

## Summary of the Beliefs of the Messenger Church of God

The aim of the **Messenger Church of God** is to follow Jesus Christ in practicing and teaching the original Christianity of Jesus and the apostles of the New Testament. As a Church it is our aim to grow toward the perfection God wants us to be growing into (Matthew 5:48; Ephesians 4:13-15).

Our beliefs are based in the entire Bible, both the New and Old Testament correctly understood. The main explanation and interpretation of our teachings is the Word of God itself (Isaiah 28:10).

Below is just a summary of our practices and beliefs.

1- The Bible. The Bible is the authority for our teachings and practices. We Believe that The Bible is the collection of Scriptures inspired by God and is the basis of doctrine for the Church of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible tells us the truth about God and mankind, it tells us how human beings came to exist and how we are to relate to God. The Bible reveals God's love and plan to save us from death and give us everlasting life. Members of God's Church are sanctified by the truth, God's word (John 17:17). Only those who abide in God's word are truly his disciples (John 8:31).

2- God's nature. We believe in God as described by His word, not by flawed human tradition rooted in paganism. The Bible tells us of one God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Ephesians 4:5-6), consisting of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:1-2, 14). God is not a trinity. The Holy Spirit is an aspect of God's nature, not a separate person within the Godhead. It is through his Spirit that God works his will (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Zechariah 4:6). God is spirit (John 4:24), and He cannot be represented by images such as statues or pictures made with the hands of men (Acts 17:24). We do not partake in any form of idol worship nor practice any in the name of God.

3- Humanity. God made human beings in his image, of the dust of the earth, and breathed His Spirit in them to make them living "souls," or living beings (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7). Although human beings are made of flesh, there is a spirit in man, which is a part of the nature of every human being (Job 32:8), passed down through the generations from the first created humans, Adam and Eve.

The Bible tells us that the first humans sinned against God (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24), and the result of Adam's rebellion is death. Humans were created mortal, and subject to death, but eternal life was offered to mankind from the beginning (Genesis 2:9, 16-17). Sin cut Adam and Eve off from access to the "tree of life," and they died in their sins as punishment for their rebellion (Genesis 3:19, 22-24). All humans thereafter have been subject to death through sin (Romans 5:12).

Despite the limitations of our nature, human beings were created with the potential to be granted the Spirit of God, to share his nature, and be granted eternal life – God life – in God's

eternal family and kingdom (Proverbs 1:23; Acts 2:38; John 3:14-17; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Peter 1:2-4, 10-11; Revelation 21:7).

4- God's plan of salvation. God is love (1 John 4:8) and he loves us (John 3:16). From before creation God had a plan to provide salvation for mankind through the forgiveness of sin (1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8). The salvation that God offers is eternal life in the Kingdom of God, as sons in the Divine family of God, through Jesus Christ (John 1:12; 3:14-17; Revelation 21:7), who gave up temporarily his Divine glory to become a human being, begotten of God the Father, in order to pay the penalty of sin, death, for us (Philippians 2:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-20). The steps of this plan are pictured in God's festivals and Holy Days found in Leviticus 23.

5- Gods Feasts and Holy Days. We keep all of God's commanded feasts and Holy Days which are the weekly Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great day. The instructions concerning these commanded festivals and Sabbaths are found in Leviticus 23 and other Scriptures. The festivals reflect God's plan of salvation for humanity. There are, besides the weekly Sabbath, seven annual Sabbaths (or Holy Days) associated with God's commanded festivals. On the weekly and annual Sabbaths, we do no servile work and we meet in our assemblies around the world with brethren to worship God and fellowship. During our services, we sing Bible Hymns and hear a sermon.

6- The Commandments. The two greatest commandments in the following order are to love God with all one's heart, soul and mind; and to love your neighbor as yourself. All the other commandments and Scriptural teachings rest on these precepts (Matthew 22:37-40). The ten commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-20) are more detailed laws telling us in specific ways how we are to express love toward God and neighbor. Transgression of the law of God as expressed in his commandments is sin (1 John 3:4). Repentance and obedience to God is essential to having a saving relationship with him (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; Acts 5:32; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 5:3; Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:17).

7- Evangelism. We believe we are partakers of God's work and plan to save mankind. In the Bible, instructions are given to God's people collectively to take God's message to the world (Ezekiel 3:17-21; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 13:34-37). In terms of outreach, the mission of the Church is to continue to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and the original apostles, proclaiming the true gospel – God's word – faithfully, and teaching obedience to his commandments (Matthew 28:18-20; John 8:31). Preaching is done by those appointed to that responsibility, but all are partakers of the work through their example, prayers and financial support (Ephesians 6:18-20; 1 Peter 2:11-12; Luke 16:9-12). Our literature is offered free of charge. Literature published by the Church on our website(s) or through other means is copyrighted. But we do not object to persons sharing it with others, as long as they do so without charge, and without alteration, and with all copyright notices intact.

8- Baptism. Baptism is commanded of those who believe the true gospel and are prepared to

surrender to God and obey his will (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38). Real repentance is not just being sorry for what you have done, but, with God's help, changing how you think and how you behave. It is a conversion of heart and mind from one of ignoring or rejecting God's laws, and God, to truly seeking God. One must repent not only of what he has done, but what he (or she) is. It involves a lasting change in what you are, and how you think, and how you live your life. With genuine repentance you must begin overcoming the fleshly nature driven by lusts, with God's help. Scripture makes it clear that mere lip service is not enough. Baptism symbolizes the "death" of the old self living in rebellion and sin, and one regenerated to a newness of life in submission to God (Romans 6:1-6). A superficial acceptance of the claims of the Bible alone does not reach the standard necessary for salvation. The faith that leads to salvation must be a deeply held belief that motivates one to yield to God's will; which includes submitting to the righteous requirements of God's commandments, including the "ten commandments," as well as other commandments as applicable under the New Covenant (Romans 8:1-4).

Baptism, if done properly, is the outward manifestation of your faith, your commitment to Christ, your willingness to submit to him as Lord and Savior. If you attest that you have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but you refuse baptism, what does that say about the genuineness of your faith? Jesus himself, as he began his ministry, was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17). Biblical baptism is done by complete immersion of a person in water, upon demonstrating faith in Christ and bringing forth fruits of repentance (Matthew 3:7-8; Romans 10:9-10), following the example of Christ Himself and the disciples. (Acts 8:35-39; Matthew 3: 13-16)

9- The Lord's Supper. Baptised members of the Church observe "the Lord's supper," or the Passover service, every Passover according to Christ's command. (Luke 22:14-20, John 13:1-17; 1 Corinthians 11:20-26).

10- Tithing. God commands His people to set apart tithes and offerings from their "increase," or net income (Leviticus 27:30, 32; Malachi 3:10).

11- Food. God created some animals with flesh fit for use as food for human beings. Others are forbidden as unclean, and not suitable for human consumption. We avoid consuming unclean animals according to God's command found in Leviticus 11, and the blood and hard fat of even clean animals (Leviticus 3:17; *et al*). The Bible also forbids consuming food or drink that one knows has been sacrificed to idols (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; I Corinthians 10:20-22; 27-28; Revelation 2:14, 20).

12- Leadership in the Church. We recognize Jesus Christ as the head of the Church, its chief apostle, and sovereign ruler (Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 3:1). Jesus Christ is the sole mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Each member of the Church has direct access to God's throne through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22). Each member is being judged individually by Jesus Christ, and each will give account of himself as an individual to God (Romans 2:6; 14:11-12). We acknowledge that the true Church of God is a

spiritual body made up of those whose names are registered in heaven (Hebrews 12:23), and is not identical with any human organization of men. We thus make no claim to be the only Church fellowship representing Christ on the earth, but we have come together to fellowship with one another in the Father and Jesus Christ, endeavoring to faithfully follow the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit (1 John 1:3-7).

The Church is governed in accordance with Biblical principles, understanding that the ministry, while entitled to respect and cooperation in the legitimate discharge of their duties, is required to be faithful to God and his word. Ministers and other officials in the Church are normally trained and appointed by ministers who have preceded them (Acts 16:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14; Titus 1:5). Authority in the ministry is not absolute but is limited by God's word to those actions which are in accord with God's word and which edify the body of Christ. Failing that, members are under no obligation to continue in fellowship with them (Hebrews 13:7, 18; Deuteronomy 13:1-4, 18:20-22; Isaiah 8:20; Jeremiah 23:28, 32; Acts 5:29).