

Elder Letter #1 This we continue to Believe, July 2010

July 12, 2010

Greetings, brothers, in the Risen Savior's name:

We are taught in Revelation 2:5 to "repent and do the first works," and in Revelation 3:2 to "be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." It is our desire, by the grace of God, to do what we can to further these scriptural directives given to us.

We are endorsing a document entitled "This We Continue to Believe." It contains nothing new, but reflects rather, a continuing belief in our long-standing doctrine and church practices. We are not interested in a new doctrine. We plan to continue with these beliefs and practices in our congregations and plead with you brothers to support us and others in the Apostolic Christian Church who desire to do the same.

We recognize from past experience that changes and modifications to a document such as this would be non-ending. Please accept this document as it is written. We feel strongly that many of our brethren will be encouraged and strengthened by our desire to retain these beliefs and practices.

If you have any questions, concerns, or encouragement, please contact anyone of us

May God bless our effort,

Least ones in Christ:

Peter Petrovic (San Diego)
Lawrence Luthi (Lamar)
David Graf (Akron)
Wayne Grimm (West Bend)
Ben Walder (Congerville)

This We Continue to Believe

We brothers who are the under-shepherds of traditional churches are beginning to question whether we will be able to continue in some of the long held beliefs and practices of the Apostolic Christian church which have been prevalent in our congregations. We have listed some of these below. This is not intended to be an inclusive list of beliefs or practices, but rather point out areas where we feel pressure to change. Beliefs or practices not listed do not indicate that we don't support them.

We plan to continue with these beliefs and practices in our congregations and we plead with you brothers to support us and others in the Apostolic Christian Church who desire to do the same.

1. We believe in order to become a child of God, a soul must:

- a. Have faith in the death, shed blood, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1)
- b. Humbly repent (2), confess his sins to God before an Elder, and make restitution as far as possible (3)
- c. Willingly separate from former sinful and worldly activities (4)
- d. Permit the Lord to convert him by having a broken and contrite spirit

Through this a convert is granted peace with God and man (5). We believe that as a fruit of true conversion, a convert must be obedient to the interpretation of the Word and practices (some further discussed below) of the Apostolic Christian church *before* baptism (6). Then they are a fit temple for the

Holy Spirit, are qualified to make a covenant with God, be baptized, and become a member of the Body of Christ (7).

2. We believe after baptism faithfulness to God includes faithfulness to God's Word and Spirit and long standing church practices, including the teachings given through the memorandum (8).

3. We believe we should continue to have provings where we allow the Spirit to work within the brethren to prove if a convert has truly become converted. Lay brethren should be respected if they are not satisfied with the repentance and conversion of a convert. Provings should be closed to non-members so brethren can freely express themselves (9).

4. We believe we have a hope (versus confidence) of having an everlasting life. To maintain that hope we must live an overcoming life by grace, free of sin, which we can only do by walking in the Spirit, striving to follow the example of Jesus Christ and staying close to the Word of God (10).

5. We believe in the additional following doctrinal truths regarding sin, Christ's blood, conversion, and a sanctified life:

- a. That repentance, conversion, and baptism are God's process whereby a soul can find remission of his sins, have his old man of sin destroyed, and arise to a newness of life (11).
- b. The shed blood of Christ atones for sins prior to conversion, but does not atone for current and future sins of a believer (12).
- c. That following our conversion, by the grace and power of God, we do not and should not have to continue sinning (13).
- d. That by receiving the gifts of the indwelling Holy Spirit and the grace of God, a child of God who doeth righteousness is righteous (14).
- e. That there are faults and failings in a believer's life that are not sin and are not interchangeable with sin (15).
- f. That there are different types and depths of sin, including sins unto death (16).
- g. That we can sin if we do not listen to the Holy Spirit and avail ourselves of the gift of grace (17).
- h. That if we sin as a child of God we can find forgiveness through the advocacy of Christ at the right hand of God and through continuous Scripturally applied discipline (18). Because Christ came in the flesh and paid the price for our sins on Calvary, He has become our Advocate (19).
- i. That there are grievous sins for which there can be no restoration to full membership and which fall beyond the judgment of the church. We believe such a soul can be saved, but the judgment is left to God (20).
- j. That discipline, ranging from self-discipline through excommunication with the ban, is an essential part of God's plan to deal with failings, shortcomings, and any sin in the life of a child of God (21).
- k. That good works wrought by faith, grace, and the Holy Spirit, are an integral part of salvation; are brought forth joyfully; and will be a part of our final judgment (22).

6. We believe we should have close spiritual fellowship only with brethren In the Apostolic Christian church. Even though we develop friendships with many other associates we should not join them in spiritual activities to avoid deception. We don't judge them as God will be the judge of all, but we maintain separation from them (23).

7. We believe, as provided in our Statement of Faith, that we should embrace the King James Version of the Bible as the foundation of our doctrine. We should avoid using other versions. When leading in prayer our Brothers should use the language of this King James Version (24).

8. We believe we must guard our homes very carefully because Satan is very subtle and will sneak in if we give an opening. We believe television and video entertainment are worldly influences and have no justification in the Believer's home or life (25). We believe the internet and other technology can be a tool of Satan. While it may be necessary for our business or schooling, it must be properly filtered and monitored very diligently, to protect our families and ourselves from being entangled in this insidious

device (26). Unwholesome reading material and unwholesome music, including contemporary Christian music and concerts, should also be kept out of a Believer's home and Life (27).

9. We believe America and most other nations are becoming addicted to all kinds of entertainment which should not be apart of a Believer's life. We believe we should not be involved in organized sports or athletics as a participant or spectator (28).

10. We believe outward appearance is included in our reflection of the heart's desire to please God. Outward appearance should show separation from the world through modesty and simplicity. We believe brothers and sisters should not follow fashionable trends and casualness. It is also not appropriate for a believer to wear revealing or tight clothing that is sensual or attracts inappropriate attention, including shorts and short skirts. The edges should not be pushed, but rather carefulness exercised in our daily walk of life (29).

11. We believe Satan is attempting to confuse us and blur the line of distinction between the role of man and woman as defined in the Bible. Therefore, we believe a Sister in the Lord should not wear pants unless required for modesty when engaged in a specific activity (30).

12. We believe a Sister should not use makeup on her body, including painting of finger and toenails, which is worldly fashion (31).

13. We believe it is essential that Believers Wear modest clothing when we go to the house of God or assemble with our brethren and friends. A Godly woman should have her head covered with veiling that is large enough and heavy enough that it can easily be seen and worn on the top of her head, have her legs covered with hosiery, and wear modest footwear (32). Likewise, a Godly man when assembling in the house of God for worship should be attired in a modest suit and tie with a white shirt, which has been our practice for many years (33). Children should also be expected to dress appropriately and respectfully as they are in the house of God.

14. We believe the Bible is clear that a woman should have long hair and it should be put up in accordance with our long-standing practice to show a spirit of submission as the Bible instructs. A man's hair should be short and neatly trimmed and facial hair should be absent. Humility of heart should be shown through simplicity, neatness, and lack of interest in the latest trends and styles that include gels and other enhancements (34).

15. We believe unity and like-mindedness includes consistent application of the Word in areas of broad significance among believers in a brotherhood. Diversity of doctrine and application is not pleasing to God (35).

16. We believe following the established order and traditions of the church is following the Word. It is not following the commandments of men as were the Jewish additions to the Old law. Our traditions have proven to provide safety and promote the doctrine (36).

17. We believe single group activities should be very focused on spiritual activities or good works. Playing games leads to inappropriate interaction and thoughts between Brothers and Sisters. It feeds the flesh instead of the Spirit. Dating and established carnal relationships are works of the flesh (37). We also believe approved hymnals should be used for singings. Praise singings are not appropriate.

18. We believe that further study and examination of our doctrine and church practice is unnecessary (38).

19. We believe disobedience to the interpretation of the Word and practices (some discussed above) of the Apostolic Christian church causes discord among brethren. When one is disobedient, it emboldens others. This diminishes the purpose and importance of the church as the Body of Christ within the life of a believer (39).

Peter Petrovic, Lawrence Luthi, David Graf, Wayne Grimm, Ben Walder

References:

- (1) John 20:27-29, Romans 3:24-26, Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:20
- (2) Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:15, Acts 2:37-38, James 4:6-10
- (3) 1 John 1:8-9, Romans 10:10, Acts 19:18-19, Matthew 3:6
- (4) Ephesians 4:21-24, Colossians 3:1-10
- (5) Matthew 18:3-4, Acts 3:19, Romans 5:1, Romans 12:18
- (6) Romans 6:14, Colossians 2:10-12
- (7) John 3:5, Romans 6:3-8, I Corinthians 12:13-14
- (8) 1 Corinthians 11:1-2, Acts 16:22-32
- (9) Proving Candidates for Baptism (Apostolic Christian Publications), Pages 6-7
- (10) Galatians 5:16-18
- (11) Colossians 2:10-14
- (12) Colossians 1:13-14, Hebrews 9:15, 2 Peter 1:8-9, Romans 3:25-26, Hebrews 9:25-28, Hebrews 7:27, Hebrews 10:16-18, Hebrews 10:26-29
- (13) 1 John 5:3-4, Revelation 3:5, Revelation 21:7, 1 John 3:8-10, Jude 1:24-25, Thessalonians 3:3
- (14) 1 John 2:29, 1 John 3:7, Ephesians 2:10, Timothy 3:17, Titus 2:6-7, Titus 2:13-14, Colossians 1:27-29, John 15:8, John 15:16, Romans 6:22
- (15) Galatians 6:1, James 5:15-16
- (16) John 19:11, 1 John 5:16-17
- (17) Jude 20-21, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Peter 2:20-22
- (18) 1 John 2:1
- (19) Hebrews 9:11-28
- (20) 1 John 5:16, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, Hebrews 13:4
- (21) 1 Corinthians 11:31-32, Hebrews 12:5-8, 1 Timothy 5:20, Jude 22-23, 1 Corinthians 5:13
- (22) Matthew 16:27, Revelation 20:12
- (23) 2 Corinthians 6:17-18, 1 Corinthians 5:12-13
- (24) Revelation 2:18-19, see Memorandums (1957, 1952, 1972, 1976, 1982, 1995)
- (25) 1 Thessalonians 5:22, Romans 1:32, Galatians 5:16-21, see Memorandums (1948- current)
- (26) see Memorandums (1995, 1997, current)
- (27) Unwholesome Music, see Memorandums (1974, 1984, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1994); Christian Rock, see Memorandums ;1986, 1992, 1994); Dangers of Religious Books, see Memorandums(1974, 1981)
- (28) Galatians 5:21, 1 Peter 4:3, Corinthians 10:7
- (29) Romans 12:2, 1 Peter 3:3-4, 1 Timothy 2:9-10, Revealing or Tight Clothing, see Memorandums (1975, 1976); Shorts or Short Skirts, see Memorandums (1962, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1995, 2005)
- (30) Pants on Sisters, see Memorandums (1980, 1982, 1988); Pantsuits, see Memorandums (1971, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1990)
- (31) Makeup, see Memorandums(1962, 1964, 1966, 1970, 1976, 1983, 1987, 1988, 1995)
- (32) 1 Corinthians 11:5-6; Proper Veiling see Memorandums (1954, 1955, 1986, 1993)
- (33) Modesty In Brothers' Clothing, see Memorandums (1974, 1975, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1992, 1997)
- (34) Corinthians 11:14-15, Sisters' Hair, see Memorandums (1945 -current); Brothers' Hair, see Memorandums (1969-current)
- (35) 1 Peter 3:8, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 2:2, Ephesians 4:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13-11
- (36) 1 Corinthians 11:2, Philippians 3:1, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Romans 3:20
- (37) Dating, see Memorandums (1965, 1976, 1977, 1997)
- (38) 2 Peter 3:15-18
- (39) 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, 1 Corinthians 8:10-13, 1 Corinthians 10:28-33