



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
2024 ASSEMBLY
SACRAMENTS AND COMMANDMENTS

31/March/2024



Circular nº 191/2024

Dear brethren,

The Peace of God.

1. COMMANDMENTS/SACRAMENTS

We understand a sacrament to be an-act instituted in the New Testament that symbolizes a divine action in those who believe; it is a visible act of God's grace for the believer. We recognize three commandments/sacraments: Baptism, the Holy Supper and Anointing.

Baptism symbolizes the death and new birth of those who believe in the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38; Matt 28:19). The Holy Supper is a commemoration of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:26; John 6:51,53,57; 1 Cor 11:20,22,27 to 30; Acts 20:7). Anointing (James 5:13-15) is a means of obtaining healing of a sickness for those who believe. Through anointing God may also grant forgiveness of sins.

2. SICKNESS AND ANOINTING WITH OIL (Amendment to Topic 9, 2022)

We believe that the anointing is a responsibility of the elders of the Church. It is a way, through the faith of the sick person, to obtain a special favor, by the Lord's intervention, through prayer.

We know that the healing power is not in the oil, but in the prayer of faith in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Both the healing of sickness and the forgiveness of sins are gracious concessions granted by the Lord Jesus Christ. Anointing to heal the sick was practiced by the Apostles even before the death and resurrection of Christ.

“And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.” (Mark 6:13)

TEACHINGS

3. THE NATURE OF GOD

God is Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent. He is superior to everything and everyone, invisible, and self-sufficient. He was not created; He is self-existent. He always existed and cannot be contained in anything or in any place, and has no restrictions or limitations. He has no equal.

Since God is Spirit, He cannot be seen or fully understood by anyone. He is the only Infinite Being, Author of life, Creator of all things, visible and invisible. He has personality and identity and is Holy and Perfect.

Our Eternal Lord God revealed Himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make Himself known to men. After His death and resurrection, He now communicates with the Church through the Holy Spirit that was sent to us. He does not change because He is Perfection itself. He is Holy, Just, Kind, True and the Father of Eternity.

Although there is only one God, being One, in His unity there are three persons or distinct beings: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; John 14:16; 1 John 5:7).



4. PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE GIFT OF NEW TONGUES AND THE LANGUAGE OF ANGELS (Clarification with repetition of Topics 9 and 10, September, 202)

When the Holy Spirit is outpoured, a person can receive gifts, and among these is the gift to speak new tongues. We should not say “he spoke the language of angels” or similar expressions. Since there is no biblical support for such terms, we simply say that we received the gift of new tongues. In his first epistle to the Corinthians 13:1, the apostle Paul was speaking in hypothetical terms, when he said: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels”*.

There is no incident in the Scriptures of anyone speaking to an angel in the angel’s own language. All the angels who were sent to speak to men spoke in human language. The men of old who spoke with angels, spoke and heard in their own language. When the Lord Jesus fulfilled His promise and sent the Holy Spirit Comforter on the day of Pentecost, those who spoke in new tongues spoke human languages, and those who heard them said:

“And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? “...we do hear them speak in our tongues, the wonderful works of God,” (Acts 2:8,11)

5. GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit –the Comforter sent from heaven by our Lord Jesus Christ to the hearts of the faithful—which empowers the Christian with virtues and a diversity of gifts that are distributed according to His will. Those who consecrate themselves to Christ are empowered by the Holy Spirit with the gifts of God, such as the word of wisdom, of knowledge, with the gift of healing, with the gift of miracles, with prophecy, with different tongues, with the interpretation of tongues, with the gift to rebuke evil spirits, with the gift to administer, among many other gifts. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer is shown by the magnificent virtues in his character - such as love/charity, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, meekness, humility, kindness, goodness, faith, temperance, righteousness and truth (1 Cor 12:28, Gal. 5:22, Ephesians 4:2 and 5:9, Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 5:5). The gifts of God are given according to His will and are not lent to men or women.

“Whereas he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” (Ephesians 4:8)

6. SEAL OF THE PROMISE

When the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the believer through faith, (John 14:23), he is sealed for eternal life (Ephes.1:13,14, and 4:30). That is, he has received the guarantee, or the pledge of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22) to walk in faith with divine strength. To be clear, to speak in tongues is one gift of the Holy Spirit, but in itself, it is not the seal of the promise, since not all who are sealed speak in new tongues. Anyone who has received any gift of the Holy Spirit is certainly sealed; the One who ministers



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the gift of tongues as well as the other gifts is the Spirit of God Himself (1 Co 12:10), who dwells in the heart of the faithful.

7. EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS

The people of God are called Christians and believers because they believe that Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh, and, as the Son of God, was sent for the salvation of all who believe in Him.

They are also called Evangelical because, being evangelized, they believe and follow the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the Word of God.

8. FUNERAL CONDUCT (Amendment to Topic 3, 2012)

At funerals, we should conduct ourselves with respect and consideration for the family that is suffering pain at the loss of a loved one. We should remain quiet, and avoid casual conversation, joking and laughter. The funeral service should last between 30 and 40 minutes.

9. CURRENT WORLDLY CUSTOMS—WEDDINGS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS (Reference to Topics 7 and 8, 2017)

Customs prevalent in the world today should be examined under the light of the Word of God. Although all things may be lawful, not everything is expedient for us. One example is the inappropriate clothing some of our brethren wear at weddings and other events. This is displeasing to God. We counsel brothers and sisters, whether single or married, to adapt their clothing to sound doctrine, and not conform to the customs of the world today. Those who serve God with fear will be blessed by Him.

Weddings should not be conducted like those who don't know the grace of the Lord Jesus, who promote a nightclub atmosphere with dancing, loud music, pulsing colorful lights or semi darkness. We exhort our brethren that this is contrary to the Word of God.

10. BEHAVIOR IN WEDDINGS AND RECEPTIONS

We also advise our brethren to behave responsibly at parties. Avoid eating and drinking alcoholic beverages to excess, which is vulgar and inappropriate in front of the other guests. Besides being a bad testimony, this behavior is displeasing to God since both drunkenness and gluttony are sins.

11. EVANGELIZATION

The brethren should always be awakened and encouraged to announce the Gospel. There should be groups of brothers and sisters who make visits and evangelize, thus fulfilling the plan of the Lord Jesus.



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12. PERIODIC BAPTISMS (Amendment to Topic 3, 2021)

In cities that have baptismal tanks, it is good if baptisms are held periodically, with a frequency decided by the ministry. There are places where months and even years pass without a baptism, leaving the brethren unaware of the necessity of obedience to this commandment.

13. BIBLES, HYMNBOOKS, AND VEILS WORN OUT FROM USE (Correction of Topic 21, 1994)

When these items are no longer usable, they should be discarded by shredding (those who wish to keep them are free to do so). Brethren can bring worn bibles, Hymnbooks and veils to the local or regional distribution center, who will arrange for proper disposal.

14. MUSICIANS SHOULD BE SEATED TO PLAY THE FIRST AND LAST HYMNS (Repetition of Topic 10 of 2023)

In all Official services, Baptisms, Holy Suppers, Youth Meetings and Children's services, the first hymn, after the service is opened, and the last hymn, before the brethren are dismissed, should be played sitting down. If there are brothers seated among the musicians, they should also be seated.

Your brothers in Christ,

Counsel of the Senior Elders