

THE CATECHISM OF THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN

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Acknowledgements

Members of the Catechism Committee

Members of the Revision Committees

PREFACE

The Unity of the Brethren was established in 1457. Out of that community developed a rule of life based on humanity's response of faith, love, and hope to the living God who is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This catechism seeks to integrate early Brethren faith and practice into the faith and practice of today's Unity of the Brethren in Texas. Historical documents and recent research have informed the questions and answers, and shaped the format, of this catechism.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1989).

SECTION I: THE CATECHISM AND ITS PURPOSE

Question 1. What is the purpose of this catechism?

The purpose of this catechism is to state, in question and answer form, the doctrine of the Unity of the Brethren. ("Doctrine" is understood in this catechism to be either singular or plural.)

Question 2. What is meant by the "doctrine" of the Unity of the Brethren?

Brethren doctrine is the collection of beliefs the church teaches about Christian faith, truth, and practice.

(In this catechism, the word *Church* with an upper case "C" refers to the Church Universal, while *church* with a lower case "c" refers to the Unity of the Brethren.)

We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. Ephesians 4:14

But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. Titus 2:1

Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 2 John 9

Question 3. What is the basis for Brethren doctrine?

The basis for Brethren doctrine is the Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments.

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20-21

Question 4. Why should we have knowledge of Brethren doctrine?

Brethren doctrine describes our basic understanding of God, humanity, creation, and the Church, and helps us develop our spiritual convictions.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

...Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you... 1 Peter 3:15

SECTION II: FOUNDATIONS OF BRETHREN BELIEF AND PRACTICE

Question 5. What is essential to salvation?

What is essential to salvation is:

- a) God as Father creates, God as Son redeems, and God as Holy Spirit sanctifies (makes holy); and
- b) humanity responds to God in faith, love, and hope. (Both God's initiative and humanity's response are gifts of God's grace.)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:8

Question 6. What does God provide to lead us to salvation? (What things minister to salvation?)

God provides such things as scripture, Church, sacraments, and pastors and other leaders to lead us to salvation. These are *means of grace*; that is, ways in which God bestows grace to nurture and strengthen faith.

The early Brethren referred to all of these as *ministerials*; that is, things that minister to salvation.

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Question 7. What things are incidental to salvation?

Things which are incidental to salvation can be instituted, changed, or even eliminated without affecting God's saving truth. Examples include rites and rituals (such as for membership, ordination, marriage, funerals, officer installation, building dedications, etc.), modes of baptism and the age of a person when baptism is received, administration and elements of Holy Communion, styles of worship and music, versions of the Bible, liturgical year, programs, organizations, architectural styles, and other matters of taste, culture, and tradition.

So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!" Mark 7:5-9

Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:23-26

But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. Titus 3:9

Question 8. What does it mean to believe in God?

According to the Brethren Catechism of 1523, to believe in God “is to know God and keep all God’s words, to love God above all, and to receive God’s word and diligently to be faithful, and to be joined together with the faithful through God.”¹ The early Brethren referred to this as *living faith*.

The opposite of living faith is *dead belief*. “Dead belief is to believe that God the Lord exists, to believe about God the Lord, and to believe God the Lord, but not to believe in God the Lord.”²

To believe in God was central to salvation for the early Brethren.

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. John 14:15

The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” Romans 10:11

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. Ephesians 2:19-22

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Matthew 23:27-28

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

Question 9. What distinguishes living faith from any other faith?

Living faith is faith formed by love.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. Galatians 5:6

SECTION III: THE BASICS

Question 10. Why did God create us?

God created us for God’s glory and for our fellowship with God.

And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name. 1 Chronicles 29:13

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3

Question 11. What should be our chief concern in this life?

Our chief concern in this life should be to do the will of God and thus fulfill God’s purpose in creating us.

¹ *Catechism of the Bohemian Brethren*, translated and edited from the 1523 German version by Craig D. Atwood, in *Journal of Moravian History* 2 (2007), p. 107.

² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Matthew 7:21

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever. 1 John 2:17

Question 12. What is God's will for us?

God's will for us is:

- a) to accept God's gift of salvation; and

This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day. John 6:40

For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

- b) to obey God rather than to please ourselves.

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be their slaves no more; I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and abhor my ordinances, so that you will not observe all my commandments, and you break my covenant... I will set my face against you... Leviticus 26:13-15, 17a

"Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:14-15

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Question 13. Where can we find guidance in fulfilling God's will?

We can find guidance in fulfilling God's will in the Bible.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

SECTION IV: GOD

Question 14. Who is God?

God is the creator, ruler, and preserver of all things.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth... Genesis 1:1

The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103:19

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:6-7

Question 15. What do we mean by the providence of God?

The providence of God is God's immediate, personal, and protective care for creation.

And Ezra said: "You are the LORD, you alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. To all of them you give life, and the host of heaven worships you. Nehemiah 9:6

He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:17

Question 16. What are the principal qualities that are used to describe the being of God?

- a) God is Spirit.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. John 4:24

- b) God is eternal (God never began and will never cease to exist).

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. Psalm 90:2

- c) God is unchangeable (God is always the same).

For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. Malachi 3:6

- d) God is omnipresent (God is everywhere at all times).

Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. Jeremiah 23:23-24

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. Psalm 139:8

- e) God is omnipotent (God has power to do whatever God wills).

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does what he wills with the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can stay his hand or say to him, "What are you doing?" Daniel 4:35

But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

- f) God is omniscient (God is all-knowing and all-wise: nothing can be hidden from God).

O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. Psalm 139:1-4

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! Romans 11:33

- g) God is just and righteous.

And I heard the altar respond, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!"
Revelation 16:7

For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face. Psalm 11:7

h) God is love.

So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 1 John 4:16

i) God is merciful and gracious.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Psalm 103:8

Question 17. How is God made known to us?

God is made known to us:

a) through Jesus Christ;

No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. John 1:18:

...but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. Hebrews 1:2

b) through the Holy Spirit;

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. John 14:26

c) through God's word (scripture); and

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

d) through God's works.

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.... Romans 1:20

Question 18. Why do we use the terms, "Holy Trinity" and "Godhead" in speaking of the being of God?

We use these terms because God is revealed in scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three persons in one Godhead.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Matthew 28:19

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. 2 Corinthians 13:14

SECTION V: GOD THE FATHER

Question 19. Who is God the Father?

God the Father is the first person of the Holy Trinity.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Matthew 28:19

Question 20. Why do we call God our Father?

We call God our Father because we are God's children through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Isaiah 64:8

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God... John 1:12

...for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. Galatians 3:26

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. 1 John 3:1a

Question 21. What was the primary act of the Father in providing salvation?

God's only Son, Jesus Christ, was sent by God the Father to be the Savior of the world.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16

And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. 1 John 4:14

Question 22. How are we to respond to the Father?

We are to welcome the Father's love and adoption into the Father's family, we are to welcome the Holy Spirit whom the Father sends to us, and we are to love the Father with all our being and follow the Father's commandments.

...you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. Mark 12:30

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. John 14:16-17, 26

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:14-17

...because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. Galatians 4:6-7

For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 1 John 5:3-4

SECTION VI: GOD THE SON

Question 23. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Holy Trinity; truly God, eternal with and of the Father; and also truly human, born of the Virgin Mary.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Matthew 28:19

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God." Luke 1:26-35

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. ...And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-3a, 14

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law... Galatians 4:4

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily... Colossians 2:9

Question 24. Why do we call Jesus Christ the Son of God?

We call Jesus the Son of God because God the Father identifies Jesus in this way.

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16-17

While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" Matthew 17:5

The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. John 3:35

Question 25. Why do we call Jesus Christ our Savior?

We call Jesus Christ our Savior because:

- a) Jesus saves believers from their sins; and

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:21

- b) because there is no other Savior or way of salvation.

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15

Question 26. Why did Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assume human nature in coming into the world?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, assumed human nature in coming into the world because:

- a) only in this way could Jesus fulfill God's plan for our salvation; and

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Hebrews 2:14-17

- b) by taking on human nature, Jesus could best declare the love and purpose of God to us.

No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. John 1:18

Question 27. Why did Jesus suffer and die?

- a) Jesus' suffering and death reveal God's loving plan for our salvation.

But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

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

- b) Jesus alone could offer the perfect sacrifice for sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:1b-2

God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10

- c) Jesus died in our place.

...just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

- d) Through his death and resurrection, we who believe have eternal life and are accepted as children of God. (This is called atonement.)

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God... John 1:12

When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God... Romans 8:15b-16

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you... 1 Peter 1:3-4

Question 28. What is the importance of the resurrection of Christ?

- a) God's plan of salvation is complete through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior, in whom we have newness of life.

The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Acts 5:30-31

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:3-4

- b) The resurrection of Christ assures us that all who believe in him shall be raised from the dead also.

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Question 29. Where is Jesus now?

- a) Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:1-3

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Romans 8:34

God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. Ephesians 1:20-21

- b) Jesus is on earth mysteriously present with believers.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them. Matthew 18:20

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20b

Question 30. Will Jesus visibly return?

Yes, Jesus will visibly return to earth with great glory at the time appointed by the Father to judge the world, to reward the faithful, and to reign as King of kings forever.

But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. Matthew 24:36-42

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels... And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:31-34, 41, 46

They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." Acts 1:11

For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ...On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords." Revelation 22:20

Question 31. How are we to respond to the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Holy Spirit reveals to us our need of salvation, which leads us to:

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

- a) believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior;

They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

...if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. Romans 10:9-10

- b) repent of our sins;

Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out... Acts 3:19

While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent... Acts 17:30

- c) let others know what Jesus has done for the world and for us; and

And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. Luke 12:8-9

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

- d) love the Lord Jesus Christ and serve the Lord joyfully all of our lives.

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. John 15:16

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 1 John 5:1

SECTION VII: GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Question 32. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity, one with the Father and the Son.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Matthew 28:19

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. John 15:26

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. 2 Corinthians 13:14

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13

...these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 1 Corinthians 2:10

Question 33. When did the Holy Spirit first come in a special way to the followers of Jesus Christ?

The Holy Spirit first came in a special way to the followers of Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. This marked the beginning of the Christian Church.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. Acts 2:1-5

Question 34. What is the work of the Holy Spirit?

- a) The Holy Spirit convinces us of our sin and our need of a Savior.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment... John 16:7-8

- b) The Holy Spirit leads us to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3

- c) The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance of our salvation.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh... Romans 8:11-12

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

- d) The Holy Spirit gives us power to witness for Christ.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

- e) The Holy Spirit enlightens our minds to understand the truth.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:12-13

- f) The Holy Spirit empowers us with gifts so that our lives become fruitful in Christ's cause.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. Galatians 5:22-23

- g) The Holy Spirit comforts, helps, and sustains us.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. John 14:16-17

Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. Acts 9:31

Question 35. How are we to respond to the Holy Spirit?

- a) We are to humbly recognize the Spirit's leading, willingly obey the Spirit, and live by the Spirit's power.

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:16

- b) We are to neither resist nor act against the Spirit's influence.

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Luke 12:10

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

SECTION VIII: HUMANITY AND SIN

Question 36. How were human beings created?

- a) God formed their bodies from the earth and breathed into them the breath of life.

...then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7

- b) God created human beings in God's own image.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27

Question 37. What was the original state of humanity?

Humanity was originally pure and sinless.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

Question 38. How did humanity lose this state?

Humanity lost this state by yielding to temptation and disobeying the known will of God.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and

evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." Genesis 3:1-13

But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. James 1:14-15

Question 39. How does the loss of this state affect humanity?

All are sinful and have inherited a selfish, rebellious, and depraved nature.

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned... Romans 5:12

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8

Question 40. What is sin?

a) Sin is a way of life in which humanity ignores or rebels against God and God's purpose.

Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin. James 4:17

b) Sin is a failure to measure up to God's standard for humanity.

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

...for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23b

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 1 John 3:4

Question 41. How do we sin?

a) We sin in thought, word, and deed; by omission as well as by commission.

For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. Matthew 15:19

Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin. James 4:17

b) We sin against God, our neighbor, and ourselves.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Psalm 51:4

...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 1 Corinthians 8:12

Question 42. What are the results of sinning?

The results of sinning are:

- a) a guilty conscience;

There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. Isaiah 57:21

- b) misery and disgrace;

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:69-75

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. Matthew 27:3-5

- c) increased control by sin over our lives; and

...do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. Romans 6:12

- d) spiritual death and separation from God.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. Romans 1:18

For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23a

SECTION IX: SALVATION

Question 43. Who is able to deliver us from sin?

Only the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life a ransom for all, is able to deliver us from sin.

There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. 1 Timothy 1:15

Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. Hebrews 2:17-18

Question 44. How is humanity made aware of Jesus Christ the Savior?

Humanity is made aware of Jesus Christ the Savior through:

- a) hearing the proclamation of the Gospel; and

For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is writ-

ten, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ...So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ. Romans 10:13-15, 17

- b) the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. John 15:26

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. John 16:13

Question 45. How are we saved?

We are saved by:

- a) following the leading of the Holy Spirit;

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. Romans 8:14

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Galatians 5:16-18

Do not quench the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19

- b) repenting of our sins; and

...“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” Mark 1:15

- c) believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath. John 3:36

They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Acts 16:31

Question 46. What is repentance?

Repentance is:

- a) to know and admit to God that we have sinned; (This is called confession of sin.)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment. Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:1-5

- b) to be deeply sorry that we have disobeyed God;

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

- c) to humbly ask for pardon; and

For your name’s sake, O Lord, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Psalm 25:11

- d) to turn away from evil and to turn to God in faith. Because of our sinful nature, repentance requires a constant turning to God.

Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Lamentations 3:40

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live. Ezekiel 18:32

Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. Joel 2:12-13

Question 47. What does it mean to believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ?

To believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ means:

- a) to accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior;

Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:30-31

- b) to trust that Christ's life, suffering, death, and resurrection have saved us; and

"You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power." ...Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." ...So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. Acts 2:22-24, 37-38, 41

- c) to commit our lives to the Lord.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?" Matthew 16:24-26

Question 48. What happens when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?

When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ:

- a) we experience new birth;

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. John 1:12-13

Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." John 3:3

- b) our sins are forgiven and peace with God is restored;

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... Romans 5:1

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

- c) we become children of God and have fellowship with God;

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God...

John 1:12

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
1 Corinthians 1:9

- d) we have the hope of life with Christ both now and forevermore; and

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
John 17:3

- e) we are given the Holy Spirit to dwell in us.

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:21-22

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Question 49. What do we mean by "new birth?"

New birth is new life in Christ. In this new life, those who trust in Christ receive a new heart, mind, will, and motive to live in gratitude and obedience to Christ.

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 1 John 5:1

MINISTERING TO SALVATION

SECTION X: THE BIBLE

Question 50. What is the Bible?

The Bible:

- a) is a collection of 66 ancient books, designated as sacred by the early Church, which tells the story of God and humanity; and
- b) is divided into two major sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains 39 books while the New Testament contains 27 books.

Question 51. Why should we turn to the Bible for guidance?

- a) The Bible contains knowledge which no human mind could have discovered for itself;

Then Job answered the Lord: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." Job 42:1-3

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! Romans 11:33

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20-21

- b) God, through the Bible, measures and judges the human heart; and

I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. Psalm 119:11

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

- c) the Bible is the sourcebook of Christian truth.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:16-21

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ...They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" Luke 24:27, 32

Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. 1 Timothy 4:13

Question 52. Who wrote the books of the Bible?

The books of the Bible were written by individuals guided by the Spirit of God to write what God revealed to them.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. Hebrews 1:1-2

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20-21

Question 53. What does the Bible mainly teach?

- a) The Bible mainly teaches who God is, what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will do; and

But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'" Exodus 3:13-14

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1 John 4:7-8

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." John 3:16-17

But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Romans 5:10

"All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ...I speak these things in the world so that they may have my

joy made complete in themselves. ...I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:10-11, 13b, 15-23

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:2-3

b) what God requires of humanity.

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40

Question 54. Why was the Old Testament written?

The Old Testament was written:

a) to tell of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God as shown through the books of the law, history, poetry, and prophets;

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:1-2

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Psalm 104:24

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure. Psalm 147:5

“He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send [Lazarus] to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ “ Luke 16:27-29

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. Luke 24:27

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

b) to instruct humanity in righteous living; and

See Question 53b.

c) to declare humanity’s sinful condition and foretell God’s plan of salvation in Christ.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. Isaiah 53:5-7

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. Luke 24:27

Question 55. Why was the New Testament written?

The New Testament was written:

- a) to tell of the earthly life, sacrificial death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ;

You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. Acts 2:22-24

- b) to offer and assure salvation in Christ;

But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

- c) to introduce the Christian faith, life, and conduct; and

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:8-10

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10

- d) to reveal the glory and joy of the life in Christ now and forever.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. John 15:9-11

But, as it is written, What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"... 1 Corinthians 2:9

Question 56. How should we make use of the Bible?

- a) We should treasure the Bible and read it thoughtfully each day.

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law they meditate day and night. Psalm 1:1-2

I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. ...Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law. Psalm 119:11, 18

- b) We should believe fully in the Bible's truth and authority.

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Luke 1:1-4

“He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send [Lazarus] to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ “ Luke 16:27-31

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name. John 20:30-31

- c) We should seek to live by the Bible’s teachings.

I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep your word. I do not turn away from your ordinances, for you have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:101-105

Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” John 14:23

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Question 57. What is the relationship of the Bible and science?

- a) The Bible reveals the truth of the person, will, and works of God.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. Colossians 1:15-18

- b) Science uncovers the truth of the works and laws of God in nature.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet... Psalm 8:3-6

- c) The correct interpretation of each sheds light upon the other.

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. Romans 1:20a

SECTION XI: THE CHURCH

Question 58. What is the Christian Church?

The Christian Church is:

- a) the household of faith;

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God... Ephesians 2:19

- b) the body of Christ; and

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23

c) a fellowship of all—

(1) who truly believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior;

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:42

God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:9

...we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3

If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:6-7

(2) who have publicly professed their faith in him; and

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven... Matthew 10:32

(3) who are united for worship and service.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Psalm 100:2

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" Psalm 122:1

So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right. 2 Thessalonians 3:13

Question 59. Who is the Head of the Church?

The Lord Jesus Christ, and no one else, is the Head of the Church.

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:22-23

He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:18-20

Question 60. Why was the Church founded?

The Church was founded:

a) to proclaim the Gospel of salvation from sin;

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 2 Timothy 4:1-4

- b) to welcome believers and build them up in the Christian faith and life; and

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 1 Corinthians 3:5-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Titus 3:4-5

- c) to send forth messengers to witness for Christ in all the world.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Question 61. By whom is the mission of the Church being performed?

The mission of the Church is being performed:

- a) by the membership at large—

- (1) by each individual member,

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. ...But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:14, 18, 27

- (2) by devoted and gifted lay leaders, and

We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Romans 12:6-8

- (3) by trained and authorized or ordained pastors, missionaries, and individuals in specialized ministries; and

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. Acts 13:1-3

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

- b) by various groups and organizations within the Church.

Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. And the twelve called to-

gether the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." Acts 6:1-4

Question 62. Why should a Christian be a Church member?

- a) A relationship with the living Christ leads a Christian into connection with the Church, the body of Christ on earth.

Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ...God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:1-3, 9

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:4-6

He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.... Colossians 1:18-23a

- b) A Christian needs the preaching of God's word, the administration of the sacraments, and the fellowship of other believers for spiritual growth.

For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:21-24

...“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. Acts 16:30b-33

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ... Ephesians 4:11-15

- c) Through the Church, God shapes a Christian's faith and enables a Christian to share the faith through word and deed.

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. Acts 9:36

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus. Acts 18:24-28

SECTION XII: SACRAMENTS

Question 63. What are the sacraments?

The sacraments, instituted by Jesus Christ, are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace God gives to us. The two sacraments in the Unity of the Brethren are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Question 64. What is Baptism?

- a) Baptism is a sign and pledge of grace, a covenant between the Lord and the believer. In this sacrament the use of water in the name of God—revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the sign of the cleansing of the soul from sin, God's boundless spiritual sustenance, and adoption as a child of God.

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." John 4:10

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God. Acts 16:33-34

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. Galatians 4:4-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Ephesians 1:3-6

- b) When a child is baptized, the child is consecrated to the Lord by the parents and placed within the covenant of grace under the care of the Church.

A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us. Acts 16:14-15

The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. Acts 16:29-33

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 1 Corinthians 1:14-16

- c) When an adult is baptized, the individual professes personal faith in Christ and becomes a member of the Body of Christ.

"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven..." Matthew 10:32

So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:41-42

...because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. Romans 10:9-10

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ...Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

Question 65. What is the Lord's Supper?

- a) The Lord's Supper is a profound remembrance of the death of Christ and an anticipation of Christ's return, as well as a spiritual communion of the believer with Christ and with fellow believers. Not only does it symbolize the new covenant and a pledge of the benefits of Christ's atonement, but Christ is mysteriously present in this sacrament.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- b) The Lord's Supper is the renewal of the public profession of one's faith.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:30-35

- c) In the Lord's Supper, the visible signs are bread and wine, signifying Christ's body and blood, the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Matthew 26:26-29

INCIDENTAL TO SALVATION

SECTION XIII: RITES OF THE UNITY OF THE BRETHREN

Question 66. What are rites of the Unity of the Brethren?

Rites of the Unity of the Brethren are rituals conducted in worship settings that invoke God's presence, affirmation, and blessing. Rites of the Unity of the Brethren include:

- Commissioning for Specialized Ministries
- Confirmation
- Dedication of Church Buildings and Furnishings
- Funerals
- Installations of Church Leaders
- Ordination
- Weddings

A unique relationship exists between the Sacrament of Infant Baptism and the Rite of Confirmation. (See the following question.)

Question 67. What is the Rite of Confirmation?

- a) In Confirmation, persons baptized as infants, after being instructed in Christian faith and doctrine, agree to and renew the covenant and promise made for them.

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven... Matthew 10:32

Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

- b) Those who are confirmed:
- (1) make a public profession of faith in Christ;
 - (2) promise to be Christ's followers;
 - (3) promise to serve Christ throughout their lives;
 - (4) receive the blessings of the Lord; and
 - (5) are admitted to the membership of the Church.

SECTION XIV: THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Question 68. What does it mean to be a Christian?

A Christian is a person who, under the influence of the Holy Spirit:

- a) believes in and follows the Lord Jesus Christ; (See Question 47)
- b) lives a life of faith, love, and hope; and

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Matthew 7:21

...and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

- c) is active in the worship and mission of the Church.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Matthew 25:31-40

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom.... Luke 4:16

...so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10

And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

Question 69. How does a Christian demonstrate faith?

A Christian demonstrates faith:

- a) by keeping the commandments of Christ—love God and neighbor; and

...“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40

I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. John 15:17

- b) by exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. Galatians 5:22

Question 70. What is the goal of the Christian life?

The goal of the Christian life is to become more and more like Christ in character, obedience, and service.

...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28

...“Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!” Luke 11:28

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. Romans 8:29

And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

...until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. Ephesians 4:13

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

Question 71. What are some of the disciplines of a Christian?

a) Prayer

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

b) Bible Study

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation... 1 Peter 2:2

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

c) Worship

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Psalm 100:1-2

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!” Psalm 122:1

d) Stewardship

He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.” Mark 12:41-44

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 1 Peter 4:10

e) Witnessing

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Luke 24:45-48

f) Service

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:11

SECTION XV: OBLIGATIONS OF A CHURCH MEMBER

Question 72. What are the obligations of a church member toward Christ?

A church member will:

a) love Christ above all others and keep Christ's commandments;

He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

b) praise Christ for the blessings and gifts Christ bestows, especially the gift of salvation; and

"This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.' There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved." Acts 4:11-12

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

c) profess Christ before others and promote Christ's glory by a faithful and loving life.

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" Acts 7:54-56

Question 73. What are the obligations of a church member toward the local church and the worldwide Christian Church?

A church member will:

a) attend public services faithfully and joyfully, hearing the word of God proclaimed and seeking to live by the word;

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:1

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.” Matthew 7:21

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:20

Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:23-25

- b) celebrate the Lord’s Supper faithfully;

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- c) participate enthusiastically in the ministries of the church, to fulfill the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20);

“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

- d) make cheerful and generous financial contributions to the ministry and mission of the Church;

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

- e) use God-given abilities, gifts, and talents to build up the Body of Christ;

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ...But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love. Ephesians 4:11-13, 15-16

- f) show special concern for other Christians; and

My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ...So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith. Galatians 6:1-2,10

- g) be an intelligent, informed, and faithful member of the local, denominational, and worldwide Christian Church.

Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collec-

tions need not be taken when I come. And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: ...I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. Ephesians 1:1, 15-16

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. Philemon 1-5

Question 74. What are some of the obligations of a Church member to others?

A Church member will:

- a) follow the example of Christ in word and deed;

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:10

- b) share the good news of Christ's redeeming work to remove the barriers between God and people;

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ...Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:10, 18-19

- c) take a courageous stand against injustice and evil; and

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Deuteronomy 15:7-8

...learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

- d) witness to all the world through the support of missionary work.

You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. Philippians 4:15-18

SECTION XVI: FUTURE THINGS

The Bible's teachings about death, Christ's second coming, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment are ultimately beyond human comprehension. As a result, there are varying understandings of these teachings.

The following questions offer some Biblical statements about death and what lies beyond.

Question 75. What happens when we die?

When we die, the body returns to the dust from which it was made, while the spirit returns to God.

Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come... before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes 12:1, 6-7

Question 76. When will Christ return?

No one, not even Christ, knows when Christ will return. Only the Father knows.

"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ...Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." Matthew 24:36, 42

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Matthew 25:1-13

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake." Mark 13:32-37

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority." Acts 1:6-7

Question 77. How will Christ return?

Christ will return in the same way as Christ ascended into heaven: "in a cloud." Christ's return will be with power and glory.

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Luke 21:27

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.
Acts 1:9

Question 78. What will happen when Christ returns?

When Christ returns:

- a) all the dead will rise;

Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out... John 5:28-29a

I have a hope in God—a hope that they themselves also accept—that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Acts 24:15

- b) Christ will judge the living and the dead;

Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. John 5:28-29

For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10

But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does. 1 Peter 4:5-6

- c) the believer will rise, receive a glorified spiritual body, and live in bliss and unbroken communion with God and the saints forever; and

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” Matthew 25:31-40

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.... 1 Corinthians 15:42-44a

- d) the ungodly will rise unto judgment to be followed by everlasting woe in hopeless separation from God.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’” Matthew 7:21-23

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ... Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Matthew 25:31-33, 41-46

APPENDICES

I. THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

A) THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Law (5)
Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
2. History (12)
Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
3. Poetry (5)
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
4. Major Prophets (5)
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
5. Minor Prophets (12)
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

B) THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Biography (4)
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
2. History (1)
Acts
3. Pauline Epistles (13)
Romans, I Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon
4. General Epistles (8)
Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude
5. Prophecy (1)
Revelation

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

III. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.
- II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me; and keep my commandments.
- III. Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain.
- IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.
- V. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
- VI. Thou shalt not kill.

- VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
- IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

IV. THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He went to the place of departed spirits. The third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Acknowledgements:

Portions of the 1966 Catechism are adapted from the Catechism of the Moravian Church in America (Northern Province), and are used by permission.

Members of the 1966 Catechism Committee:

Rev. John Baletka
 Rev. Josef A. Barton
 Rev. John Bravenec, Jr.
 Rev. Daniel J. Marek
 Rev. E.P. Simon

Members of the 1979 Catechism Revision Committee:

Rev. John Baletka
 Rev. Milton Maly
 Rev. Daniel J. Marek

Members of the 2017 Catechism Revision Committee:

Rev. James Hejl
 Rev. Dr. Larry Koslovsky