

Statement of Beliefs

INTRODUCTION

The doctrinal tenets, practices, teachings, and beliefs of the Church of God International are based on the Word of God, the Holy Bible. God's people believe that they are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

1. GOD

God is the eternal, all-powerful, supreme creator and sustainer of the entire universe. God is one, composed of spirit and comprising a family presently consisting of God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son. God is a loving, kind, merciful being who wants to share His magnificent existence by reproducing Himself through man.

Psalm 19:1; 50:1, 6–7; Isaiah 44:6; Nehemiah 9:6 16–17; John 1:12–13; 3:16; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:1–2; 1 John 3:1–2

2. BIBLE

The whole Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God containing His plan of salvation, and the record of His participation in history. The Bible is God's revelation of knowledge that man cannot discover for himself. It is the foundation of knowledge, and the guidebook of life. The Old and New Testaments comprise God's written Word, which forms the basis of Christianity as taught by the church and as practiced by the Christian.

Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; John 17:17; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:7–11; 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20

3. JESUS CHRIST

Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man. He was the prophesied Messiah of the Old Testament, and is described in the New Testament as being fully human and fully divine. As the second member of the God family, He has existed throughout eternity as the "Word." He divested Himself of this power and His majesty, and became a human being to die for the sins of all mankind as our loving and merciful Savior. He was then resurrected, and ascended to heaven to become our High Priest. Jesus Christ shall return to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and rule as King of Kings with His saints forever.

Deuteronomy 18:15; Matthew 17:15–17; John 1:1–14; 3:16; Acts 2:32–33; Romans 5:8; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 4:14–15; Revelation 1:13–16

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the essence, power, mind, and spiritual extension and presence of God. God begets Christians as His sons and daughters through this Spirit. It strengthens a Christian spiritually, converts his mind, and serves as an earnest or guarantee of eternal life.

Acts 1:8; 2:38; Romans 8:9, 14; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Ephesians 1:13–14

5. MANKIND

Humans are physical beings with no inherent immortality, but they can receive eternal life as a free gift from God. Man was created by God to be wholly flesh and blood, yet in God's image, and with a spiritual component added to his brain to compose the human mind.

Genesis 1:26–27; Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 John 5:11–13

6. SPIRIT IN MAN

When God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, man became a living being. But man also was given a spirit that made him far superior to the animal world, which operates solely on instinct and conditioned response. The human mind, coupled with the human spirit, gives man intelligence far above the animal kingdom. When a human is converted and is given the Holy Spirit from God, that Spirit combines with the human spirit to begin the formation of a new spiritual creature. Then, when a person dies, his spirit (being eternal) returns to God until the resurrection. In analogy the human spirit may be compared to a master recording device that records all of a man's characteristics, intelligence, and experiences. If God so chooses, He can rebuild that man either from new physical material or from spirit (depending on which resurrection) from all the information contained in the human spirit. Scripture clearly speaks of two types of spirit a man can have: The spirit of man, "which is in him," and the Spirit of God, which is given to him during the conversion process.

Genesis 2:7; Job 32:8; Ecclesiastes 3:21; 12:7; Zechariah 12:1; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11–15

7. ANGELIC REALM

God has created powerful spirit beings as His agents and messengers. Since man's creation, these spirit beings have functioned as ministering spirits to help mankind attain salvation. Like man, angels have free moral agency. Although created to help God, some of them—led by Satan the devil—rebelled against God's government, transforming themselves into demons.

Psalms 91:11–12; Ephesians 6:12; Hebrews 1:7

8. SALVATION

Salvation is the means by which God, through Christ, saves man from the penalty of sin and gives him eternal life. This process includes one's calling, repentance, baptism, justification, receiving of the Holy Spirit, life of faith and obedience, and final birth into God's Kingdom as a spirit being. Salvation is a freely given gift from God through grace, with our ultimate reward given according to our works.

Matthew 16:27; John 3:16–17; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9; Hebrews 6:1–2

9. FAITH

Faith is the sure knowledge that God exists, and that He will accomplish those things He has promised. Faith is necessary for salvation. The basic elements of faith are courage, action, and risk.

Romans 1:17; 10:17; Ephesians 3:17; Hebrews 11:1–2; James 2:22–24

10. REPENTANCE

Repentance is the act of acknowledging one's sins, and resolving to fully obey God. It begins when God opens one's mind to see himself in comparison with God and His law. True repentance is the first step toward reconciliation with God, and thereby toward ultimate salvation.

Acts 2:38; 3:19–21; 8:22; 1 John 3:4

11. BAPTISM

The ceremony of water baptism is performed by immersion, for the forgiveness of sins, upon true repentance and acceptance of Christ's sacrifice. After this ceremony, and as a result, one receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Baptism symbolizes the renunciation of the past sinful way

of life, the burial of the old man in a watery grave, and the emergence of a new, Spirit-led man living with Christ's mind and following in His footsteps.

Matthew 3:13–16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1–8; Colossians 2:12

12. LAYING ON OF HANDS

The laying on of hands is an act performed on special occasions, such as for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit after baptism, at ordination, anointing of the sick, or for other special purposes.

Matthew 19:13–15; Acts 6:5–6; 8:17–18; 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 6:2

13. KINGDOM OF GOD

The Kingdom of God is the family of God ruling as the government of God. It is a future world-ruling government to be set up on earth by Christ at His return, with Jesus as King and the resurrected spirit-composed saints in positions of co-rulership with Him. The Kingdom of God—referred to as a “mystery” in the New Testament—was first preached and explained by Christ, then by His church; it shall be established on earth for a thousand years following Christ’s return, and shall be completely fulfilled when New Jerusalem and God the Father come down out of heaven to dwell on the New Earth.

Mark 4:11; Revelation 5:10; 20:4; 21:1–3, 7, 10

14. GOSPEL

The gospel is the message preached by Christ and by His church about God’s coming Kingdom, the restoration of His government on earth, and how mankind can enter that Kingdom and government. It includes the message of what Jesus has done, is doing, and shall do—and ultimately is the message of the entire Old and New Testaments. The primary purpose and commission of the church is to “Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 3:2; 24:14; 28:19–20; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:47

15. PROPHECY

Prophecy is God’s testimony to his people, revealing His purpose and plan for mankind. God’s Word points out obstacles, mistakes, and potential mistakes along the way. God boldly states that He has a definite plan and purpose. He declares that there is none like Him, that He declares the end from the beginning, and that He will accomplish His purpose. Much of God’s plan and purpose is revealed in the Holy Bible. God’s people are called upon to be faithful and honest with the Word of God, “rightly dividing the word of truth,” and informed that no prophecy is subject to personal or private interpretation. Down through the ages, many self-proclaimed “prophets” (false prophets) have come, and there is no shortage today. A false prognostication attributed to God is a violation of the Third Commandment and will have to be accounted for. Fulfilled prophecy, or prophecy in progress of being fulfilled, builds faith in God and His Word. God’s testimony and revelations are more positive than negative. The majority of the prophecies in the Bible are good news, not bad news.

Isaiah 46:9–11; Matthew 12:36–37; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 19:10

16. RESURRECTIONS

The hope of all mankind and the promise to the Christian is the resurrection from the dead. The Bible refers to (1) the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the firstborn from the dead and the pioneer of our salvation; (2) the resurrection of the saints—called the “first resurrection”—at the return of Christ when the true believers shall become spirit-

composed members of God's family; (3) the resurrection back to physical life of all who have ever died without having understood God's way, for their first opportunity for salvation; (4) the resurrection of the incorrigibly wicked—those who have refused to repent and have rejected God's way—to be consumed in the lake of fire (called the “second death”).

John 5:28–29; Acts 2:32; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; Revelation 20:4–6, 13–14.

17. JUDGMENT

The time of one's judgment is the time of his opportunity for salvation, extending from one's calling by God until his death (or the resurrection of Christ's return). Those who shall qualify for God's Kingdom—the overwhelming majority—shall inherit eternal life, and those who deliberately reject God's way shall be consumed in the lake of fire.

Matthew 13:49–50; 25:34; 1 Peter 4:17; Revelation 20:15; 21:8

18. FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is the state of being whereby one's sins are removed, blotted out, or covered. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” It is obvious from Scripture that sin is a condition that separates us from God. It also divides us from each other and breaks down relationships. Thus, forgiveness comes to us in two spheres: 1) forgiveness from God towards us, and 2) forgiveness from us to each other. The example prayer given to us by Jesus Christ summarizes the full scope of the issue of forgiveness. The forgiveness we obtain from God depends largely on the forgiveness we offer to others. Those who refuse to forgive will not be forgiven. However, forgiveness in no way removes or negates all the consequences of sin, as can be seen in the scriptural account of the life of David.

Psalms 32:1; 2 Samuel 11–12; Matthew 6:12, 14–15

19. LAW OF GOD

The law of God as revealed in the Bible is a good, right, and perfect system of eternal directives and principles that reflects God's character and serves as a means of expressing His love toward man. God's law teaches man how to properly worship God, how to love his fellowman, how to live life abundantly, and, at the same time, how to prepare for an eternal spiritual life in the family of God. The law of God is represented in both the Old and the New Testaments, and is expressed by both physical actions and spiritual motivations.

John 14:15, 21; Romans 7:12; 1 John 5:2–3

20. BIBLICAL COVENANTS

Both testaments record that God made certain promises in the form of specific contracts or agreements with man. These are called “covenants,” and define the terms of God’s relationship with individuals or groups in various circumstances and eras. Of these covenants, the best known are the covenants made with physical Israel and the New Covenant established on “better promises,” which will be fully confirmed with spiritual Israel after the return of Jesus Christ. The New Covenant, which also applies to the New Testament church from the time of the original apostles, makes God’s law even more relevant by expanding it to include one’s mental attitude and spiritual intent.

Matthew 5:21–22; 2 Timothy 3:15–16; Hebrews 8:6–13

21. TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments, as revealed by God, codified by Moses, and ratified and magnified by Christ, are the perfect expression of God’s love. They are the foundation of all biblical teaching, showing man how to express love toward God and fellowman, and are consequently the focal point of Christian life.

Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5; Matthew 5:17–19; Romans 13:10; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Revelation 12:17; 22:14

22. DESTINY OF MAN

Man’s awesome destiny is revealed in the very first chapter of Genesis. Unlike the animals, man was made in the image and after the likeness of God. God created all creatures to reproduce after their kind, but when He made man He began His plan of reproducing Himself after His kind. But in this initial phase of

God’s plan, man was made from red mud, not from spirit, but with the potential of building the right character so that he could eventually be changed at the resurrection into spirit as a son of God, just as God’s Son Jesus Christ has been changed back to spirit to live eternally in the family of God.

Genesis 1:26–28; John 17:1–5; 1 Corinthians 15:50–54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–17; Romans 8:18–23; 1 Corinthians 15:12–23

23. SABBATH

The seventh-day Sabbath is to be taught and kept holy in accordance with the biblical instruction. Instituted at creation, reaffirmed to Israel as a part of the covenant at Sinai, and taught by Jesus Christ, who is the Messenger of the New Covenant, the observance of the Sabbath is basic to a Christian’s relationship with God.

Genesis 2:2–3; Exodus 16; 20:8–11; 31:12–17; Mark 2:27–28; Luke 4:16

24. ANNUAL HOLY DAYS

The annual holy days were ordained by God, kept by the ancient Israelites, and continued by the early New Testament Christians. These seven annual “appointed feasts” picture God’s plan of salvation for man.

Leviticus 23; Zechariah 14:16; John 7:8–10; Acts 2:1; 12:3; 20:6, 16; 27:9; 1 Corinthians 5:8; 16:8

25. HEBREW CALENDAR

The Church of God International uses the Hebrew calendar to establish God’s holy days. The book, *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, by Arthur Spier, lists all the holy days of the Jewish calendar from 1899 to 2100 A.D., and thoroughly explains all the rules the Church has consistently used for these many years. The New Testament affirms that the Jews were entrusted with the “oracles of God.” We believe that those oracles included not only the Old Testament Scriptures, but the maintenance of the calendar given by God, with its rules and regulations. This calendar is designed to deal with the lunar-solar nature of the heavens and God’s holy days, and has been in existence since early Old Testament times. It seems logical that calculations developed as a reliable standard to be used when the new moon could not be observed. A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This calendar council calculated the beginning of the seasons on the basis of astronomical figures, which had been handed down as a tradition of old. In the fourth century, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took an extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel by making public the system of calendar calculation. Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years until such time as a new, recognized Sanhedrin would be established.

Romans 3:1–2

26. TITHING

Tithing is an act of worship; it is a private matter between the individual and God. The church does not “enforce” or “police” tithing, but simply teaches the responsibility to tithe. Each individual has the responsibility to “honor the LORD with his substance and with the firstfruits of all his increase.” Tithing is a method by which the message of Jesus Christ is proclaimed to the world.

Malachi 3:8–10; Matthew 6:21; 23:23; 2 Corinthians 9:7

27. BIBLICAL DIETARY LAWS

Biblical dietary laws, including the prohibitions of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, are among the many health laws God gave to Israel. Jesus, the apostles, and the early New Testament church observed them, and they remain in effect today. Scripture indicates that

laws pertaining to “clean” and “unclean” animals were recognized and observed from earliest times.

Genesis 7:2–3; 8:20; Leviticus 3:17; 11; Deuteronomy 14:3–21; Matthew 5:17–19; Acts 10:9–15, 28

28. SIN

Sin is the transgression of God’s law—the falling short or missing the mark of the character of Jesus Christ. Although the penalty for sin is death in the lake of fire, all sin can be completely forgiven by God, who desires that all men be saved. (The unpardonable sin is a sin for which the sinner asks no pardon.) God forgives sin upon repentance of the individual who accepts the shed blood and sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment in full for the penalty of his sins.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 1:14; 1 John 3:4

29. THE CHRISTIAN

A true Christian is one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13

30. MAN’S SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Man’s spiritual relationship with God begins with repentance and faith. When these criteria are met, God “begets” us with His Spirit; He becomes our Father and we become His children. A family relationship has begun. To maintain this family relationship, a bond is formed as we fellowship with each other, and with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Communication as we fellowship is the tool that builds this family relationship. The tool of communication with God is nourished through four basic components: prayer, Bible study, meditation, and fasting. As we use the tool of communication, a warm personal relationship is established that gives us peace of mind, spiritual confidence, and faith that comes from knowing the Designer, Sustainer, and Ruler of the entire universe.

Matthew 6:5–13; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:15–16; 1 Timothy 2:15; 3:16; Hebrews 1:1–2; 2:10–18; 1 John 1:3; Daniel 6:10

31. MAN’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FELLOW MAN

First, we must realize that we are a family—we all have the same roots. As a family we need to live in peace with one another as much as is possible, as amplified in the last six of the Ten Commandments. Jesus Christ gave us the principal discipline that would make it possible to live in peace with our fellowman. He said to love our fellow man as ourselves, and gave specific instructions for settling problems with our fellow man.

Scripture urges us to consider the needs of others, and offer help to those in need when possible.

Exodus 20:12–17; Deuteronomy 22:1–4; Matthew 18:15–17; 22:39; 25:34–40; Philippians 2:2–4; Luke 10:29–37; Hebrews 12:14; James 2:8

32. THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The marriage relationship is the basis of the family, which in turn is the core of a stable society. As the primary physical analogy of God's plan for mankind, marriage, child rearing, and the family are given a preeminent place in the teachings of the Bible and the church. Although roles are defined, men and women have equal spiritual potential before God.

Exodus 20:12; Malachi 4:5–6; Ephesians 5:22–29; 6:1–3; 1 Peter 3:7

33. HEALING

Divine healing is a miracle that God in His mercy and love may extend to those who call upon Him in time of need, according to faith. The healings of Jesus Christ demonstrate and represent His power to express compassion, to forgive sin, and ultimately, to resurrect the dead and establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

Matthew 9:1–7; James 5:14–15

34. THE CHURCH OF GOD

The church is the spiritual body of Christ, a group of persons called out by God and impregnated with His

Holy Spirit. As a spiritual body, the church is made up of baptized, Spirit-led individuals who are scattered around the world.

1 Corinthians 12:12–14, 27; Colossians 3:15

35. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The Church has a mandate to continue with the witness and message of Jesus Christ initiated through His life, teachings, and sacrifice for every person and all nations. This will be accomplished by the resources available to the "body of Christ" and furthered through the spiritual gifts bestowed by our Heavenly Father. As the "body" consists of individual members, it is each person's privilege to follow the Savior and "repent...and believe the good news." Living as new creatures in Christ, it then becomes evident that a devoted membership will carry on the work begun by Jesus to announce "in all the world" that the "Kingdom of God is at hand." Furthermore, Christ's promise of vitality to His Church for all ages will be evident in the love of each member for their "brothers and

sisters in the faith,” and their fellow man, regardless of gender, race, or social status. Through spiritual design, the body of Christ will extend beyond a local community as members support one another, taking care of their “own,” visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping themselves unspotted from the world.

Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 1:15; 16:15–16; Acts 1:7–8; Matthew 16:18–19; Luke 24:44–47; Luke 4:18–19

36. THE MINISTRY

The ministry of Jesus Christ and the New Testament church is a ministry of service to God and His people, and a continuation of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The ministry has the responsibility of teaching, edifying, and overseeing the Church of God. The ministry of Jesus Christ is a team effort and not subject to one-man rule. The Bible outlines the offices and job functions for the ministry of the Church of God, and dictates high moral and ethical conduct for all members of the ministry.

Matthew 4:23; Luke 4:18–19; 1 Corinthians 1:24; 12:28; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; 5:17–21; 2 Timothy 2:24–26; 1 Peter 5

37. FELLOWSHIP

The prevalent use of the term “fellowship” appears throughout the New Testament. It is a necessity and requirement of the believer. Fellowship connotes the following concepts: communion, sharing in common, communication, partaker, partnership, and contribution. The Spirit of God facilitates all of these as they are expressed in the body of Christ. The apostle John tells us that fellowship with the Father and the Son produces the ability to fellowship with members of Christ’s church, even across regional and national boundaries, and across organizational lines also.

1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:20; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 4:1–6; Philippians 2:1; Hebrews 10:24–25; 1 John 1:3, 6–7