christianity Alfred Edersheim noted

558 rabbinic writings in pre-Christian times and 456 Old Testament passages referring either to the Messiah proper or messianic times in general. Observe the following direct comparisons.

- Messiah’s side would be pierced - Zechariah 12:10; cf. John 19:37.
- Messiah would suffer for sins - Isaiah 53:6, 9, 12; cf. I Peter 2:21-25; Romans 4:25
- Isaiah 53:9a, Messiah would be killed with “wicked” *ones*. Hebrew noun is *plural*.
- Isaiah 53:9a, Messiah would be buried with the “rich” *one*. Hebrew form is *singular*.

The mathematical odds of even these last few verse comparisons all being true is exponentially staggering, and the possibility of Jesus fulfilling all direct Old Testament references to the Messiah is simply of a theoretical magnitude beyond comprehension.

In many cases even the grammar is forth telling. God indicated to Isaiah that the Messiah would die with wicked ones, the “two” thieves (*plural*). Similarly, it was indicated that the Messiah would be buried with “a” rich person (*singular*), and that would have coincided with Joseph of Arimathaea. The exactness of even grammatical insights is astounding.

Surprisingly, we will discover “parallels” that seem too exacting to be the result of chance. God has written the Bible in such a way that we learn many hidden truths prepared only for those willing to seek. For example, there are many parallels between Jesus and Joseph. By carefully studying these parallels we learn to understand more about the reality of God.

PARALLEL ATTRIBUTE	JOSEPH	JESUS
He was the favorite son of a wealthy father	Gen. 37:3	Matthew 3:17
He was a shepherd	Gen. 37:2	John 10:11-14
He was taken into Egypt to avoid being killed	Gen. 37:28	Matthew 2:13
He became a servant	Gen. 39:4	Philippians 2:7
He was filled with the Spirit of God	Gen. 41:38	Luke 4:1
He was humble and unspoiled by wealth	Gen. 45:7-8	John 13:12
He gave bread to hungry people that came to him	Gen. 41:57	Mark 6:41
He resisted the most difficult temptations	Gen. 39:7-9	Hebrews 4:15
He was hated for his teachings	Gen. 37:8	John 7:7
He was sold for the price of a slave	Gen. 37:28	Matthew 26:15
He was silent before his accuser	Gen. 39:20	Mark 15:4
He was condemned between two prisoners	Gen. 40:2-3	Luke 23:32
He was held for two, and was free on the third	Gen. 41:1	Luke 9:22
He arose into a new life	Gen. 41:41	Mark 16:6
He was not recognized by his own brethren	Gen. 42.8	Luke 24:37
He returned to his father	Gen. 46:29	Mark 16:19
He became, a lord / THE LORD	Gen. 45:8-9	Revelation 19:16

There are parallels between the Exodus wanderings and the life of a Christian.

PARALLEL ATTRIBUTE	LIFE IN THE EXODUS	LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN
Life begins in bondage	Exodus 1:14	Galatians 4:3
Saved by the shed blood of a lamb	Exodus 12:7	1 John 1:7
Baptized and Consecrated to follow	Exodus 14:22	Matthew 3:13
The Spirit of God came down	Exodus 19:20	Acts 2:2-4
Faith under testing	Deuteronomy 8:2	James 1:3
Warfare with Evil	Deuteronomy 25:17-19	Ephesians 6:12, 1 Peter 1:5-7
Crossing into the Promised Land	Joshua 3:13-17	1 Thessalonians 4:16-18
Rewards for faithful service	Deuteronomy 8:7-10	Hebrews 10:35-36
New Homes	Joshua 14-17	John 14:2-3

OLD TESTAMENT SECTIONS

LAW	HISTORY	POETRY	MAJOR PROPHETS	MINOR PROPHETS
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Ester			Malachi



The only difference between a major and minor prophet is the length of writing. Each one is just as important. Notice that many Old Testament book names are actually from Greek instead of Hebrew. The Old Testament was translated into the Greek language more than a century before the coming of Jesus. Greek was becoming an international language.

For example, Genesis from γένεσις meaning “Origin;” Exodus from ἔξοδος meaning ἔξ “out of” + οδος “road / way” and Deuteronomy from Δευτερος “second” + νόμος “law” and Psalms from ψαλμός “songs of praise” and Pentateuch from πεντά “five” + τευχος “parts,” or the first five books. The Greek Old Testament is called the Septuagint from Latin *septuaginta* meaning seventy, referring to the seventy Jewish scholars who are thought to have completed the project. There is some dispute over its actual formation. Jewish literature in our modern era is grouped under the following six biblical canons or sections.

JEWISH BIBLE

Torah	Five books of Moses
Midrash	Interpretations of the Torah that seek to answer or “fill in the gaps.”
Mishnah	Oral law given to Moses, first in writing about 2 nd Century B.C.
Gemara	Additional commentaries interpreting the Mishnah.
Talmud	Gemara + Mishnah
Tanakh	Complete Jewish Bible, interchangeable called the Mikra

COMMENTS

1. Summarize your previous thoughts of the O.T. with what you have just read.
2. Compare your impression of God in the O.T. with how you see Christ in the N.T.
3. How does a better understanding of the O.T. enhance your appreciation of the N.T?
4. Where do you see examples of God’s grace in the Old Testament?
5. Express your impressions on the many Parallels found in the O.T.
6. How relevant will the Old Testament be in your continuing faith journey?

OVERVIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are more manuscripts of the New Testament than any other literary work in the history of writing. Numbers gradually increase as more manuscripts are discovered. As of this composition there are about 5,800 Greek and about 9,700 Latin manuscripts of the New Testament, in various forms both extant and fragmented. Publius Cornelius Tacitus was a senator and historian of the Roman Empire. His expansive “*Annals of Imperial Rome*” is one of the main historical sources for understanding the Roman world in New Testament times, yet, it survives in partial form in only *two manuscripts* dating from the Middle Ages. *Only two!* Thucydides was an Athenian historian and military general. His history of the Peloponnesian War survives in only *eight manuscripts*, and there are only eight copies of Herodotus’ History.

No classical scholar would dare question the authenticity of Thucydides or Herodotus, even though the earliest manuscripts of their histories are over a thousand years later than the originals. Liberal critics often dispute the veracity of the New Testament with disparaging remarks such as, “The Bible has been copied and translated so many thousands of times that it’s impossible to presume any confidence in its accuracy.” Other baseless forms of ridicule contend that it is an elaborate forgery. When evidence of these accusations is demanded, none exists that would be admissible to a high court justice. Rather, claimants are forced to acknowledge they know very little about the mechanisms which produced this large volume of manuscripts.

First, it was both oral and written during the same overlapping time frame. Anyone might challenge a variant reading in either form. Second, most textual critics have assessed the viability of New Testament manuscripts using well established rules of the trade to identify scribal errors. In fact, the more manuscripts, the better the cross-referencing. Third, exponential reproduction creates 50 copies from one, and 2,500 from those 50. Fourth, and probably the most important of all, no transcriptional error has remotely affected basic doctrines or theology.

One of the most compelling reasons to trust the New Testament is the authenticity of the Old Testament. Direct predictions and indirect allusions to the Messiah are enormous, yet Jesus fulfilled hundreds with a probability that defies mathematical explanation. Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus is Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) from Hebrew עִמָּנוּאֵל “God is with us.”

Although the gospels are arranged first in the New Testament, they were written years later than the personal letters of Apostle Paul. His teachings and revelations give us a primary view of Jesus because he claims a direct revelation. In Galatians 1:11-12 we read: “*But I certify you, brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Compare this with the book of Hebrews, 2:3: “...*which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*” Both authors and their messages are just as reliable yet they received their messages in two different ways: direct and indirect.

One element of biblical translation that is rarely addressed by Christian educators is reading level uniformity near that of the American 8th grade education. Reading a Greek New

Testament immediately discloses the wide latitude of writing styles and vocabulary. Observe the following differences between Mark, Luke, and Hebrews in the original language.

Mark's Greek is terse and rough with a very small vocabulary. He lacks rhetorical flexibility as in redundantly utilizing the word εὐθέως or εὐθὺς meaning straightway or immediately 42 times. All this may be easily accounted for if Mark was Jewish but writing in Greek which was not his mother language. *First year Greek student readability: Feasible.*

Luke, on the other hand, is thought to be Greek and composing in his native language, for his style is polished, cultured, sophisticated, reflects attention to detail, and contains a very impressive vocabulary. He is a physician by trade and a professional by influence. He mentions the word salvation six times, whereas John uses it merely once, both Mark and Matthew not all. Stories about people, especially those who have been marginalized are important to him. Luke mentions women on numerous occasions. *First year Greek student readability: Challenging.*

The Book of Hebrews is premier literature and conceivably the best written in the Bible. Style is eloquent, refined, well-reasoned, and draws from an immense vocabulary. The purity of the grammar was first publicly noted by Clement of Alexandria in a 95 A.D. sermon. This unknown author was a true wordsmith of the first echelon, incorporating a profound number of *Hapax Legomenon* ("once said"): 157 words occur nowhere else in the New Testament. In regard to Pauline authorship, there are 205 words occurring in Hebrews which are also found elsewhere in the New Testament, but not once in the authenticated letters of Paul. Only the supremacy of Christ governs this work. *First year Greek student readability: Formidable.*

Apostle Paul is arguably the most influential Christian preacher, teacher, author, and mentor of pastors and evangelists. We know more about Paul than any other New Testament personage except Jesus. He traveled on five missionary journeys, established the first church in Europe (Acts 16), and wrote thirteen letters to churches and individuals. His early writings provide an insight into the beliefs, controversies, and general health of the early church. The book of Romans is a towering giant of Christology which may explain why it is a favorite choice of biblical studies. Much of what he wrote is correctional in nature, especially to the Corinthians. Ephesians is unlike anything else that Paul wrote. He does not mention one name. Some think it may have been an encyclical type of letter that might have been sent to more than one church (Colossians 4:16?). These early Christians did not possess their own Bibles and depended on the teachings and personal life testimonies of others (1 Corinthians 11:1). Without Apostle Paul, the future Rapture of the Elect would be completely unknown.

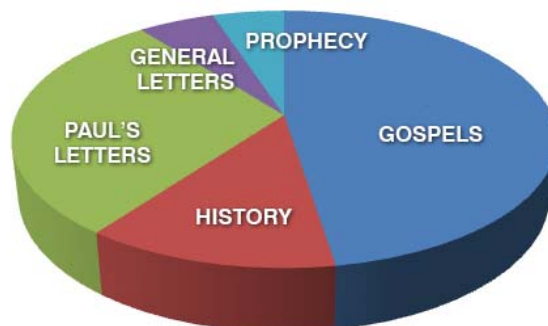
The Book of Revelation was difficult for the early church to assess, for they were immersed in fulfilling the "Great Commission" of Jesus to go throughout the world, saving souls, baptizing them, and disciplining new converts. Whereas the Revelation is a study in the end of the world. It was not easy to blend or harmonize them together. Martin Luther originally disputed its canonicity along with a few others books and placed each of them at the very end of his German bible. John Calvin accepted its canonical worth but did not write a commentary. In most New Testament manuscript collections, the Revelation usually stands alone, whereas the Gospels plus the book of Acts is found regularly, as are the entire letters of Paul.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. First mention of a New Testament book collection is in 2 Peter 3:16.
2. The word “immortal” appears only one time in the entire Bible, 1 Timothy 1:17.
3. Ephesians 1:3-14 is the longest sentence in the Greek New Testament totaling 270 words.
4. The word rapture *does* appear in the Latin Vulgate Bible, “*simul rapiemur cum illis.*”
5. N.T. Apocryphal books originate from the 2nd century and some from the 3rd and 4th.
6. Every N.T. author was Jewish, except Luke, and some dispute his gentile background.
7. Jesus died on Passover, rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on Jerusalem on the Feast of Weeks.
8. Peter was a Jew and maintained the Levitical dietary restrictions up until Acts 10:14. Thus it would be fair to conclude that early Jewish Christians did not stop being Jewish, but rather seen the *New Way* as an enlightenment of their own Judaism. It would also explain Jewish Christians anticipating that Gentile believers needed to adopt some degree of Judaism as a perquisite to becoming fully Christian. The Church Council at Jerusalem fully decided the matter, Acts 15. James speaks, “*Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them,*” verse 19.

NEW TESTAMENT SECTIONS

Gospels Life of Jesus	History of the Church	Paul's Letters to Churches	Paul's Letters to Individuals	General Letters	Prophecy
Matthew Mark Luke John	Acts	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation



THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Some will argue that Jesus never really claimed to be God, therefore He is just a man without credentials or a message that should be regarded above that of anyone else. However, Jesus did claim to be God and further contended to equally share the same divine attributes.

Who is He?

In the fifth chapter of John, a man is healed on the Sabbath by Jesus, and confronted later by the authorities for working on this holiest day of the week. In His defense for all Sabbath activity, Jesus makes several statements which also defines His substantive divine nature:

- **ESSENCE**, verse 17: “God is my Father. He has been working on every Sabbath right up until this moment, and I will continue to do the same.” In other words, God is continually working on every Sabbath, at maintaining things like gravity and molecular activity. Jesus asserts that He the Son and God the Father are of the same equal substance. In verse 18 the authorities retort: *“Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”* The authorities understood exactly what Jesus was asserting. The people who were standing right in front of Jesus knew precisely the spiritual inference of His statement. Jesus was claiming equality with God.
- **PROCESS**: verse 19, Jesus asserts that He and His Father do things in the very same manner and consistency. This is not always the case with human fathers and sons or mothers and daughters who frequently reflect generational changes.
- **OMNISCIENCE**: verse 20, Jesus claims to possess the same knowledge as that of the Father. Jesus knew about Nathaniel before Philipp arrived, John 1:48. He knew about the death of Lazarus two days after the messengers had left, John 11:14.
- **LIFE**: verse 21, Jesus declares that He possesses the same authority over life and death, in fact, Jesus says that restoration from death is entirely His prerogative. In the village of Nain, Jesus restored a widow’s dead son back to life but no others. Jesus stood in a cemetery at Bethany but only Lazarus was restored, no others.
- **JUDGEMENT**: verse 22, Jesus reveals that God has given authority for judgement to the Son. Apostle Paul affirms in 2 Corinthians 5:10, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*
- **HONOR**: verse 23, Jesus asserts that He should be honored in the same way that God would be honored. Additionally, Jesus says that honoring Him is likewise honoring the Father who sent the Son.
- **ETERNITY**: verse 24, Jesus declares that hearing the Son and believing the Father is absolutely essential to receiving eternal life and avoiding condemnation.

Proof of Jesus' authority over life and death can be understood in His last words before dying on the cross: "*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost,*" Luke 23:46. This death experience is in reverse. Normally the physical body expires and then the spirit returns to God, Ecclesiastes 12:7. Jesus returned His spirit to God and then He died. There was a supervising Centurion who recognized this divine connection, Mark 15:39, and following the earthquake, his fellow soldiers also affirmed: *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God',*" Matthew 27:54. If "rank pagans" can recognize the divinity of Jesus, then why should it be so difficult for those of a religious background to comprehend the same thing, especially a Christian background?!

What is He About?

Why did the Son come to earth in the first place? Many of us learned and memorized the following verse in Sunday school: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,*" John 3:16. And the next verse is also enlightening. "*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved,*" v.17.

Jesus did not come to condemn us, but to save us. This message of hope was imparted to prophets of the Old Testament many centuries before, and also revealed to John the Baptist who exclaimed, "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,*" John 1:29. See Lamb also in Exodus 12:1-14.

His ministry centered on those who needed Him the most. People who were lost without God because they were hopelessly captive to their sinful lifestyles. "*And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"* Mark 2:16. "*When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,*" v17. This is the ministry of Jesus Christ and it should be the goal of every member of the church, Matthew 28:19.

She was a five-time loser, married and divorced five times, and currently living with a man who was not her husband, John 4:18. She was captive to a sinful lifestyle. Going to the well for water at mid-day was not the usual time of the day for supplying the house with water, Genesis 24:11. Was she trying to avoid other women? She is like many people of our present world, both captive and hopeless. We don't even know her name. How will they escape from their distressful situations unless there are people like Jesus who desire to help them?

The evangelistic ministry of restoring people to God and society is a necessary part of being a Christian. We can learn a lot about being involved in this type of ministry by first noticing what Jesus *did not do*. He did not say "*I'm gloriously saved, what about you?*" "*Do you believe in God?*" "*Do you go to church?*" This is a regrettable mistake that well-intending Christians do without regard to the words of Jesus Himself. He told us in John 3:17 that He did

not come to condemn, but to save. Although these previous questions may be asked with good intentions, this approach to evangelism is condemnatory and occasionally flagrant. What did Jesus first say to her? *“May I have a drink of water?”* He approached her on her own level, without assumptions. People are more open to discussion when they believe that anything they say will not result in condemnation. God’s message of forgiveness is good news and should be presented – *as good news!* Those of us who are sufficiently capable and mentally able to do amazing things need to realize that this woman is just the very type of person that God can accomplish the greatest work for the Kingdom.

What does He Expect of Us?

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence,” 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

When the disciples returned and found Jesus talking to her, they completely misread the situation. Bringing salvation to the nearby village was not on their minds. They were hungry and laden with assumptions. Later, upon offering Him something to eat, Jesus said to the effect, “I am dining on food that you do not understand. I am feasting on every opportunity to do and complete the will of my Father,” (4:32-34). She was so full of life and new truth and in a hurry to tell others – she left her water pot! *“The woman then left her water pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”* John 4:28-29. This is evangelism that puts a smile on the face of God because it is not condemnatory. Rather, this approach values the worth of the individual.

It is the desire of both Father and Son that everyone hear and respond to the good news of God’s forgiveness by grace through their faith. *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,”* 2 Peter 3:9.

Jesus accepted great challenges in the selection of the twelve Apostles. Matthew was a tax collector and valued friend of the Roman government. Simon the Zealot belonged to a political party that despised and preferred the expulsion of the Roman government.

James and John were passionately motivated and hot-heads in the modern sense. Jesus called them Sons of Thunder, Mark 3:17. When a Samaritan village would not receive them because they were headed for Jerusalem, these brothers suggested bringing down fire from heaven as a just punishment. They also asked Jesus for the privileges of sitting on His right and on His left in the coming Kingdom.

Judas was selected by Jesus to be one of the Twelve, yet knowing that he would become the betrayer. Here is a man who possessed a unique relationship with Satan equaled only by the

future Antichrist. *“Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?”* John 6:70. One of the Twelve is a devil? Greek, διάβολός refers to the head-guy in hell. This word should not be mistaken with δαιμόνιον which refers to a demon. Satan later took full control, John 13:27.

Jesus challenged the status quo of society. After preaching His first sermon, Jesus scolded His home-town congregation for questioning His truthfulness and they tried to kill him, Luke 4:28-29. He was appalled that the Temple was a noisy marketplace. It should be noted that Jesus expelled the buyers as well as the sellers. *“Den of thieves,”* in Matthew 21:13 refers to both buyers and sellers for each were robbing the Temple of its sacredness. Jesus is quoting Jeremiah 7:11 where the latter is also scolding people for disgracing the sanctity of the Temple. At no point does Jeremiah or Jesus mention money. This is spiritual robbery. *“Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise,”* John 2:16.

COMMENTS

1. How would you approach a modern day woman, or man, at the well?
2. What circumstances or situations would make evangelism the most difficult for you?
3. How do you lovingly confront a person who does not believe the Bible is God's Word?
4. How do you keep the gospel as “good news” when others treat it as bad news?
5. Which of Jesus' challenges would be the most difficult for you to face?

SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

Question: *“Who divided the Bible into chapters and verses?”*

Answer: Stephen Langton was the Archbishop of Canterbury (1207-1228 AD). Langton divided the Bible into chapters around 1227. This pattern was first used by John Wycliffe in his English translation of the Latin Vulgate in 1382. Since that time, most Bibles still reflect Langton's chapter divisions.

Question: *“Who divided the Bible into verses?”*

Answer: The Hebrew Old Testament was divided into verses by Rabbi Nathan in 1448 A.D. Robert Estienne, also known as Stephanus, first divided the New Testament into verses in 1555, also incorporated Nathan's Old Testament verse divisions. The Geneva Bible of 1560 was the first Bible in any language to use the chapter and verse divisions of Langton and Stephanus.

Question: *“Who conceived the idea of using red letters for the words of Christ?”*

Answer: Lous Klopsch, editor of the Christian Herald magazine, got the idea after reading the words of Jesus in Luke 22:20, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”* Klopsch asked influential people about this innovation and it soon became a reality.

Question: *“How much of the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament?”*

Answer: Jesus directly quoted or indirectly referenced Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Proverbs, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi. Only Esther, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are silent in the New Testament.

Fact: The King James Bible, contains 66 books, 1,189 chapters, 31,102 verses, 773,693 words, and 3,566,480 letters, based on the Oxford Standard edition of 1769. This lengthy calculation was completed and later confirmed before the use of computers. Additionally, a Bible contains 929 chapters in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament.

Fact: Most people can read the Bible in less than a year by reading three chapters each day and five on Sunday. Reading fifteen chapters each day will finish the exercise in three months.

Fact: A chariot imported from Egypt cost around 600 shekels of silver (1 Kings 10:29). That would be about \$77,000 in 2016 US dollars, based on one shekel being about 4 days' wages.

Fact: The Bible mentions the ant, bear, cow, dog, eagle, fox, goat, hornet, lion, moth, ox, peacock, quail, raven, sheep, wolf, the mysterious leviathan, but not the domestic house cat.

Chapter 2. Learning about Salvation

ORIGINAL FALL OF HUMANITY

What happened? Why do we need salvation? We are to be saved from what? In the very beginning of this world, God provided a place for humans to dwell in complete security, enjoying all the particulars that daily life could afford. It was a beautiful garden, full of every splendid need of their imagination. God is immediately represented in the plural, “*Let US... in OUR image... OUR likeness...*” Genesis 1:26. The exact form of that image would be a lengthy debate but descriptively, humans were the countenance of righteousness and true holiness, as Apostle Paul states, “*...put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth,*” Ephesians 4:24. Two people living in companionship with themselves and God. How could anyone write a better novel?

But then sin entered into the picture. Adam and Eve willfully violated the specific instructions of God that were well known to them. No force was applied in their decision making. It was their choice to sin against God which resulted in their expulsion from the Garden. This original act gives precedence to the term, “original sin,” and all humans of this modern day continue with that original sin, as well as, the temporal or personal sins that each of us willfully commit. Original sin separated us from a close harmonious relationship with God.

Providentially, God provided a way through Jesus in which everyone could be restored to that original state of harmony. “*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,*” 2 Peter 3:9. “*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*” Ephesians 1:4-5.

From the beginning of time, God knew who would accept His invitation to life and who would reject it. “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren,*” Romans 8:29. God chose to focus on those who would accept His invitation and mold them into the image of Jesus. “*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified,*” Romans 8:30. God called them. The Greek word for called, καλέω, means to invite as in the wedding invitation of Matthew 22:3. There is no force in the process of decision making. It is entirely the choice of each individual.

SHEOL

As the Bible continues to unfold, its writers speak of a place where the spirits of people go after death. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew שְׁאוֹל, “sheol” originally meant a place of no return. “*Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death,*” Job 10:21. *Paradise* is the compartment of the righteous and *Torments* is that of the

unrighteous, and the determination of who goes where is made solely by God. At the moment of death, the body returns to the earth but the spirit returns to God, *“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it,”* Ecclesiastes 12:7. We are spiritual beings inhabiting vessels of dust which neither scalpel nor x-ray can locate. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the mythological Hades (ᾍδης) became the preferred substitute word: *Elysium* was the abode of the virtuous and *Tartarus* that of the most wicked. Elysium is not found in the Greek New Testament but Tartarus is mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 and correctly translated as Hell. Originally created for fallen angels, this is also the tormented home of ungodly humans. *“And in hell he (Rich man) lift up his eyes, being in torments,”* Luke 16:23.

HELL

This word has generated much confusion for Christians because translators have used it to render different concepts. Whereas Hades was the Greek god of the underworld and reigned over both the good and bad spirits, Hell is generally thought of as only the place of the wicked, but the eternal abode of the wicked is best understood as the Lake of Fire. *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,”* Revelation 20:15. Gehenna was the term preferred by Jesus (Greek γέεννα), a place of burning in the Valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem where worshipers of Baal sacrificed their children alive, 2 Kings 23:10. See also Matthew 5:29, 10:28, Mark 9:43, Luke 12:5.

Debate frequently centers around the eternal state of existence for the wicked, and has resulted in the formation of many theologies, denominations, and faiths. Some people dismiss the notion that a loving God would torment people forever. They usually fall into one of two camps: God just would not do such a thing, or the wicked will be annihilated upon entering the fire. Annihilation does not seem to fit Revelation 20:10, *“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”* The beast (antichrist) and the false prophet have been in the Lake of Fire at this point for over a thousand years.

Numerous scriptures do seem to indicate a longevity of torment. *“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,”* Matthew 13:41-42. Nouns ending with “ing” are called Participles and define a continued activity, such as: running, jumping, swimming, or climbing. Thus, wailing suggests a conscious, continued action. Still others contend that the Greek word αἰώνιος does not actually mean forever, thus, any torment could only be for a specific time. But in Matthew 25:46 this very word is applied to both the righteous and the unrighteous, *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”* It would seem reasonable to conclude that the time frame and existence of both will be the same, forever.

At the end of this age, God will separate the good from the bad as the wheat from the tares, Matthew 13:30, or the sheep from the goats, Matthew 25:32. *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man (Jesus) whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the*

dead,” Acts 17:31. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,” 2 Corinthians 5:10. In any case, believers are spared from these worrisome issues because they have been promised an eternal home with God in heaven.

HEAVEN

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” Genesis 1:1. Heaven is the first location of any kind mentioned in the Bible, yet this word (Hebrew שָׁמַיִם, *shamayim*; Greek οὐρανός, *ouranos*) can refer to a variety of places, such as a clouded sky, the atmosphere, the firmament, celestial bodies, the outer universe, or the very dwelling place of God. It is the context of each passage that needs to supply the answer, often times the location can still be rather elusive. The writer of Genesis 2:4 most probably is referring to the clouded sky while the Psalmist of 20:6 most surely points to the very abode of God.

Jesus reveals to John that the earth and sky will at a later time be refashioned into a new estate more appropriate for spiritual beings, Revelation 21:1. Of special note in this passage is the absence of oceans. Cosmologically, this makes perfect sense, for oceans have mainly served to moderate temperatures and saturate the atmosphere. Believers endowed with new spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44) will be unaffected by physiological, biological, or environmental processes. It has been promised as a place devoid of tears and sorrow, Revelation 21:4.

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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 if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also,” John 14:1-3. These are some of the clearest and most definitive teachings of Jesus. “I am making a special place for each of you, and when finished, I will return to get you!” Assurance of entrance into heaven is promised only to those who accept the substitutionary death of Jesus by faith through the grace of God. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,” Ephesians 2:8.

THE AGE OF FAITH

Anticipating the coming of the Law, there was the emergence of faith. Without faith, it is difficult to fully understand the need for law or grace, because it is faith through which we respond to either one. God called Abraham (Abram) to leave everything that he knew and trust an unknown God through faith alone to a place he knew nothing of. Now, that's not asking much, would you agree? “I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it,” Genesis 15:7. The true cost of discipleship can be high. In the Early Bronze Age, the city-state of Ur was the most centralized bureaucratic state the world had yet experienced. Several archaeological discoveries have yielded an immense volume of cuneiform tablets that depict a vast urban center, small by today's modern scale, yet truly metropolitan for that time. Royal tombs picture a city of luxury, precious metals, and a commercial network. It was the first city inland from the Persian Gulf. Merchants traversing both ways passed through its doors before continuing onward to do business.

God later asked Abraham to look upward at the night sky and believe through faith alone that his descendants would outnumber the stars. Much later God would ask him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, as a demonstration of that growing faith. The Holy Spirit tells us in Hebrews 11:6 that without faith, it is impossible to please God. Before attempting to learn about the full message of salvation, we must understand the true cost of discipleship through faith. We cannot truly appreciate the genuineness of grace without the need for faith which explains it. And neither faith nor grace can be adequately understood until we comprehend God's Law and its penalties for sin, because grace and faith are the resolution for the problem of sin.

THE AGE OF LAW

At the appointed time known only to God, the Law was given to a Chosen people, freshly rescued from slavery in Egypt. The Law of God is first mentioned in Exodus 13:9, yet it is an unwritten law uttered verbally. In other words, God's intention is Law, whether verbal to Adam and Eve or in a much later written form. Moses led the Israelites from Egypt to Mount Sinai where the Law was first delivered on tables of stone, the famous Ten Commandments. Over the next few years God would expand the written Law to 613 statutes: 365 negative warnings and 248 positive admonitions. This Law would continue to preside over the Chosen people until modern times. Reading the history of Israel in the books of Kings and the Chronicles reveals a people who continually vacillated between submission to the Law and abhorrence to it.

This inability to reach perfection by fulfilling God's expectations through the Law was highlighted by Apostle Peter at the first church council surrounding the question of gentile status within the church, "*Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the (gentile) disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*" Acts 15:10-12. It's just not possible to achieve perfection by following the Law, for, if we break one statute, in God's sight, we are guilty of breaking them all. "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,*" James 2:10.

Remember earlier in this exercise we learned about the Schoolmaster that would lead us to Jesus? The Law was God's way of leading us to Jesus. "*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,*" Romans 8:3. The fulfillment of the Law would be realized in the death of Jesus. "*So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,*" Hebrews. 9:28.

THE AGE OF GRACE

There are many examples of grace throughout the Old Testament. Conceivably the best case might be God sparing the city of Nineveh. "*So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them... And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not,*" Jonah 3:5-10. Nineveh was one of the wickedest cities in the Assyrian Empire. They were never a part of the Chosen people, nor were they ever given the Laws from Moses, yet, for reasons known only to God, the city was

spared from the inevitable punishment for sin. *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me,”* Jonah 1:2.

Imagine that – a people were saved from the penalty of sin who did not follow the Law delivered to Moses. This is grace in its finest hour! People were saved who did not deserve it. Earthly parents still love their children when rules are broken. God still loves us when His rules are broken. Grace is that inner desire to forgive, even in the midst of the hurt. Jesus modeled this grace, ultimately on the cross when He died in our place, for our sins. God desires to love us. Grace is God reaching down to us, and faith is our reaching up to receive that grace.

REDEMPTION THROUGH JESUS

The word redeem in a biblical sense means “to regain possession” of something, with or without a price. If it referred to slaves it would mean regaining their freedom. God redeemed the Chosen people from their enslavement in Egypt. There was a costly price to be paid, for the first-born of every household across the nation died unless the blood of a lamb had shielded them from a destroying messenger. *“... the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the ‘destroyer’ to come in unto your houses to smite you,”* Exodus 12:23. This is how we acquired the term Passover. The Lord will literally pass-over. In a similar sense in our modern times, God will also forgive us of our sins when we have been shielded by the blood of a Lamb who is Jesus Christ. *“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,”* Galatians 4:5. *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree,”* Galatians 3:13.

The Pocket Gospel

It is called “The Pocket Gospel” because it contains the wider dimensions of God’s grace in the ‘pocket’ of a few short verses: *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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,”* Romans 3:23-25.

Golgotha is the scene where Jesus, “The Lamb of God” (John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:6; 7:17; 14:10; 15:3; 19:9; 21:22, 23; 22:1, 3) was slain to redeem us from our sins. While He is being nailed to the cross, He forgave the soldiers who were piercing His body. *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,”* Luke 23:34. What a tremendous example of grace. Jesus forgave because they did not comprehend the significance of this execution. On the other hand, the crowd did understand. Joseph Ben Caiaphas, the chief priests, and some of the Pharisees had been contemplating Jesus’ death for years and then began actively planning for this moment, John 11:47-53. Jesus truly died for all humankind upon that cross, including the crowd, but the first words that He uttered were for the very ones driving the nails. *That is forgiveness!*

Jesus is the Lamb of God who died in our place, so that we may be forgiven of God for the original sin and our own temporal sins. *“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,” Romans 3:25. See also 1 John 2:2; 4:10. Merriam-Webster defines propitiate: “to gain or regain the favor or goodwill of.” Regaining the favor of God is a two-step process. God reached down to us with the blood of Jesus, and we then reach up through faith in that blood to save us from sin and inherit the promise of eternal life. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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 if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also,” John 14:1-3. Jesus promised to return one day and take us to His Father’s house where we may all live together in heaven. “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,” 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

ETERNAL DELIVERANCE

Jesus is the first fruit of the final harvest of souls. *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept,”* 1 Corinthians 15:20. In the parable of the “Wheat and the Tares” Jesus explained this final harvest. The good and the bad remain together until the harvest, at which time the Tare-people will be gathered and burned, and the Wheat-people will be gathered into a heavenly barn. The mortal has become immortal. *“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”* 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. Finally, we may rejoice with those same words of Apostle Paul. We will have crossed over into our final victory from the pain and suffering of this world.

Our deliverance will be final. *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,”* 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. We will be free from all pain and sorrow. *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away,”* Revelation 21:4. Yes, Brother Paul, we gladly rejoice with you in saying, *“O grave, where is thy victory?!!!”*

COMMENTS:

1. Explain the difference between original sin and temporal sin.
2. What does propitiation mean?
3. Clarify what is meant by the term “Pocket Gospel.”

Chapter 3. Learning about Church History

BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

The Church was born at the Jewish Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost (50th day) since it was celebrated 49 days after Passover. *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance,”* Acts 2:1-4. The Chosen had now officially become the Elect. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:4.

Were there Gentiles in this gathering? It would appear they were all Jewish. So, there remained yet another baptism of the Holy Spirit for Gentiles to become a part of the Church. Apostle Peter and his Jewish friends learned a very hard lesson in the house of Cornelius. *“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost,”* Acts 10:44-45. Just imagine their astonishment, for Jews looked down upon everyone else as dogs, Matthew 15:26; Philippians 3:2. And now God has baptized both Jew and Gentile with the same Holy Spirit.

Other Jewish members of the Church back in Jerusalem were dubious of this incident. Dogs? Would the God they knew and worshipped give Gentiles equal footing as Jews? Peter stood in their midst and said, *“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning,”* Acts 11:15. There is no record of a “rushing mighty wind” or “cloven tongues of fire” in Caesarea. But Peter was at both places, and in his mind, the experience was the same.

MEDIEVAL DECLINE AND ABUSES

In the political vacuum left by the dissolution of the Roman Empire in the West, the Church gradually became the new central institution ready to govern with an administrative body already in place and a hierarchical structure to execute plans and procedures. From about the 5th Century until perhaps the 11th Century, Christianity spread rapidly throughout Western Europe. Although the Church in Rome was the center of power, most of Europe was powerless. Feudalism began during the 800's and lasted until the rise of nation-states. Masses of common people rarely left their small farming villages, knowing very little of the larger world. The term clerk derives from cleric because few people could read or write. During medieval times the clergy of the Church were that small privileged class who could read and write. Often they were employed by people outside the Church to do bookkeeping and similar types of work. Clerical work in modern times functions very much the same as in centuries past.

Europe was too large to effectively govern from Rome. Instead, a national system of kings and queens developed who controlled a noble class with land grants, who in turn hired

knights to fight wars for the nobles and the king. Peasants were at the bottom who tilled the land for the nobles and knights, who in turn offered them protection. As kings and nobles became more and more powerful, skirmishes or power-struggles with the Church were inevitable. Hoping to maintain their authoritative power, the Church grew more political and abusive which incrementally, and predictably, resulted in the loss of holiness and piety.

THE REFORMATION

This was the age of Raphael, Michelangelo, the Sistine Chapel, and Pope Leo X who was in the process of renovating the basilica and remodeling adjacent buildings. Naturally, such a building project requires a building fund. Cash was flowing to Rome from many parts of Europe, specifically because Leo X was encouraging the sale of Indulgences to raise the money. An indulgence (Latin, *indulgentia*, “to be tender”) was a paper signed by a Church official that would grant immunity from temporal punishment for a sin that had been forgiven.

In the mind of Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and German professor of theology, this was egregious. As if the already mounting abuses of the Church weren't enough, now people were asked to pay both for forgiveness and amnesty. The Grand Commissioner for indulgences in Germany, Johann Tetzel, was attributed with the saying: *“As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.”*

Luther posted his ninety-five arguments of church abuse on the Wittenberg Castle Church door which also served as the bulletin board for academic discussions among students of the University of Wittenberg. Luther wanted to spur discussion among the student body – not to form a new movement that would break with the Roman Catholic Church.

What surprised Luther and his followers was the unexpected alliance of German nobility to Luther's cause. Seizing an opportunity to cut off the steady flow of much needed currency at home, German princes began protesting Rome's financial expropriation under the guise of theological sympathy. Although most people consider the word Protestant an appellation for Luther's followers, it actually describes this occasion of protestation from German nobility.

RISE OF ANABAPTISM

Another challenge to the Roman Church was Anabaptism. It was a movement that repudiated ecclesiastical control of individuals through infant baptism and Sacramentalism, and strove to attain radical discipleship to Christ by separation from worldly enticements. ANA (Greek, “again”) + Baptists made a public statement through the act of rebaptizing - theological (to believers) and political (to authorities). Their illegal rebaptisms were perceived by the government as subversive and a genuine threat to civil stability. Anabaptists were routinely hunted by Täufenjäger (Baptist hunters) and executed through drownings, mockingly called the third baptism. Few of the original leaders escaped martyrdom.

Enthusiasm for reform was not limited to Germany, for only a few years after Luther posted his church door arguments, Ulrich Zwingli found himself in trouble with a Catholic

bishop in Zurich, Switzerland, over matters pertaining to the observance of Lent. He had previously started a small cultural study group of several men, including Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz, but their focus gradually turned more to biblical matters. Each was proficiently skilled in Latin, Hebrew, and Greek; and they concluded from a scrupulous examination of the New Testament that infant baptism was scripturally groundless, determining that only believers with a mature comprehension of their decision should receive baptism. After corresponding with Luther on numerous issues, he gradually decided in 1522 to leave the priesthood. Catholic priest Georg Blaurock shared their theological views, and during one of their meetings involving a spirited discussion of believer's baptism, Blaurock requested to be “re-baptized” since he was first baptized as an infant. Conrad Grebel baptized him, and Blaurock, in turn, baptized Grebel and Mantz. Anabaptism was formally born on January 21, 1525. Additionally, it should be noted that Grebel was a lay person - not an ordained priest, minister, or the holder of any important ecclesiastical office. This is an interesting departure from the normal caste of the Reformers who were all clergy. In the wake of this theological movement there quietly sprang another movement that was more spiritual and explicitly more pious.

EMERGENCE OF PIETISM

It emanated from within the Lutheran movement and emphasized the need for a “*religion of the heart*” instead of the head, yet marvelously combined with a strong commitment to express this inner experience in daily life. It was characterized by ethical purity, inward devotion, charity, separation from worldly interests, and even mysticism. Followers were known for individual piety and rigorous adherence to the teachings of Christ. Leadership was more empathetic to adherents instead of being strident loyalists to Sacramentalism. A later and more radical version of Pietism even questioned the necessity of religious denominations. They wanted to exist as free independent groups outside of a denominational structure. These Radical Pietists were known as Separatists.

Philip Jacob Spener was the father of Pietism in the Lutheran Church. In 1675, he published *Pia Desideria* (“Pious Desires”), a six-point prescription for church reform that identified the laxity of the clergy and the shortcomings of the ecclesiastical system.

Ernest Christopher Hochmann von Hochenau also experienced his “awakening” at the University of Halle through August Hermann Francke in 1697. In the previous year, he had been arrested and expelled for openly preaching Christ and forcefully excoriating the three state churches: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed, (aka “The Big Three”). These incidents prompted him to abandon a promising career in law for that of an itinerant preacher. He was a persuasive speaker who roamed the countryside preaching to both nobleman and commoner with the power of the gospel. Also following the path of his mentor Gottfried Arnold, he proclaimed that the only true church was a spiritual one that was “separated” from denominationalism and especially from governmental interference. He later settled in the district of Wittgenstein under the protection of Count Henrich Albrecht’s promise of refuge to all persons experiencing harm because of their religious beliefs, activities, or practices.

HISTORY OF THE BRETHREN

Wittgenstein was also a haven for Alexander Mack and family who retreated from persecution to the safety and protection of Count Henrich Albrecht's promise of refuge. Mack was born in the town of Schriesheim in 1679. His father was a miller by trade, an elder in the Reformed Church, and briefly served as mayor of Schriesheim in 1690 and 1696. When he died in 1706, the mill was bequeathed to Alexander and his brother John Philip. Greatly influenced by Pietism, Alexander extended an invitation to Hochmann to minister in Schriesheim, who then used Mack's property for Pietist meetings. Although inconclusive, there is convincing evidence from some historians that Alexander even accompanied Hochmann on several preaching tours. When Pietist activity in Schriesheim became intolerable for local authorities, Hochmann was sentenced to hard labor. Alexander & Anna Mack sought refuge in the district of Wittgenstein at the small village of Schwarzenau, along with many others who were also expelled for their Pietist leanings. Feeling secure under the protection of Count Henrich Albrecht, Mack sold the remainder of his property in the spring of the following year (1707), and ministered to the needs of other refugees, as well as pay legal fines of close friends.

In the summer of 1708, he contemplated organizing a small community of believers, who would attempt to implement a Pietist experiment in faith by communal practice, involving believer's baptism, sharing all goods as common, uninhibited confession of sins, and diligently spending time in prayer in order to advance personal holiness. One notable difference existed between Mack and Hochmann. The latter being one of the more extreme Separatists in Pietism, Hochmann did not believe that an organized church was necessary. He considered the pure Church to be spiritual, without formal clergy, ritual, the need of sacraments or buildings, whereas Mack held to the need for each.

Living in the company of seven other similarly minded believers, Mack directed them to evaluate their mutual circumstance, particularly their unbaptized state (having repudiated infant baptism). If spiritual progress was to be made, it would be necessary to resolve these two hindrances through organizing and baptizing themselves. As Mack continued to dream of his own Pietist experiment, he penned a letter seeking advice and guidance from Hochmann, who was then imprisoned at Nurnberg. In Hochmann's reply dated July 24, 1708, he instructed the young visionary to ponder carefully the words of Jesus in Luke 14:28 - "*count the cost!*"

The Schwarzenau Baptists

A few months later, the twenty-nine-year-old idealist and seven others went to the Eder River at Schwarzenau and proceeded to inaugurate their group through baptism by trine immersion according to their interpretation of Matthew 28:19. The Church of the Brethren traces its roots to this inaugural baptism. Alexander Mack, Jr. later recalled that one person baptized his father who in turn baptized the others. They were five men and three women; Alexander Mack, Anna Mack (wife of Alexander), George Grebi, Lucas Vetter, Andrew Boni, John Kipping, Joanna Kipping (wife of John), and Joanna Noethiger. First known as the Schwarzenau Täufer (German, baptists), they would later adopt the separatist, Anabaptist title

of German Baptist Brethren. In the quietude of the district of Wittgenstein, Alexander Mack would attempt to institute a spiritual experiment in communal living, vigorously patterned after the New Testament account of the early believers. *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common,”* Acts 4:32. His inherited wealth largely contributed to their ability to live under common ownership, a noteworthy state that later dissolved in almost direct correlation to the expenditure of his wealth. Enjoying a brief respite from persecution, Mack would galvanize his social ideas and theology into practical living, and his writings reflected and defended the Anabaptist-Pietist heritage. He traveled extensively into the surrounding country which resulted in small congregations at Eppstein, Frankenthal, and Marienborn. The early Brethren message was evangelistic and centered on the basic New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ.

Brethren in America

Persecution of small groups by the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed state churches escalated. The first Brethren group arrived in America in 1719 under the supervision of Peter Becker who had been the pastor of the Krefeld congregation. They settled near Mennonites in the little village of Germantown which is now a part of northwest Philadelphia. Hardships of the Atlantic crossing along with disillusionment over internal strife in Germany resulted in no immediate formation of congregations.

On Christmas day in 1723, six Brethren were baptized in the Wissahickon Creek which is now in Fairmount Park (Philadelphia). Joyfully they celebrated the season of Christmas and organized the first Brethren congregation in America. The Germantown Church became the mother church. German printing was introduced to the American colonies and dominated by the Wittgenstein immigrants Christopher Sauer I (*pronounced “sour”*) and his son Christopher II which included the first German Bible and the first German newspaper. Additionally, the printing press of this father and son team was also a powerful lobbying device to maintain Quaker preeminence in the Pennsylvania legislature, opposed by the Proprietary Party that was largely composed of the growing William Penn family, most governors, and related interests. The Penn’s were chiefly concerned that their land would not be taxed and were strong proponents of a militia to quell Indian uprisings - the Sauer’s press fell on opposite sides of both issues.



Sauer German Printing

Another foe of the Sauer press was Benjamin Franklin who also operated a printing business in nearby Philadelphia and endeavored to corner their influence by monopolizing his notable control over paper and ink in this area of the colonies. This competitiveness eventually led to the Sauer’s manufacturing their own printing supplies and distribution system. German culture was generally knitted under one voice by the Sauer’s who encouraged voting for candidates that would support typically Brethren issues. The fledgling Germantown congregation

met for worship in the home of this prosperous businessman, where the second floor of the Sauer I residence had movable partitions so that family members could enjoy individualized compartments, yet when opened, a larger room could then accommodate the congregation for worship services. From 1731 until the death of Christopher I in 1758, this home was the principal meeting place of the Germantown Congregation.

Ephrata Cloister

As the German Baptist Brethren established themselves in the New World, they quickly welcomed and provided assistance to other Brethren arriving from the Old World. Conrad Beissel was one such individual who later became a presiding member of the Conestoga congregation near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. After time he endeavored to influence them toward his own spiritual mysticism, particularly his teachings regarding celibacy and Sabbath (Saturday) worship. Elders from the Germantown Mother Church in Philadelphia attempted to return their brother back into their fold of orthodoxy through repeated visitations. After continued friction with these Elders, Beissel finally broke with them and established his own experiment in faith at Ephrata in 1732. In the following years, especially with the death of Alexander Mack in 1735 who was their founder and figurehead, Brethren increasingly began leaving their congregations to join Beissel in his new mystical experiment along the Cocalico Creek at Ephrata.

During the early years and primarily under the guidance of Beissel's personal supervision, the community prospered, incorporated much industry, and produced a unique religious culture. But not long after the death of Beissel in 1768, the community began to wane and the buildings slowly deteriorated. After several decades, the remaining dwellers made notable attempts to preserve their society and repair the buildings, but there were not enough people left to maintain a viable community. In 1814, the few remaining dwellers incorporated the Seventh Day German Baptist Church which survived until 1934. Finally, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission assumed ownership of the grounds and regressing structures in 1941, and initiated a program of research, careful restoration, and visitor interpretation.

19th Century Acculturation

Many innovations of the Nineteenth Century irreversibly changed the Brethren who were mostly rurally situated, agriculturally minded, and moderately suspicious of outside influences. In the 1700's and early 1800's the Brethren easily managed to insulate themselves from the influences of American society due to their German subculture and rural location. What proved to complicate matters was the fact that while the more primitive rural Brethren generally abstained or refrained from technological innovations and more worldly social conventions, many of their urban counterparts were embracing both. Annual Meeting (*now called Annual Conference*), the denominational forum regularly became a factious arena where cultural and theological lines were clearly drawn between the more primitive Brethren (*also labeled Old Orders, Ancient Brethren*) and their progressive counterparts (*and labeled The Progressives*). This century dramatically restructured the social and theological framework of the Schwarzenau Brethren who officially adopted the label German Baptist Brethren in 1871.

Schisms of The 1880's

During the 1870's, the *Progressives* began lobbying the church to implement innovations that were considered by the vast majority of moderates as too worldly. At the same time, a small group of *Old Orders* desired implementation of measures to preserve values of heritage that were similarly perceived by the moderates as too restrictive. The insistence of each group to have their own way fractured the German Baptist Brethren. The Old Orders broke away from Annual Meeting in 1881 to form the *Old German Baptist Brethren*. Minister and publisher Henry R. Holsinger gradually became a firebrand of the *Progressives*, calling for a series of reforms: salaried ministers, Sunday school, personal choice of dress, unique approaches to missions, interaction with the world at large, and a greater emphasis on evangelism. He used his various publications to change public opinion.

At the 1867 Annual Meeting he erupted over the installation of deacons. The argument became so heated that he was later forced to apologize for many of his statements. This was the first of many incidences that would widened the gap between Holsinger and the Annual Meeting leadership. He was eventually disowned by the 1882 Annual Meeting. *Progressives* supported his causes and seceded to form *The Brethren Church* in Dayton, Ohio, on June 6, 1883. These divisions actually freed the central group of moderates (then called *Conservatives*) from the insistence of both parties, to finally regain the momentum of their own denominational vision. But it would take years for that vision to crystallize, because the constant infighting at Annual Meeting had left them without a clear identity.

Very much dismayed by this series of infighting, nevertheless, the moderates gradually devised a course for the future. In the 1904-1906 Annual Meetings they felt the need for a new identity with a new denominational name, for at least three reasons: (1) Brethren had been predominately speaking English since about 1850, (2) the label German gradually seemed less and less descriptive of their evolving culture, and (3) a new label would hopefully disassociate them from the unpleasant divisiveness of the recent past. Originally known as the Schwarzenau Baptists, they assumed the 1871 label of German Baptist Brethren in their New World migrations, since few people in America would have any idea where Schwarzenau was located. Much aware that they were no longer strictly German and now eschewing the title Baptist because of other dissimilar groups, the remaining word Brethren was the only thing left that would still retain their heritage. In 1908, Annual Meeting would formally adopt *Church of the Brethren* as their denominational label. They would be starting a new century with a new name.

Colleges & Universities

Higher education was not a significant issue for the German Baptist Brethren until the latter half of the century. Determined to preserve their rural German sub-culture, the Brethren modestly resisted the concept of higher education at the family level for two principal reasons: they were a hardworking people immediately concerned with making a living and viewed formal education as a luxury, additionally there was a significant fear that outside social

influences, especially that of campus life, would alter the spiritually established principles of their young men and women. This proved to be prophetic, for it did change their values.

Momentum for the establishment of Brethren colleges and universities was not a denominationally coordinated effort, but rather an interspersed energy rising from the vision of unrelated individuals at different times in various geographical locations, starting with Juniata College in 1876 and ending with Elizabethtown College in 1899. Annual Meeting uniformly declined to assume any degree of ownership in the colleges and further stipulated that the word Brethren should not be included in the school label.



Juniata College is the oldest of the six colleges that are affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. It was the vision of three central Pennsylvania men of the Brumbaugh family who steadfastly advocated the establishment of a Brethren institution of higher education. Martin Brumbaugh was later elected governor of Pennsylvania (1915-19). The college officially opened for classes on April 17, 1876 as the Huntingdon Normal School. Its label was changed to Brethren's Normal College two years later, and then finally to Juniata College in 1894. Full accreditation was received from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1896.



Bridgewater College evolved from the former Spring Creek Normal School, which was founded in 1880 under the leadership of Daniel Flory at Spring Creek. The campus moved a few miles east to Bridgewater in 1882, just in time for the fall semester. It was incorporated by the State of Virginia in 1884 and the label changed to Bridgewater College in 1889. Full accreditation as a four-year college by the Virginia State Board of Education came in 1916.



La Verne, University of – It was founded by members of the Church of the Brethren under the name of Lordsburg College in 1891. The Church of the Brethren Pacific Southwest District took over the administration of the school in 1908, and the name of the school was changed to La Verne College in 1917. Accreditation was received by the California Board of Education in 1927 and administrative control was later transferred to an independent board of trustees in 1933. Following accreditation by the Western College Association in 1955, the school engaged in a vigorous program of innovation during the 1960s with new major programs of study being introduced, such as the off-campus degree programs in 1969, addition of a law school in 1970, and the American Armenian International College in 1976, plus a name change in 1977 to the University of La Verne.



McPherson College was founded in August of 1887, and opened for classes the following year on September 5, 1888. It was the first of the Brethren affiliated colleges to include a biblical studies program as a part of its origination, and the first to request a direct relationship with the Church of the Brethren. McPherson has a strong agricultural department that was strengthened by the acquisition of a

one hundred fifty-acre farm in 1909. Accreditation was then received in 1921 from the North Central Association of Colleges. Presently, a board of trustees includes some Brethren from surrounding church districts. Since it is the only Brethren affiliated institution in the mid-west, McPherson serves a wider geographic region than the other five colleges, with a prospective area of coverage from the Pacific coast to the Mississippi River, and from Canada to Mexico. It is a co-educational institution with an enrollment near 500.



Manchester University was incorporated from the former Roanoke Classical Seminary, founded in 1860 by members of the United Brethren Church in Roanoke, Indiana. It was moved to North Manchester, Indiana, in 1889 and acquired by representatives of the Church of the Brethren who incorporated it as the College and Bible School in 1895. Accreditation was received from the State of Indiana in 1932. Elevating into graduate programs and establishing a School of Pharmacy in Fort Wayne, the label college was changed to university in 2012.

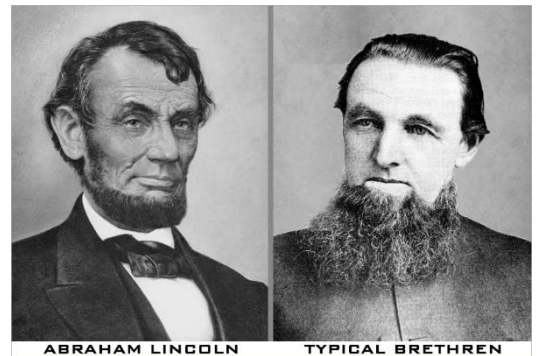


Elizabethtown College officially opened for classes on November 13, 1900, at the corner of South Market & Bainbridge streets in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. Elders of the German Baptist Brethren of Pennsylvania Eastern district were invited in 1898 to attend a meeting for the expressed purpose of founding an institution of higher education, and a committee subsequently recommended Elizabethtown as their choice location. The school was moved to the east side of town in January of the following year, and came under ownership of the Eastern Pennsylvania district of the Church of the Brethren in 1917. The college later received accreditation for issuing baccalaureate degrees from the State Council on Education in 1921. It is the largest of the six colleges.

Nationally Known Brethren

ABRAHAM LINCOLN?

Rumor among the Brethren was that the 16th President was baptized by Elder Isaac Billheimer, who is said to have immersed Lincoln in the Sangamon River, near Springfield, Illinois. There is no substantive evidence to support the story, however two other things are confirmed: Elder Daniel P. Saylor frequently visited Lincoln in the White House, and the President started wearing the typical Brethren beard without a mustache not long afterwards. Mustaches were disliked by the earliest Brethren because it reminded them of the large ones sported by European Cavalry officers, especially those of the Bugle Corp. A few of these details were garnered from *Sidelights on Brethren History* by Freeman Ankrum as told to him by a Mrs. Anna Wagner whose father knew the unnamed officiating baptismal minister.



MARTIN BRUMBAUGH

The distinction of being the first Brethren politician goes to Martin Brumbaugh who became the 26th Governor of Pennsylvania from 1915 until 1919. He began serving as the superintendent of the Philadelphia Public School system in 1906. After political corruption marred the 1910 campaign, the Republican Party asked him to run for governor in 1914. During his term in office, Brumbaugh pressed for more highway construction, supported farmers, and endeavored to increase funding for public education. This was a novel undertaking for a man who came from a strict German heritage. He was also president of Juniata College and the first education commissioner for Puerto Rico. Before entering the political scene, he wrote *“A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America.”*



DAN WEST

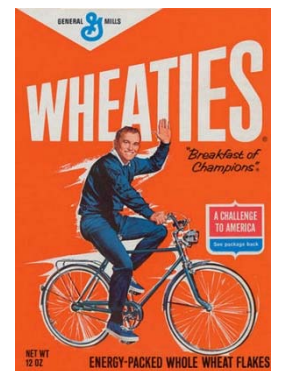
Founder of “The Heifer Project” and vigorous advocate for peace, West’s legacy to hunger destressed people all over the world is still in business. After working for the Emergency Peace Campaign in 1936 he traveled to Spain in order to serve as a relief worker following the Spanish Civil War. Sitting under an almond tree one day, he also felt the challenge of feeding hungry people as ubiquitous images of poverty and deprivation surrounded him daily. On that Almond Tree day, one man’s vision became a reality. Later known as The Heifer Project, its continuing process would geometrically multiply animals worldwide as hundreds of cattle produced thousands of calves, and those thousands would exponentially produce millions.



On his return to the US in 1938, West started building enthusiasm for his project among neighbors, resulting in a volunteer *Heifers For Relief Committee* the next year. It gained approval as a national project in 1942, with the first shipment of heifers leaving for Puerto Rico on June 14, 1944. Following the death of Dan West in 1971, the project was incorporated as *Heifer Project International* and has become an independent ecumenical operation.

BOB RICHARDS

This two-time Olympic pole vaulting champion became Mr. Wheaties, the General Mills cereal’s spokesman from 1956 to 1970, after winning gold medals at the 1952 and 1956 Olympic Games. When General Mills decided to begin using a spokesman to sell their cereal, Richards was chosen from more than 500 candidates, and the first athlete to have their photo on the Wheaties cereal box. Considered at that time to be the best pole vaulter in the history of the sport, he was nicknamed the “Vaulting Vicar” because he was also a Church of the Brethren minister. Richard occasionally told the public: *“It’s in the striving, not in the winning—that’s the Olympics. It’s not in the gold medal, but in trying to be your best, in reaching out.”*



CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN LOGO



The Church of the Brethren Logo is a composite of three different shapes that symbolize three central messages of the life of Jesus: *death on a **cross**, baptism in the **wave**, and the unity of a **circle**.*

CROSS represents one of the most horrific methods of human execution, yet it has also become a singular logo for Christianity itself, because Jesus died on a cross for our sins. Appearing on church spires, altars, literature, bumper stickers, and costume jewelry, it has become a symbol of hope to millions of people who have accepted God's offer of redemption through Jesus' shed blood for their sins. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"* John 3:16. Because of God's infinite love for humanity, we were given a way of escape from the wages of sin by accepting divine grace through the sacrificial death of Christ. *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it,"* Luke 9:23-24. Paradoxically, believers save their life by losing it through identifying themselves with Jesus. In order to remain faithful to our calling, believers must take up their own spiritual cross with Christ by living according to His expectations instead of that of the world.

CIRCLE is a geometric symbol of unity as represented in a wedding ring. Through identification with Jesus, believers are spiritually unified into one body. *"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of one another,"* Romans 12:5. *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism,"* Ephesians 4:4-5. The circle also represents the earth and the Great Commission which calls for all believers to teach and baptize people in all nations, spreading the gospel of God's grace to all who will accept it. The prayer of Christ on that final night with his disciples, before walking across the Kidron valley into the garden of Gethsemane, focused on His desire for believers to maintain unity and achieve perfection. *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...that they may be made perfect in one,"* John 17:21,23. An unending circle reflects the nature of eternity. Christian hope is predicated on being resurrected into heaven where we may live forever.

WAVE represents numerous characteristics of water that describe various elements of Christianity. Water represents baptism through which a candidate enters into a new life, and then becomes united with the larger membership of believers. The Church of the Brethren fully immerses the baptismal candidate in water, in three successive forward motions as patterned after the words of Jesus in the Great Commission: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"* Matthew 28:19. As Christ was buried in the grave and arose to new life on the third day, so also do we bury our sins and rise to newness of life in baptism. From a watery baptismal grave, the convert departs from a lifestyle of death into a lifestyle filled with promise (Romans 6:8). Water also evokes our compassion for service as Christ washed the feet of the disciples as a slave with towel and basin (John 13:5), reminds us of Jesus' promise of rewards for service (Mark 9:41), recalls that justice will ultimately flow like a river (Amos 5:24), and reveals the eternal nature of the gospel (John 4:14). The wave prompts our compassion to serve, teach, and baptize.

BUNKERTOWN CORE BELIEFS, VALUES & PRACTICES

Every organization has core beliefs or minimal standards which serve as guiding principles to maintain consistency, harmony, and alleviate conflicts arising from misunderstandings. The following points regarding personal accountability and social responsibility are central to the Church of the Brethren and the local congregation at Bunkertown.

ABORTION is murdering the innocent which belong to God. *“Thou shalt not kill”* (Hebrew רצח, murder) as stated in the Sixth Commandment. The necessity of protecting small children from harm, and the punishment for the offender was forcefully expounded by Jesus in Matthew 18:6, *“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”*

ALCOHOL and addictive behavior undermines sober vigilance against the devious stratagems of Satan who would destroy the Church by first destroying its members - mind and body. Apostle Paul reminds us that God regards our bodies as a sacred temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are,”* 1 Corinthians 3:16-17. Following the deaths of the priests Nadab and Abihu by fire, God instructed Aaron, *“Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,”* Leviticus 10:9-10.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE should be a hallmark to the secular world that we value the worth and contribution of each member of a God ordained family. Ephesians 5:21–25 provides basic guidelines for husbands and wives in a Christian family. A husband is required to love his wife in the same manner as Christ sacrificially loved the church. A wife should respect her husband and willingly submit to his Christ-like role of leadership. Fathers are admonished to raise their children in the, *“nurture and admonition of the Lord,”* Ephesians 6:4. Additionally, fathers are to provide for their families, or be regarded as *“worse than an unbeliever,”* 1 Timothy 5:8. God also expects, *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise,”* Ephesians 6:1-2. Obedience to these precepts by all family members represents a successfully functioning Christian family.

DANCING is prohibited at Bunkertown as dancing may invite sensual thinking and sexual passions. Even ballroom dancing at wedding receptions engages one to lose sight of the purity demanded by the Holy Spirit, *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world,”* 1 John 2:16. (Also by vote of Congregational Business Meeting, February 9, 2003).

FRUIT BEARING is the litmus test of Christian loyalty to Jesus who challenged us to be productive workers in the Kingdom of God, for Jesus stated *“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,”* Matthew 7:19. We achieve Christian productivity by adhering to, and implementing the teachings of Christ in our daily lives. *“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing,”* John 15:4-5.

GAMBLING is an avaricious mind-set toward worldly gain which directly subverts the entire body of Christ’s teaching. *“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth,”* Luke 12:15. *“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me,”* Matthew 19:21. Church of the Brethren Annual Conference addressed this issue in their 1986 Statement on Gambling, to *“Encourage all congregations to look*

carefully at their stewardship practices to assure that gambling, lotteries, and games of chance, however harmless-appearing, are not promoted, excused, or practiced within their fellowship.” 1986, IV, E.

HOMOSEXUALITY violates the very basic family structure established by God in Genesis 1-2 and then reaffirmed by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-6, *“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”* Every biblical mention of same sex activity employs disdainful and condemnatory language, such as found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”* Same sex unions simply lack biblical foundation, tacit approval by God, or a divinely sanctioned blessing to any degree.

INTEGRITY OF SPEECH preserves the highest standard of love and respect for all of God’s people. Jesus stated, *“For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned,”* Matthew 12:37. Apostle Paul likewise affirmed, *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers,”* Ephesians 4:29.

LAW SUITS between Christians reflects a spiritual weakness in asking the government to arbitrate spiritual disputes outside of what Jesus has taught us in Matthew 18:15-17, *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”* Apostle Paul, likewise, stated in I Corinthians 6:1-8, *“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? ...”* Spiritual matters are best resolved through a spiritual process.

LOVE FEAST AND COMMUNION has been one of the most sacred ordinances to the Church of the Brethren. Holy communion involving the remembrance of Christ’s bodily suffering through the Bread and the Cup sustains our devotion. Love Feast refers to the Agape love of Christ for the Church. A typical service is composed of a fellowship meal, washing of feet, breaking of Bread, and receiving the Cup of Blessing. Each step is emphasized by Scripture, hymns, and prayer. See also Matthew 26:26-28 and 1 Corinthians 11:24-26.

PEACE and non-violent resolutions to all conflicts are primary. Jesus instructed us to care about our enemies in the same manner as God. *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you,”* Matthew 5:44. Jesus gives us a very orderly approach to resolving conflicts in Matthew 18:15-17.

SECRET SOCIETIES governed by oath-bound allegiance are in direct violation of our primary loyalty to Jesus Christ and his Church. Jesus stated that no one can serve two masters, for they will always reverence one with disdain for the other. Jesus forcefully stated that we should not take an oath apart from devotion to God alone. *“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King,”* Matthew 5:34-36.

SIMPLE LIVING has been at the heart of the Brethren mind-set from the very beginning in 1708 when our founders Alexander Mack and wife Anna gave practically all of their personal wealth to sustain the new fledgling congregation. They followed the teaching of Jesus to give to the poor in order to have treasure in heaven. A simple life-style frees us from the hurried pace of consumerism and self-promotion, both of which draw us away from God. *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him,”* 1 John 2:15.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION

“I am the good shepherd,” imparted Jesus to His disciples in John 10:14. And, what is a good shepherd? One who loves the flock, cares for each member of the flock, understands the value of the flock, and thus will take measures to protect the flock. In this same verse, Jesus also says, *“I know my sheep.”* The manuscript word for “know” is one of the most common in the Greek language. It means completeness of understanding. When used with the accusative as in John 14:7, Jesus was implying that if you “really” knew Me, then you would also have fully known the Father. Likewise, it is wise for a pastor to know the flock more completely.

Unfortunately, sheep have a proclivity for wandering from the rest of the flock, and need to be lovingly returned. Likewise, church members have the same propensity for wandering from sanctified living, either through inadvertent behavior, or at worst, an intentional desire to harm. As behavior escalates to the level of harmful intent, it becomes necessary for the church to intervene on behalf of its own welfare. Hopefully, in minor instances, this would not be necessary because the Holy Spirit has given the flock a self-correcting directive through the Apostle Paul who related in Galatians 6:1, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* The Greek word for restore (καταρτίζω) is also used by Mark (1:19) to describe the routine of fishermen mending their nets. Something needing regular attention. Paul’s inclusion of the word “spiritual” is paramount. For only those persons who are spiritually and lovingly guided by God’s own Spirit, should assist in this delicate process of restoring fallen members.

Jesus has given the flock a uniform procedure for restoration found in Matthew 18:15-17, *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”* Here we see three distinct levels of engagement. First, a face to face meeting between individuals in private, for privacy ensures the needless loss of respectability through gossip. Second, a small group of like-minded persons whose intention is to gently restore. And third, because the spiritual health of the flock is essential, the church itself must intervene following a well-defined protocol that is generally understood by all members of the church. This latter circumstance is precisely what occurred at Corinth when sexual misconduct was affecting the welfare of the flock (1 Corinthians 5:1-11).

Regrettably there could be situations where irreconcilable differences prevail, and more stern measures are required as the Holy Spirit has prescribed in 2 Thessalonians 3:6, *“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”* The manuscript word for “disorderly” conveys the image of something being out of rank, such as fence posts uniformly in line, except for one which is leaning. Satan enjoys his finest hour when a church neglects to discipline its members, or even worse, when those out of line appear to be esteemed above the majority who endeavor to be faithful.

Chapter 4. Learning about Faith

WHAT IS FAITH?

Biblically defined faith may be found in Hebrews 11:1: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,*” or, the assurance of things that we hope for and the certainty of things we cannot physically see. Faith is an active channel of a living trust between us and God, a strong conviction for something when no tangible proof exists. This kind of trust does not develop easily. Many Christians struggle with the nuances of faith, such as maintaining confidence, sustaining belief, preserving a comfortable reliance, all of which may vacillate in times of stress or doubt.

What complicates matters is when things hoped for are seemingly unrewarded. Trusting is simple when a process completes successfully and consistently. Upon entering a dark room and flipping the wall switch, how often do we contemplate whether the ceiling light will not illuminate the room? This process is so frequently successful that faith is not really much of a consideration. However, stepping into a large airplane is a terrifying experience for some people no matter how much they are reassured about the safety of traveling by air. So, what makes the difference? Both of these processes are mechanical but the outcomes can be horribly different. Is it because a personal relationship is not involved in a mechanical process? Yes, and no. How many times have people suffered the consequences of being swindled by a con-man? Trust was betrayed even though there was a genuine expectation of reward on the part of the victim. Why do people use “Caller ID” on their phone system? To avoid scams for one thing. How does one preserve a strong faith when the odds of success are uncertain?

In relationships it requires getting to know someone better. Passengers in a carpool will learn to trust their driver through travel experience and a deeper knowledge of the driver, so that arriving at their destination is relatively certain. *Familiarity is the key component.*

Just imagine that you are watching a carpool of three persons plus the driver. After thirty minutes, one person might be sleeping, a second might be looking out a window, and the third might be asking the driver a lot of questions. You are actually looking at three different levels of trust. The first person is so trusting of the driver that sleeping is preferable. The second person looking out a window may not yet have a sleep level of trust, but there is enough familiarity with the driver that enjoying the scenery is preferable. The third person asking all the questions may be a new rider who is still getting to know the driver and increase familiarity.

Let’s change this scenario into a faith lesson. The driver is God and the passengers are believers who have different trust levels based on their familiarity with God. How does one gain familiarity with God? The same way that we get to know another human. Communication. It requires frequent conversation. “*Pray without ceasing,*” 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Apostle Paul most certainly did not mean that we should be on our knees with eyes closed 24 hours of each day. Prayer is conversation with God. We can talk to God on our knees, riding a bicycle, sitting

in a car, eating a meal, lifting boxes, swimming in a pool, ironing clothes, or hunting for keys. The point is that conversation needs to be taking place. Familiarity requires frequency, and solitude usually works best if we wish to reach a deeper level of understanding or develop a much stronger faith. “...*enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret,*” Matthew 6:6.

Two young people in love get to know each other better when they are alone. Why is that? Because intimacy becomes strongest without interruptions. One such couple was traveling on a highway when the girl changed the subject of their conversation, and instantly, the boy said, “Choo”! “Where do you see a train, she asked?” “I don’t, he said.” He then explained that when she changed the subject, he had already been thinking of that very same thing. Since their minds were on the same track - “choo choo” just seemed the appropriate phrase. That incident of their minds both “being on the same track” started a tradition for that couple, and they have been “Choo Chooing” with each other for more than thirty-five years.

WHY DOES GOD REQUIRE FAITH?

The Holy Spirit tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God? Hebrews 11:6. But why does God require faith? Why is pleasing God so impossible without faith? Wouldn’t the whole process be much more reliable if God just made Himself visible to us, so faith would become unnecessary? No. That was tried once in the Garden of Eden and sin ruined everything. Additionally, humans have lost their immortal “likeness” as a result. We cannot be in the same environment with God and live. “*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see...*” I Timothy 6:16. Our likeness to God changed because of sin. Adam and Eve possessed a special likeness (Genesis 1:26) with God that we do not possess. God dwells in a light that we cannot approach. “*Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live,*” Exodus 33:20. Moses was permitted on only one occasion to get nearer to God, but not too near, Exodus 33:21-23.

Israelites who remained in the valley were frightened by the appearance of Moses when he returned from being with God on top of Mount Sinai because his face shone. So distressful was the visage of Moses that a veil was placed over his face while speaking with the people. He would remove it when again in the presence of the Lord, Exodus 34:29-35. Why did his face glow? Perhaps, that original “likeness” was temporarily being restored. Think on this analogy, when a person gets out of a swimming pool, they are still wet for a period of time. In a similar way, Moses was still wet, with the “likeness” he acquired from being in the proximity of God.

Why is faith essential? Because sin has “physically” separated us from God. Without that restored “likeness” we cannot occupy the same environment with God. However, we still have a spiritual nature, and since God is spirit (John 4:24) we may communicate on that level only. Those Christians who have redirected their thinking to the spiritual realm enjoy that familiarity with God. It’s like a new birth. Things gradually take on new meaning. “...*old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new,*” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

FAITH THAT IS CONFIRMED

Ok, you're new to Christianity and struggling with this thing called faith. One of your questions will undoubtedly be: "How do I know that communication with God is real." It is when faith is confirmed. This does not refer to the liturgical service when young candidates make promises to a church, or to Roman Catholics who hold Confirmation as one of the Seven Sacraments through which they must pass in the course of their religious upbringing.

When we earnestly start living a consistent life of faith, God will spiritually confirm that He is real and that our trust has not been in vain. Usually we receive confirmation at the same level of our familiarity with God. In the carpool there were three types of passengers: one was sleeping or resting (*fully committed to trusting the driver*), one was gazing through the window (*halfway committed to trusting*), and one was questioning (*not yet ready to trust the driver*). Christians may be grouped into these same categories. Some have been living a committed life of faith for many years and their level of trust in God is very high. They are *resting* in the arms of God. Some are *gazing* at what other Christians are doing for God. And still others are *questioning* the whole dimension of being a Christian. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,*" James 4:8. It's true! Our confirmation is commensurate with our familiarity.

MATURING SPIRITUALLY

Age has very little to do with these levels or categories of trust. Spiritual maturity is a direct correlation to our personal investment. Here are five simple steps to incorporate in your life that will enhance your drawing closer to God and develop a higher level of familiarity.

- 1) **PRIORITIZE** a time with God. Select a part of your day to be alone without interruptions. Morning works best for many people because family, friends, or coworkers are either still sleeping, or haven't experienced enough of the day yet, to accumulate reasons for contacting anyone else.
- 2) **BIBLE READING** is essential. It is nearly impossible to become more familiar with God, if we do not learn from the literature that was divinely inspired by God. We have been provided with a wonderful book that informs, guides, corrects, inspires, and teaches. At first it may be advisable to absorb what you have just read, instead of memorization. Constant reading promotes retention.
- 3) **SMALL GROUP** participation will surround you with people at all different levels of familiarity who can mentor and assist your personal growth. Or, perhaps you are a *Resting* type believer who can mentor others. Your deeper level of trust in God can only inspire others to become more familiar and spiritually wiser.
- 4) **THINK ABOVE** to a greater extent of your time, rather than concentrating on the banal things of this sinful world. "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,*" Colossians 3:1. Your mind is a subconscious sponge that wants to soak up the conscious. Nourish it with good things instead of the worthless and eternally unprofitable.

5) RECORD BLESSINGS in a written form so that you may later benefit from the positive things that God is doing in your life. Sadly, our memories grow dim with the passing of time and we forget the “little” moments that formerly renewed our spirits. “*Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen,*” Deuteronomy 4:9. You will be more keenly aware of spiritual dynamics. Evaluate your spiritual advancement, share positive experiences with others, and ultimately praise the Lord with gratitude when moments may not be that conducive, “*In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you,*” 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

COMMENTS

1. Strive to evaluate your level of familiarity with God: *Resting, Gazing, Questioning*.
2. You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). How brightly have you been shining?
3. From what person have you learned the most about being a real Christian?
4. What stumbling blocks have impaired your spiritual growth?
5. What is the benefit of having a quiet place and time with God?
6. How do you see yourself growing spiritually from year to year?
7. If you could ask God one question, what would it be?

Chapter 5. Learning about the Larger Community

WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS BUILDING

The local church should be more than a place of worship, it should also be a launching pad into the local community where the membership can serve and minister to the physical and spiritual needs of others. Contrariwise, a church should also be a spiritual hospital where the non-churched may seek refuge within from societal injury. The door needs to swing both ways.

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Luke 10:25. This expert of Mosaic Law was really trying to justify the avoidance of Gentiles. Jesus responded: *“What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he (lawyer) answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he (Jesus) said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”* Luke 10:26-28. See also Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:35-40.

Yet, the predilection to avoid those outside the local group is more evident when the lawyer continued with his next question: *“And who is my neighbor?”* Luke 10:29. Jesus responds with the story of the Good Samaritan.

There is a plaque above the inside main entrance as you exit from the Amwell Church of the Brethren which reads, *“You become the Church, when you leave this building,”* Ministry goes beyond writing a check for outreach ministries. You need to personally reach out beyond the walls of your worship facility. Jesus touched the needful in their own streets and markets.

SERVE AND MINISTER

As was typical of other rabbis of the time, Jesus had garnered the interest of many disciples in addition to the Twelve. He assembled seventy for a special mission that would cover lands and cities where Jesus would later visit Himself. They were sent in pairs. *“The Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. And he said unto them, the harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest,”* Luke 10:1-2 (NASV, ISV, KJV, TLB, YLT; some mss. read seventy-two). Upon returning to Jesus they were joyous, celebratory, ebullient, and full of life. They rejoiced at their God-ordained success, and thrilled to witness demons abated of their power.

We too can share in that same enthusiasm by leaving our church doors behind for a season to labor in the harvest that surrounds us. Apostle Paul encouraged the church at Philippi to: *“Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love ... in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,”* Philippians 2:2-4. Ministering to others can be exhilarating. God is love. When we view others through the eyes of God, people become special. Their needs

and hurts become important to us. Our priorities and paradigms of life change as we become a co-worker with God. *“And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not,”* Isaiah 58:10-11.

DISCOVERING THE GREAT COMMISSION

Following in the steps of Jesus will change you forever, knowing that you are fulfilling God’s expectations with the reward of eternity yet to come. Apostle Peter said only Jesus had the words of eternal life, John 6:68. Sharing the eternal words of life with others is the very essence of the Great Commission: *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,”* Matthew 28:19-20. The Bunkertown Church of the Brethren also shares in the Great Commission in several ways, but not limited to just the following.

Bethesda Mission in Harrisburg is a non-denominational missionary arm of local churches, reaching out to men, women, and children of all races, nationalities and creeds, providing the poor and homeless with shelter, food, clothing, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, and further disciplining them in the Christian way of life.

Jail Ministry to Mifflin County Prison reaches men of all ages who have unfortunately stepped over legal boundaries into lives of drugs, robbery, violence, and incarceration. Most will return to the community. Here is your opportunity to serve the Lord by sharing the good news of redemption and God’s forgiveness that will enable them to return as productive citizens.

Brethren Disaster Response is our denominational avenue to helping communities recover from tornados, floods, earthquakes, and fires. You’ll receive an enduring blessing from people who experienced homelessness, death of family, or loss of property or occupation.

Juniper Community Missions to Haiti with regular mission trips to villages in the mountainous highlands. A few members have become major participants in this ministry and strongly encourage others to also become involved.

Church World Service Crop Walk is an opportunity to alleviate hunger through the simple act of walking. Join with other participants on the walking track at Walker Township Park, located on the north side of Route 75, just west of the Route 322 Port Royal Exit. Being a sponsored participant also gives you an opportunity to improve your own health at the same time.

Juniata County Food Pantry welcomes your grocery items for the many in our community who are less fortunate. Donating just a few things can mean so much to someone else.

Christmas Angel Ministry is a seasonal opportunity to truly give children a Merry Christmas.

Harvest Home each fall of the year donates grocery items to local needy families.

COMMENTS:

1. Explain your understanding of Original Sin and Temporal Sin.
2. How was sin absolved during the Old Testament period?
3. Explain your understanding of the Grace of God.
4. Why was it necessary for Jesus to come to Earth? To die?
5. Share which verse of the Bible, best assures you of eternal life in heaven.
6. How will you respond to God's invitation to serve as a Member at Bunkertown?
7. What do you like most about the Church of the Brethren?
8. Which ministry at Bunkertown are you most likely to involve yourself? Why?
9. Offer suggestions on how you would improve this Membership Handbook.

Chapter 6. Statement of Vows

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS by Transfer of Letter, or Reaffirmation of Faith, or Baptism

MINISTER:

Friends in Christ, you have previously made confession of your faith and have been members of His church. We rejoice in your decision to become members of this congregation, in full covenant relationship with the believers who worship and serve God in this place. Do you now reaffirm your faith and loyalty to Jesus Christ, our Lord and His gospel?

CANDIDATE:

I do.

MINISTER:

As you unite with this church, will you worship, serve, and share in its program, supporting it by your earnest prayers, regular attendance, loyal service, and faithful stewardship, as God gives you strength?

CANDIDATE:

With God's help, I will.

MINISTER:

Do you promise to live and share with us in the bonds of Christian fellowship, giving and receiving Christian love, sharing and bearing one another's joy and pain?

CANDIDATE:

I do.

CONGREGATION:

We welcome you with joy and affection into this household of faith. We pledge to you our help, our prayers, our concern, that we may all increase in the knowledge and love of God. We trust God for strength to follow with you in Christ's way, keeping together the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

MINISTER:

The members of this church bid you welcome in God's name. On their behalf, I give you the right hand of fellowship. We pray that all of us, united in Christian love, may grow in all Christian graces in the service of our Lord.

"FOR ALL WHO MINISTER," Brethren Press, Elgin, Illinois, pp. 142-143.

Appendix 1: Timeline of Church History

DATE	EVENT
33 ?	Birth of the <i>Jewish</i> Church, Acts 2:4 / Birth of the <i>Gentile</i> Church, Acts 10:44; 11:15.
48 ?	Council of Jerusalem decided that Gentiles are viable members of the Church without the necessity of first becoming Jewish or following Mosaic laws.
61 ?	Mark writes the first historical account of the life of Jesus.
70	Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Christians move to Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome.
301	Armenia becomes the first country to officially recognize Christianity at the state religion.
313	Edict of Milan legalizes and protects all religions. Several misconceptions abound. It is commonly thought that this edict established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Actually it legalized and protected the free exercise of all religions. Jointly issued by Roman Emperors Constantine and Licinius. It was actually thought to have been written by Licinius who was a pagan at the time. Constantine was already a Christian and promoted Christianity, but he also tolerated paganism. <i>See also Edict of Thessalonica.</i>
325	Council of Nicaea refutes the Arian heresy that the Son and the Father were not of the same substance. It also established a uniform time to celebrate Easter. <i>See also Arianism.</i>
367	Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria is the first to list all 27 books of the New Testament.
380	Edict of Thessalonica declares Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire on February 27. It was jointly issued by Roman Emperors Theodosius I, Gratianus, and Valentinian II. Nicene Christianity flourished in the western half of the Empire, but the eastern half rapidly digressed into the heresy of Arianism. This edict ordered all subjects in the East to profess the faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, making Nicene Christianity the official state religion. <i>See also Edict of Milan, Arianism.</i>
381	Council at Constantinople revises the Nicene Creed to its current wording. Changes included a different perspective of the Holy Spirit which contributed to the Great Schism of 1054 that separated the western Roman Catholics from the eastern Greek Orthodox.
449	Pope Leo I delivered his <i>Tome</i> (“large scholarly work”) to the Second Council of Ephesus which declared the official faith statements of the Roman Church. Leo would push papal authority into a new realm of primacy unknown by former Popes. Confessions to priests in secret instead of public, would result in a more authoritative priesthood.
787	Second Council of Nicaea restores the veneration of images that had been banned.
1054	Great Schism (“split”) between the Western Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox over issues of mutual excommunications, wording of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 regarding the Holy Spirit, and leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist.
1095	Pope Urban II authorizes the first Crusade to regain the Holy Land from Moslems.

- 1382 John Wycliffe translates the Latin Vulgate Bible into Middle English.
- 1453 Fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Ottoman Turks formerly ends the Byzantine or eastern half of the Roman Empire. Scholars and their Greek manuscripts plus merchants and their wealth had been fleeing to Italy for many years. This influx precipitated the Renaissance (French, “rebirth”). Much was to be learned and studied about past centuries since virtually no manuscripts of any kind had survived the constant warfare from invasions and local political conflicts that had decimated the western part of the Empire. For the first time in almost a thousand years, people learned an enormous number of particulars that had been tragically lost to history. Commerce on a vast scale provided new wealth that indirectly aided the spread of learning. What had started in Italy, gradually expanded across the entire continent of Europe.
- 1516 Erasmus, the scholar of Rotterdam, forged intellectual foundations for Protestantism. He circulated the first printed Greek New Testament, which naturally exhibited a preference for the Byzantine Text. There were noticeable diversions from the Latin Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church which inspired a renewed interest in biblical studies.
- 1517 Martin Luther posts his 95 arguments of church abuse on the Wittenberg Castle Church door which served as the bulletin board for academic discussions among students of the University of Wittenberg. Luther wanted to spur discussion among the student body – not to form a new movement that would break with the Roman Catholic Church.
- 1525 Anabaptism was born on January 21 when Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, and Georg Blaurock, baptized each other as believing adults at Zurich. They had regularly met for intense biblical studies and could find no scriptural support for infant baptism. Originally they were known as the Swiss Brethren. Mennonites trace their roots to this group although their leader Menno Simons was a Catholic Priest at that time.
- 1530 Augsburg Confession was the setting where Martin Luther’s justifications for church reforms were presented to the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. Luther dared not appear. His close associate Philipp Melancthon wrote the papers, and they were delivered and explained to the assembled by Christian Beyer, legal expert and Chancellor of Saxony.
- 1536 John Calvin publishes his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, or better understood as the basic principles of the Christian faith. A monumental examination of Protestant beliefs, systematically treating almost every facet of Christian doctrine and living.
- 1549 Book of Common Prayer first published in England by Thomas Cranmer for the Anglican Church. This work contained entire Sunday morning worship, sections for Litany, orders for Holy Communion, orders for Baptism, plus Morning and Evening Prayers.
- 1618-48 Thirty Years War between Protestants and Catholics over serious political violations.
- 1650 Emergence of the Society of Friends (“Quakers”) in England led by George Fox.
- 1675 Emergence of Pietism in the Lutheran Church with Philip Jacob Spener being the father of Lutheran Pietism. His publication of *Pia Desideria* (“Pious Desires”) was a six-point prescription for church reform that identified the laxity of the clergy and the shortcomings of the ecclesiastical system. Radical Pietists of a later period were known as Separatists, because they wanted to be free independent groups outside of denominational structures.

- 1693 Jakob Ammann breaks from the Swiss Brethren. Their main point of contention surrounded the practice of shunning former members who had been placed under the Ban, (1 Corinthians 5:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:14, Matthew 18:18). It was a form of biblically sanctioned church discipline to both correct errant behavior and restore those back into the fold (2 Corinthians 2:6-10). Representing the Swiss Brethren, Hans Reist acknowledged the biblical authority for banning, yet deemed that it was still acceptable to “eat meals” with those being shunned. Ammann was more of a disciplinarian who contended that shunning meant no association at all. There were other minor issues between the two group’s concerning excommunications, and the questionable salvation of Anabaptist sympathizers who expressed support, but would not consent to being rebaptized. Followers of Ammann later became known as Amish.
- 1708 Birth of the Schwarzenau Brethren (later Church of the Brethren) in the protected district of Wittgenstein in central Germany. Alexander Mack and seven others baptized each other in the Eder River. Religious persecution against Anabaptism forced the Brethren to move repeatedly, since the now “Big Three” (Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed) permitted no other religious denominations to exist. Citizens of each German district had to convert to the faith of that district, from which quickened the phrase: “*Convert, leave, or die.*”
- 1719 Brethren first arrive in America under the supervision of Peter Becker who had been the pastor of the Krefeld congregation. They settled near Mennonites in the little village of Germantown which is now a part of northwest Philadelphia. Hardships of the Atlantic crossing along with disillusionment over internal strife in Germany resulted in no immediate congregation.
- 1723 On Christmas day, six Brethren were baptized in the Wissahickon Creek which is now in Fairmount Park. Joyfully they celebrated the season of Christmas and organized the first Brethren congregation in America. The Germantown Church became the mother church.
- 1728 Conrad Beissel renounces affiliation with the Brethren, and “*gives back their baptism*” with his own rebaptism while serving as leader of the Conestoga congregation. He refused any further attempts at reconciliation with the Germantown Brethren.
- 1732 Conrad Beissel moved to Ephrata along the Cocalico Creek where he established his own community of cloistered dwellings later known as the Ephrata Cloisters. This group would be known for emphasizing celibacy, mysticism, and separation from the world’s evil influences. Some Brethren left their congregations to join him, but most returned after his death in 1768.
- 1742 The first “Annual Meeting” of the Schwarzenau Brethren convened by Martin Urner and George Martin over the question of Brethren distinctiveness, since Moravian leader Count Zinzendorf was calling for the universal coalition of all German sects in America. This would mean the dissolution of the Brethren. Annual Meeting was an annual gathering of Elders that would become the ruling body of the Brethren. Their decisions would impact every aspect of local congregations. Years later it would be called Annual Conference.
- 1790 Lost Creek Congregation organized at Bunkertown in the Goodwill Meeting House. At one time there were four different Meeting Houses: Bunkertown, Free Spring, Oriental, and Richfield. In the early 1780’s, John Shellenberger, a Geneva clock-maker who owned land on which the town of Bunkertown now stands was approached by members of the local Brethren requesting enough property to build a meeting house. He transferred land to them, accepting no price but their “*good will.*” Thus, Bunkertown was initially called the

Good Will Meeting House until 1941. The first structure was erected in 1831, and then later replaced by a larger two-story structure dating from 1891. One innovation of this construction was an indoor baptismal pool, a “novel concept” among Brethren of the time who baptized in creeks and rivers. In 1961, a modern sanctuary was added with renovation of the older building into classrooms and fellowship hall.

This congregation has the notable distinction of being the first in the District to hire a full-time, salaried pastor in 1916 when John Rowland accepted the invitation after expressing his need of “\$600 a year for support of self and family.” Over the years, each sister-church gradually became self-supporting and established itself as a bone fide congregation. The name Lost Creek has not been used since 1989 when the last two remaining houses, Bunkertown and Free Spring, amicably chose separate identities with different pastors, budgets, and staff.

District Conferences were held at Bunkertown in 1877, 1884, 1896, 1917, 1953, and 1974. Church of the Brethren Annual Conference has been held twice near Bunkertown. In 1833, it was convened on a farm in Evendale, only 4 miles to the northeast. It was stated that hundreds of horses and carriages were maintained in a pasture “without one incident of injury to horse or carriage.” In 1885, Annual Conference was held on a farm located about 15 miles to the southwest of Bunkertown, near the railroad along the Juniata River. By the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, Brethren were traveling by locomotive and it became important that host farms were situated near or in the vicinity of a railroad.

Ten fulltime, salaried pastors have served at Bunkertown: John Rowland, 1916-1924; Charles Grapes, 1924-1932; John Buffenmyer, 1933-1941; Harvey Emmert, 1941-1947; Martin Scholten, 1947-1952; David Markey, 1953-1958; Forrest Gordon, 1960-1979; John Layman, 1980-1988 (last pastor as Lost Creek congregation); Elwood “Woody” Johnson, 1989-2000; James Huskins, 2000-2003; Greg Jones, 2005-2014; and Wes Stahl, 2016 to the present.

- 1825 Plymouth Brethren founded by Edward Cronin in Dublin, Ireland. This body has no relationship to the Schwarzenau Brethren or the Swiss Brethren. Although Cronin started the group, John Darby would later give them international visibility.
- 1836 *Fraternity of German Baptists* becomes the first officially adopted denominational label of the Schwarzenau Brethren for purposes of creating deeds and finalizing property transfers.
- 1871 *German Baptist Brethren* becomes the second official label to be accepted by Annual Meeting. Some have privately suggested this was a “keeping-with-the-pace” decision, since many Brethren had already been using this label for years. The largest segment of Brethren had been living in settlements or rural farming communities, and were able to retain their distinctive German lifestyle. This label attempted to retain their German identity and heritage. As they began moving into the main stream of society, this would gradually change over the next several years, since more Brethren were moving into cities, acquiring higher education, speaking English instead of German, no longer wearing plain clothing, and generally losing their distinctive heritage. This cultural shift would have dynamic outcomes for many decades yet to come.
- 1881 *Old German Baptist Brethren* emerged as a splinter group, leaving the *German Baptist Brethren* denomination over a growing dissatisfaction with the progressive attitudes of a minority of Brethren who pressed for modern innovations that were considered too worldly. This group was also referred to as the *Primitives* or the *Old Orders*.

- 1882 Progressive leader Henry Holsinger, publisher of *The Progressive Christian*, was a guiding star in the progressive movement of the Brethren. He had been reprimanded by the 1882 Annual Meeting to refrain from “*slanderous and schismatic articles*” which he had been publishing in his magazine. When no harmony could be restored, he was disfellowshipped from Annual Meeting.
- 1883 *The Brethren Church* emerged as a splinter group, leaving the *German Baptist Brethren*, mainly at the promptings of Henry Holsinger and a few other progressive sympathizers. They expressed voices of a growing dissatisfaction that modern innovations and cultural paradigms were resisted by the larger body of the denomination. *The Progressive Christian* is renamed *Brethren Evangelist* to serve as their official publication voice.
- 1888 *McPherson College* in McPherson, Kansas opened for classes on September 5. It was the first of the Brethren affiliated colleges to include a biblical studies program as a part of its origination, and the first to request a direct relationship with the German Baptist Brethren.
- 1897 *Brethren Publishing House* formed by members of the General Missionary and Tract Committee. After more than forty years of unofficial private Brethren publications, the German Baptist Brethren finally have their own publishing company.
- 1904 Although dismayed by the series of events for many years, the moderates gradually devised a course for the future. In the 1904-1906 Annual Meetings they felt the need for a new identity with a new denominational name, for at least three reasons: (1) Brethren had been largely speaking English since about 1850, (2) the label German gradually seemed less descriptive of their evolving culture, and (3) a new label would hopefully disassociate them from the unpleasant divisiveness of the recent past. Originally known as the Schwarzenau Baptists, they assumed the name of German Baptist Brethren in their New World migrations, since few people in America would have any idea where Schwarzenau is located. Much aware that they were no longer strictly German and now also eschewing the title Baptist because of other dissimilar groups, the remaining word Brethren was the only thing left that would still retain their heritage.
- 1905 *Bethany Bible School* opened for classes on October 3, and then later renamed *Bethany Theological Seminary* which is presently located in Richmond, Indiana.
- 1908 *Church of the Brethren* officially adopted as the new denominational label in place of the former German Baptist Brethren at its bicentennial celebration during Annual Conference on June 9 in Des Moines, Iowa. In the wake of the 1880 schisms of The Brethren Church and the Old German Baptist Brethren, this change now reflected the desire of the central group to establish their own identity. They were starting a new century with a new name.
- 1915 Brethren member Martin G. Brumbaugh inaugurated as governor of Pennsylvania. This was a huge change for Brethren to become involved in politics. Brumbaugh is noted for championing passage of child labor laws, the first Brethren with a Ph. D, superintendent of Philadelphia schools, appointed first commissioner of education for Puerto Rico, and author of “*A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America.*”
- 1921 *Old Order German Baptist Brethren* created from the *Old German Baptist Brethren* principally concerning the ownership and usage of automobiles.

- 1939 *Heifer Project* founded by Brethren member Dan West. He conceived the idea in 1938 while serving as a relief worker in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. As he distributed milk to hungry refugee children, he said to himself: “*These children don’t need a cup, they need a cow.*” The Heifers for Relief Committee was founded in 1939 and given approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to pursue the idea as a national project in 1942. The first load of heifers went to Puerto Rico in 1944 and becomes an official program of the Brethren Service Committee. Following the death of Dan West in 1971, it became an independent ecumenical, non-profit corporation known as *Heifer Project International*.
- 1948 *Brethren Volunteer Service* created as a service agency to train and channel enthusiasm into “...*advocating justice ...working for peace ...serving basic human needs ...maintaining the integrity of creation.*” A group of youth presented Annual Conference with a proposal to create a denominational service program that would promote justice and world peace.
- 1957 *Brethren Publishing House* is renamed *Brethren Press*.
- 1974 *On Earth Peace Assembly* created at Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland.
- 1983 *The Brethren Encyclopedia* published by a consortium of Brethren denominations who have emanated from the original Schwarzenau Brethren.
- 1989 *Bunkertown and Free Spring*, the last two Meeting Houses of the Lost Creek congregation, amicably separate with different pastors, budgets, and staff.
- 1996 *Church of the Brethren Network* becomes the first national website to host and serve the denomination with news, discussions, historical information, and free homepage offers. Until this time, most Brethren were not aware of the existence of the *World Wide Web* side of the Internet. COB-NET was founded by Ronald Gordon of Bunkertown.
- 1996 Bunkertown Church of the Brethren establishes its first website on October 2.
- 2002 Construction of a new facility for Bunkertown on new property is completed. The first worship service was held on July 28 with consecration services on September 22. *See also the original formation of the congregation in the year 1790.*
- 2008 300th Anniversary Celebration of the Schwarzenau Brethren with multiple ceremonies in congregations and districts, plus a final event held in Schwarzenau, Germany, next to the Eder River which served as the birthplace of the baptisms of the original eight members.
- 2015 *Puerto Rico* recognized by Annual Conference as the denomination’s 24th district.

Appendix 2: Glossary

- Advent** Latin, *adventus* (“coming”). It is a joyous season of four weeks anticipating the coming birth of Jesus at Christmas. The focus of Advent is more spiritually oriented on the reason for His coming, instead of a secular emphasis on decorations, gift giving, cultural rituals, and vain celebrations.
- Amen** Hebrew, אָמֵן or Greek, ἀμήν (“truly, verily, may it be so”). It can be a response of affirmation to someone else (1 Chronicles 16:36), an ending to a speakers own statement (Romans 15:33; Galatians 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:16), or an initial assertion before a teaching (Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17), and often doubled in John (1:51, 6:47, 8:34, 13:20, 16:20, 21:18).
- Anabaptism** Greek, ἀναβαπτισμός: ἀνά “re” and βαπτισμός “baptism,” is a Christian movement which traces its origins to the Reformation, predicated on finding no clear scriptural basis for infant baptism. Adherents believed that only adults were capable of repenting. Rebaptism actually describes those who were originally baptized as infants and then accepted the second baptism.
- Apocryphal** Latin, *apocryphus*, (“secret or obscure”). Biblical literature so designated because of their unknown authorship, doubtful authenticity, or spurious origins. They are not included in most Protestant Bibles. New Testament scholars prefer the term pseudepigrapha, or “falsely inscribed” or “falsely attributed,” because the largest body of this literature was written by later anonymous authors who appended the name of an apostle to their work for whatever reason, perhaps to gain wider acceptability.
- Arianism** A nontrinitarian belief asserting that Jesus was created by God, thus distinct from the Father, and therefore subordinate to the Father. It denies the equality of Jesus and God, something which Jesus declared of Himself in John 5:17. There is a second misunderstanding in Arianism surrounding the phrase “first born” as in Colossians 1:15. Old Testament references to a first born signal a privileged position, as well as a biological relationship, Genesis 48:17-21; Exodus 13:2; Deuteronomy 21:17. In Jeremiah 31:9, the statement, “*Ephraim is my firstborn*” cannot refer to a literal first born son, because Manasseh was the older brother, Genesis 41:51. Apostle Paul was indicating in Colossians 1:15 that Jesus enjoys a privileged position – not that He is a created being. This heresy is attributed to Arius, a 4th Century priest of Alexandria. *See also Incarnation.*
- Atonement** The act of forgiving a transgression. Most often through rituals performed by a high priest in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, atonement was accomplished when Jesus (*our High Priest*) died on the cross, Romans 3:25,

5:11; Hebrews 5:5. In modern Judaism, the Day of Atonement (Yom “day” + Kippur “to cover”) is their holiest day of the year.

- Baptism** Greek, βάπτισμα (baptisma -“dip or immerse”). In consecrating themselves for a battle, ancient soldiers would dip their sword in a bowl of blood, (*Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament*, p.) 96. The Greek Old Testament uses the word in describing a priest “dipping” his finger in the blood of a sacrificed animal, Leviticus 4:6. From his place in Torments, the rich man asked for Lazarus to “dip” his finger in water, Luke 16:24. This is a good example of transliteration (*to borrow a foreign word*) when the receptor language may not have an exact word, or, a nearly equivalent word may present greater difficulties, or in some cases, cultural differences may lend themselves to needless misunderstandings.
- Barna Group** Founded in 1984 by George Barna, a media research specialist holding graduate degrees in urban planning and political science, for the purpose of providing “*research and marketing expertise as a service to Christian ministry.*” They have sold over 400 books, and frequently release surveys and polls on the health of Christianity.
- Bible** Greek, τὰ βιβλία (*ta biblia* - “the books”). Chrysostom, an Archbishop of Constantinople and influential Early Church Father, appears to be the first writer to use this phrase in his *Homilies on Matthew*, delivered between 386 and 388 A.D. The phrase was used to describe both Old and New Testament collections, at earlier times in scroll form and later in codex form. There are books in Heaven, and how they are bound is uncertain, Revelation 20:12.
- Born Again** In discussing spiritual matters, Jesus counsels Nicodemus that, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,*” John 3:3. Salvation is more than a ritual ceremony. It is a process of mental regeneration, very similar to the process of physical birth. New believers will be able to “see” or experience (John 8:51) a new world-view through a different mindset.
- Christ** Greek, Χριστός (Christós, “Anointed one”). Jesus was Anointed by God to proclaim good news of forgiveness and also model an exemplary life, Acts 10:38. The Old Testament offers many instances where people were anointed for service, Exodus 40:13; 1 Samuel 9:16; 1 Kings 1:34; Daniel 9:24. Clothing and furniture were also anointed for a special use or purpose, Exodus 40:9; Leviticus 8:10.

Covenant	In the ancient Middle-East a Covenant was an “agreement” between two or more parties. It defined relationships. Most were unconditional, Genesis 17:2. They usually involved the slaughtering of animals. God made a New Covenant (<i>New Testament</i>) with believers that was ratified by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 9:14. This new covenant would be different because God stated that His law would be written in their hearts, Jeremiah 31:33.
Edit of Milan	<p>A proclamation from the Roman emperors Constantine and Licinius issued from the Italian city of Milan in 313 AD, providing that all religions should have equal status and worshipers free of persecution. It did not establish Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. A further misconception is that it was written by Constantine, when actually the first draft was written by Licinius who was at that time a pagan!</p> <p><i>“We might grant to the Christians and others ... any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. We thought it fit to commend these things most fully to your care that you may know that we have given to those Christians free and unrestricted opportunity of religious worship. When you see that this has been granted to them by us, your Worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made we that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.”</i></p>
Edict of Thessalonica	<p>A proclamation issued by the Roman emperors Theodosius, Gratian, and Valentinian from the city of Thessalonica in 380 AD, which established Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.</p> <p><i>“It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation, should continue to profess that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition, and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity.”</i></p> <p>The reason that Rome and Alexandria are mentioned is because the western half of the Roman Empire was following Nicene Christianity but the eastern half was still following the Arian heresy. Thus, the western Emperors were softly demanding that the Eastern churches follow the Western churches.</p>
Eucharist	Greek, εὐχαριστία (eucharistia, “thanksgiving”). Another expression for the celebration of Holy Communion instituted by Jesus during the Last Supper.

The term emanates from a late 1st or early 2nd century literary work called the Didache (“teaching”) – *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

- Gospel Old-English, “goode spell” or good story. In the case of the Bible it refers to the good news of God’s forgiveness to sinners through the atoning work of Jesus. To a lesser degree the word refers to the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The majority of Greek manuscripts begin each of these books with the Greek word *κατα* which means “according to” followed by the name of that writer.
- Grace Greek, *χάρις* (“that which causes joy; from *χαίρω* (“to rejoice, be glad”) as in Luke 1:14. In Western Christian theology, Grace has been defined as the “love and mercy” of God, given without merit on the part of the recipient. This rich love is a spontaneous free gift, and generously bestowed. The impossibility of earning or deserving Grace by human endeavor is wholly affirmed by Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*”
- High Church Usually refers to Anglican, Episcopal, Catholic, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Lutheran denominations. Worship services are characterized by liturgical readings, rituals, many clergy wear special vestments, and follow a calendar of annual religious observances. *See Low Church*.
- Ichthus Greek, *ἰχθύς* (Ichthus, “fish” and pronounced “ick-thuus”), from IOTA Iesous, CHI Christos, THETA Theos, UPSILON *h*Uios, and SIGMA Sotor which is translated as Jesus Christ, God's Son Savior. Early Christians suffered for their allegiance to Jesus. During times of persecution, believers would draw the sign of a fish to ensure that strangers were also Christians. A later variation superimposed all six letters which then appeared as eight spokes of a wheel.
- Immaculate Conception A Roman Catholic belief that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was free of sin from the moment of her conception in the womb of her mother. It was later elevated to a dogma by Pope Pius IX in his statement “*Ineffabilis Deus*” in 1854. Protestants occasionally misunderstand this belief to refer to the conception of Jesus through His mother Mary and the Holy Spirit.
- Incarnation A theological belief in Orthodox Christianity that the second person of the Trinity was naturally born through divine intervention with a young Jewish girl named Mary. Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He is the non-created, second underlying substance of the triune God. “*And the Word*

became flesh and dwelt among us,” John 1:14. The word Substance (Greek, ὁμοούσιος) was the very point of contention among bishops at the first Church Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. They refuted the Arian heresy that Jesus was a different nature from God. Of particular notice in the Nicene creed are these words: “*only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father ... very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.*” A minor revision appeared in 381 A.D.

- Laity Latin *laity*, from Greek λαός (laós, “people”). Non-ordained members of a religions organization that are separate from the Clergy, and usually referred to as layman, laywoman, or layperson.
- Laying on of Hands During special ceremonies at times of prayer, the leaders of the Church may place their hands on a person’s head or shoulders to symbolize unity while the recipient is consecrated for service, receives conferral of authority, or is granted a special blessing as in Acts 13:3. The Greek word for ordain in Acts 14:23 (χειροτονήσαντες) actually means to “extend the hands.”
- Low Church Baptist, Pentecostal, Quaker, Brethren, Mennonite, Amish, and Holiness. Worship services are characterized by lay participation, a relatively flexible service, and heightened focus on evangelism. *See High Church.*
- Ordinance A practice or ritual observance that demonstrates a believer’s faith, such as *Baptism* or *Holy Communion*. Unlike a Sacrament which is a rite conveying God’s grace to an individual as administered through the Church. In other words, an Ordinance is typically something that a believer does in response to the grace of God, whereas a Sacrament is a sign of grace indicating that God is doing something for a believer. *See also Sacrament.*
- Original Sin The Christian doctrine of humanity’s continuing state of sin resulting from the original fall of Adam and Eve’s rebellion of willful disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden. *See also Temporal Sin.*
- Pietism A movement emanating from 17th Century Lutheranism that emphasized the need for a “religion of the heart” instead of the head, yet combined with a strong commitment to express this inner experience through one’s daily life. It was characterized by ethical purity, inward devotion, charity, separation from worldly interests, and even mysticism. Followers were known for their individual piety and rigorous adherence to the teachings of Jesus. Leaders were more empathetic to adherents instead of being strident loyalists to high church Sacramentalism. A later and more radical version of Pietism known as Separatism even questioned the necessity of religious denominations.

Redemption	The forgiveness or absolution for past sins, the possible protection from eternal or temporary damnation, and generally obtained through a sacrifice. It is common in many world religions. Judaism embraces Redemption as the Divine retrieval of the Israelites from their various exiles, and especially their present exile. In the realm of Christian theology, it refers to the deliverance of believers from sin through the sacrifice of Jesus, plus an eternal inheritance, <i>“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ,”</i> Galatians 4:4-7, Titus 2:13-14.
Replacement Theology	A belief that the Church has replaced Israel as the true people of God, and that the New Covenant has replaced the Mosaic Covenant, therefore, the Old Testament promises to Jews are now fulfilled in the Church. For many centuries this was the dominant teaching of Christianity. This belief is in direct contrast with Dual-Covenant theology which holds that the Mosaic Covenant still applies to Jews. Replacement Theology is also known as Supersessionism because it was assumed to supersede Judaism. Attitudes toward Jews changed dramatically with the restoration of the State of Israel in 1948. Compare the teachings of Apostle Paul: <i>“I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid ... God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,”</i> Romans 11:1-2. <i>“and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree,”</i> Romans 11:17.
Sacrament	A rite of special importance recognized as an impartation of God's grace to an individual as administered through the Church, such as Anointing of the Sick. The Roman Catholic Church defines Sacraments as <i>“efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.”</i> They observe a total of seven. Most Protestant denominations observe two: <i>Baptism</i> and <i>Holy Communion</i> . For example, a road sign indicating Hospital only points toward a hospital. The sign itself is not the hospital. It's just the sign. In a similar manner, a Sacrament points towards something else, which is the grace of God that is bestowed through the rite. A few Lutheran groups add <i>Confession and Absolution</i> as a third element. <i>See also Ordinance.</i>
Salvation	In a religious context, it is the saving of the human soul from present sin and future consequences of damnation. Old Testaments citations regarding this matter usually refer to the act of being rescued from an enemy, <i>“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,”</i> Jeremiah 8:20. Summer was that time of the year for warfare (2 Samuel 11:1) in most of the ancient world, because the mud of winter slowed progress for both the foot soldier and the chariot. What melancholy and despair must have affected this writer to acknowledge that the season of war had past – and still no

rescue from the besieging army? In the New Testament, Jesus alone is the cornerstone of salvation: Matthew 16:16; John 1:20, 3:16-17, 4:26, 6:69, 10:7-11, 11:26, 14:6, 17:3; Acts 4:12, 13:38; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:13-14; 1 John 2:1-3, Revelation 5:9. The academic study of Salvation is termed Soteriology.

- Sin** In a Christian perspective, this topic falls into two different contexts: original sin and temporal or willful sin. Apostle Paul explains throughout the fifth chapter of Romans, that sin entered the human world through an offence of the first man (Adam), and justification was obtained through the righteousness of the second man (Jesus) vs.15-19, who forgives all sin.
- Synoptic** Latin, *synopticus* or Greek σύνοπτις (synopsis, “seeing all together”). Mark, Matthew, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they share a very similar historical and spiritual format.
- Temporal Sin** Of or relating to a specific period of time as opposed to eternity. Temporal sins are those which we willfully commit by ourselves through temptation and our human weakness. This is different from the Original Sin of the first humans in the Garden of Eden. *See also Original Sin.*
- Textual Critic** A branch of textual scholarship and literary criticism which endeavors to identify textual variants among manuscripts of any type. Ancient scribes may have introduced unintentional errors such as skipping a word, repeating a phrase, or introducing words from a similar source. Textual critics apply well accepted rules of the trade in order to establish, what most probably was the original document, bereft of theological or cultural influences.
- Trinitarianism** Latin, *trinitas* (“triad, “group of three”). Denominations vary in their basic understanding of the Godhead. Trinitarians believe in one God who has manifested the divine nature in three different persons. This does not mean three Gods, but rather one entity presented in three manifestations: as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the “Great Commission” of Matthew 28:19, Jesus stated, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*”
- Unitarianism** Unitarians maintain that Jesus was the “son” of God only as all humans are sons and daughters of God, but not that Jesus was God. This is a radical departure from orthodox Christianity. Unitarians generally believe that Jesus was inspired by God and thus can be considered a savior in a human sense, but they do not believe that Jesus was Deity in any sense. Unitarianism is more than just a minor disagreement on the numeric order of the Godhead.

It rejects the essential sinless nature of Jesus, for if He is just another human being, then there can be no forgiveness of sins through a person who is also sinful himself. In past centuries, they accepted the doctrine of punishment in an eternal hell, but today this is a rarity. And, they also do not require a core biblical basis for truth.

Virgin Birth

An essential doctrine of Christianity that Mary, the human mother of Jesus, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit without the agency of a human father, Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:30-37. It is essential because only a sinless person could die a substitutionary death for the sake of humanity. If Jesus was the product of two human beings, then atonement would be impossible. Under Old Testament law only an unblemished animal could be sacrificed, Exodus 12:5. *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,”* John 1:29.

Worship

Old English, *weorthscipe* (“worth + ship”). The act of recognizing and attributing worth to God through adoration, as eloquently stated by John in Revelation 4:11 *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”* Worship is our grateful acknowledgement of how we esteem God, or more simply how much God is worth to us. Worth is often exhibited in proportion to one’s personal relationship and understanding of God. Jesus explained to Simon the Pharisee that a person’s response is indicative of their level of appreciation, Luke 7:40-46. Recognizing the worth of God to each of us is a continuous process, augmented by learning and growing in our faith. The more we learn about God, the more we recognize His worth. This adequately explains why one person may be teary-eyed while singing a hymn during worship, while at the same time another is barely mouthing the words to the very same song. What we put into the worship experience has a lot to do with what we receive. Service order, congregant participation, and duration are all contributing factors to effective veneration. Worship should not be entertainment coming to us, but adulation emanating from us, to God. The Greek verb for worship, (προσκυνεω; προς “toward” + κυων “dog”), appearing 34 times in the New Testament, envisions a dog apprehensively crouching up to its master’s feet. Body positioning of this type is prevalent in the Middle East, as also reflected in Scripture: *“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker,”* Psalm 95:6. The outward manifestations and focus of worship is a reflection of what is felt in the heart. Jesus said, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,”* Matthew 6:21. Perhaps the best prerequisite for effective worship could simply be reserving a place in our hearts to treasure God.

Appendix 4: Contacts

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