

## Select Documents and Church Manual Changes Voted at the

58<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session  
St Louis, Missouri

### Growing in Christ

This new fundamental belief should be numbered as #11 [after #10, The Experience of Salvation and before #11, The Church.

**VOTED,** To approve the following addition to the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs:

"By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. He who subjugated the demonic spirits during His earthly ministry has broken their power and made certain their ultimate doom. Jesus' victory gives us victory over the evil forces that still seek to control us, as we walk with Him in peace, joy, and assurance of His love. Now the Holy Spirit dwells within us and empowers us. Continually committed to Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we are set free from the burden of our past deeds. No longer do we live in the darkness, fear of evil powers, ignorance, and meaninglessness of our former way of life. In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church. As we give ourselves in loving service to those around us and in witnessing to His salvation, His constant presence with us through the Spirit transforms every moment and every task into a spiritual experience. (Ps 1:1, 2; 23:4; 77:11, 12; Col 1:13, 14; 2:6, 14, 15; Luke 10:17-20; Eph 5:19, 20; 6:12-18; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17, 18; Phil 3:7-14; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Matt 20:25-28; John 20:21; Gal 5:22-25; Rom 8:38, 39; 1 John 4:4; Heb 10:25.)"

## Baptism Vows

(VOTED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 6, Church Membership, page 32 and 33, Baptismal Vow and Baptism, to read as follows)

1. Do you believe there is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three coeternal Persons
2. Do you accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary as the atoning sacrifice for your sins and believe that by God's grace through faith in His shed blood you are saved from sin and its penalty?
3. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior believing that God, in Christ, has forgiven your sins and given you a new heart, and do you renounce the sinful ways of the world
4. Do you accept by faith the righteousness of Christ, your Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, and accept His promise of transforming grace and power to live a loving, Christ-centered life in your home and before the world?
5. Do you believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the only rule of faith and practice for the Christian? Do you covenant to spend time regularly in prayer and Bible study?
6. Do you accept the Ten Commandments as a transcript of the character of God and a revelation of His will? Is it your purpose by the power of the indwelling Christ to keep this law, including the fourth commandment, which requires the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath of the Lord and the memorial of Creation?
7. Do you look forward to the soon coming of Jesus and the blessed hope when "this mortal shall . . . put on immortality"? As you prepare to meet the Lord, will you witness to His loving salvation by using your talents in personal soul-winning endeavor to help others to be ready for His glorious appearing?
8. Do you accept the biblical teaching of spiritual gifts and believe that the gift of prophecy is one of the identifying marks of the remnant church?
9. Do you believe in church organization? Is it your purpose to worship God and to support the church through your tithes and offerings and by your personal effort and influence?
10. Do you believe that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit; and will you honor God by caring for it, avoiding the use of that which is harmful; abstaining from all unclean foods; from the use, manufacture, or sale of alcoholic beverages; the use, manufacture, or sale of tobacco in any of its forms for human consumption; and from the misuse of or trafficking in narcotics or other drugs
11. Do you know and understand the fundamental Bible principles as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Do you purpose, by the grace of God, to fulfill His will by ordering your life in harmony with these principles?
12. Do you accept the New Testament teaching of baptism by immersion and desire to be so baptized as a public expression of faith in Christ and His forgiveness of your sins?
13. Do you accept and believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy and that people of every nation, race, and language are invited and accepted into its fellowship? Do you desire to be a member of this local congregation of the world church?

## Alternative Baptism Vows

1. Do you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, and do you desire to live your life in a saving relationship with Him?
2. Do you accept the teachings of the Bible as expressed in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and do you pledge by God's grace to live your life in harmony with these teachings?
3. Do you desire to be baptized as a public expression of your belief in Jesus Christ, to be accepted into the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and to support the Church and its mission as a faithful steward by your personal influence, tithes and offerings, and a life of service?

# Rebaptism

VOTED, To amend the Church Manual, Chapter 6, Church Membership, page 42, Rebaptism, to read as follows:

Rebaptism is specifically mentioned in only one biblical passage (Acts 19:1-7), where the apostle Paul endorsed it for a group of about 12 believers. Their previous baptism had been that of John, which was a baptism of repentance. In addition to repentance, Christian baptism is associated with a clear understanding of and personal commitment to the gospel and the teachings of Jesus and a reception of the Holy Spirit. With this increased understanding and commitment, it was acceptable for them to be rebaptized.

**Individuals From Other Christian Communion**—On biblical grounds, individuals from other Christian communions who have embraced the Seventh-day Adventist message and who have previously been baptized by immersion, may request rebaptism. The following examples suggest that rebaptism may not be required. Evidently the instance of Acts 19 was a special one, for Apollos is reported to have received John's baptism (Acts 18:25), and there is no record that he was rebaptized. Apparently some of the apostles themselves received John's baptism (John 1:35-40), but there is no record of subsequent baptism.

On the basis of acceptance of significant new truths, Ellen G White supports rebaptism as the Spirit leads the new believer to request it. This follows the developmental pattern of Acts 19. Individuals who have previously experienced believer baptism should evaluate their new religious experience and determine whether rebaptism may be desirable. There is to be no urging. "This [rebaptism] is a subject which each individual must conscientiously take his position upon in the fear of God. This subject should be carefully presented in the spirit of tenderness and love. Then the duty of urging belongs to no one but God; give God a chance to work with His Holy Spirit upon the minds, so that the individual will be perfectly convinced and satisfied in regard to this advanced step." — *Evangelism*, p. 373.

**Apostasy and Rebaptism**—Although apostasy clearly existed in the apostolic church (e.g. Heb. 6:4-6), Scripture does not address the question of rebaptism. Ellen G. White supports rebaptism when members have fallen away in apostasy and have lived in such a manner that the faith and principles of the church have been publicly violated. Then they should, in case of reconversion and application for church membership, enter the church as in the beginning, by baptism. (See *Evangelism*, pp 189, 197.) "The Lord calls for a decided reformation. And when a soul is truly reconverted, let him be rebaptized. Let him renew his covenant with God, and God will renew His covenant with him." — *Evangelism*, p. 375. Clearly what is referred to here is not a recurring spiritual revival in a believer's experience, but a radical change in life.

**Inappropriate Rebaptism**— On the basis of biblical teaching and the guidance of Ellen G White, rebaptism should occur only in special circumstances and should be relatively rare. To administer it repeatedly, or on an emotional basis, lessens the meaning of baptism and represents a misunderstanding of the gravity and significance which Scripture assigns to it. A church member whose spiritual experience has become cold needs a spirit of repentance which leads to revival and reformation. This experience will be followed by participation in the ordinance of foot-washing and the Lord's Supper to signify renewed cleansing and fellowship in the Body of Christ. Therefore, rebaptism is not necessary.

Properly applied, baptism becomes the avenue of induction into the church. Baptism is fundamentally the pledge of entrance into Christ's saving covenant, intended to be permanent, and should be treated as a joyful and solemn welcome to the family of God.

## **Getting Married to A Non Adventist**

Courtship is recognized - No change

Marriage is the foundation - No change

The failure to follow these principles - No change

“The family tie is the closest - No change

Worship of God - No change

‘Can two walk together - No change

The Spirit of Prophecy consistently - No change

NEW "The church recognizes that it is the prerogative of the individual to make the final decision relative to the choice of a marriage partner. However, it is the hope of the church that, if the member chooses a marriage partner who is not a member of the church, the couple will realize and appreciate that the Seventh-day Adventist minister, who has covenanted to uphold the principles outlined above, should not be expected to perform such a marriage. If an individual does enter into such a marriage, the church is to demonstrate love and concern with the purpose of encouraging the couple toward complete unity in Christ. (For further information on the subject of marriage, see Chapter 15, Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage.)"