

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Welcome to a vibrant, loving, committed gathering of believers who don't simply go to church, but instead understand they are the church. This handbook, published by The Center for New Testament Church Development, will help to serve as your guide to experience authentic New Testament gatherings.

I encourage you to use this handbook during your weekly gatherings to stay focused, accurate and effective. If you have questions, contact your local Elders.

God is releasing hundreds of believers into the world to produce Kingdom results in every area of life. You and your gathering are critical to that purpose. I pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you as you embark on this fascinating journey into the New Testament Church.

Thy Kingdom Come,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Kurtz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tim Kurtz, Founder
The Center for New Testament Church
Development

Church structure is not a doctrine. The first century church did not consider the way they met and worshipped a doctrinal issue. Yet, it was their lifestyle and tradition. It appears that the New Testament writers assumed their readers understood the structure. The believers simply gathered from house to house.

PAGE 37

NO LONGER CHURCH AS USUAL

*Restoring first century values and structure to the 21st
Century Church*

Copyright © 2010 By T. Lemoss Kurtz

KINGDOM WORD PUBLICATIONS



BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

How To Use This Handbook

This handbook is a supplement to **No Longer Church As Usual**¹. We recommend that you read it first.

1. Pray specifically that the Holy Spirit will 'enlighten the eyes of your understanding' to see the fullness of the New Testament Church in operation.
2. Bring this handbook with you to your home and whole church gatherings as a reference guide.
3. Look up review and study the scripture references listed throughout this handbook.
4. Use topics from this handbook as discussion topics in your home gatherings.
5. Walk by faith, knowing that you are moving accurately in the Will of God.
6. Regularly review pages 21-25, NINE PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL GATHERINGS and 27-28, 20 THINGS I NEED TO CONSIDER EVERY WEEK

¹ No Longer Church As Usual *Restoring first century values and structure to the 21st Century Church* © 2010 T. Lemoss Kurtz Kingdom Word Publications.

The early Christians did not seek God's will in individual isolation. Instead, they found a fellowship so intense that it was of a wholly different character from that of people who happen to sit in the same room listening to a homily. Instead of being an audience they were actors!

Page 38

THE COMPANY OF THE COMMITTED

A bold and imaginative re-thinking of the strategy of the Church in contemporary life

Copyright © 1961 David Elton Trueblood

Harper & Row Publishers



BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

a brief history

Early Wednesday morning, December 15, 1993 the Lord gave Tim Kurtz a strategy from Isaiah 61 that has become the foundation for the New Testament Church. K

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them (Isaiah 61:1-7)

From this passage of scripture, God instructed Tim to “provide a viable outlet for all the ministry gifts”. Over a

RESTORING FIRST CENTURY VALUES AND STRUCTURE TO THE 21ST CENTURY CHURCH

period of nearly 15 years the Lord revealed to Tim that the current structure of the church was not conducive to releasing believers into their specific calling, purpose or ministry.

In 2006, after years of praying, thinking about and researching the church, Tim wrote and presented the first outline of what would become the book *NO LONGER CHURCH AS USUAL*. The *Vision for the 21st Century Church* was a paper presented to the leaders of his church. It reflected the shift that was taking place in his spirit regarding how the church should operate.

In 2010, the book *NO LONGER CHURCH AS USUAL* was released. It is the foundation from which this handbook is written. It is designed to help you gather as believers did in the first century church.

We are in the 'day of the saints'. The Holy Spirit is highlighting the 'work of ministry' being accomplished by the Body of Christ. There is a dramatic shift arising in the structure of the church. Millions of believers are being activated and released in the earth to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14).

As you activate the principles outlined in this handbook, you will experience the presence and power of Christ in a new and more exciting way. You will find yourself becoming effective in the 'work of ministry'. And most of all, you will literally see the Kingdom of God advance in the earth.



The Church

The Definition of the Church

There are eight things that define the New Testament Church.

1. The New Testament Church is an assembly of believers
2. Committed to the Kingdom Mandate
3. Who gather one or more times each week under the Headship of Jesus Christ
4. Who are submitted to each other in love
5. Who support each other's on-going work of being and making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ
6. Who edify, exhort and comfort one another
7. Who submit and relate to elders, ministry gifts and apostolic leaders
8. Who participate in planting and supporting new assemblies of believers to do the same with their prayers, time, finances and material resources.

What is a NEW TESTAMENT APOSTOLICALLY
GOVERNED church?

A New Testament Apostolically Governed church models the values, principles and practices that were taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ, founding apostles and the first century believers.

Embracing the New Testament is not at the exclusion of the Old Testament. We rely on both the Old and New Testament. The entire canon of scripture from Genesis to Revelation is our written guide for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2Timothy 3:16).

As New Testament believers we have no authority to eliminate or add to what has been written in the sixty-six books of the bible (Revelation 22:19).

To be Apostolically Governed means that the church is under the oversight of a team of elders who have been appointed by apostles to provide direction, protection and if necessary correction to insure that you grow and mature. They also provide an atmosphere for you to freely pursue God's purpose for your life.

The Kingdom Mandate

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion...(Genesis 1:28)

From the beginning, God has established the sole mission of His church. The mission to be fruitful, to multiply, to replenish the earth and subdue it, is still in force today.

Everyday you should measure everything you do by these questions taken from Genesis 1:28:

1. Am I fruitful? Am I building strong healthy relationships in our gathering?
2. Am I discipling someone, and am I being disciplined by someone else?
3. Am I filling and replenishing our community by leading others to the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I involved in planting a new assembly of believers in my area?
4. Am I committed to standing firm against satanic activity and opposition in our area?

The following pages will show you how to fulfill The Kingdom Mandate everyday!

Be Fruitful

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing (John 15:5)

Being fruitful is internal growth.

As an individual, you must be diligent to cultivate your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 1:6-8; 3:18).

As you gather with other believers each week, you should be diligent to cultivate healthy relationships among yourselves (Romans 12:10; 15:14; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:24).

Jesus commands us to bear much fruit. You must personally abide in Him. You and your gathering must abide in Him. Jesus is the True Vine that provides you with the ability to produce fruit.

Multiply

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: (Matthew 28:19 A SV)

Fruitful believers create more fruitful believers.
Healthy gatherings create more healthy gatherings.
This is the basis of multiplication. One becomes two – two becomes four – four becomes eight...

We are all commanded by the Word of God to make disciples of all nations. That means that everyone you meet is a potential disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer should seek to disciple another believer.

As a believer, you must also submit yourself to others to be discipled. This insures that you will continually grow and mature in the Lord Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18).

Replenish The Earth

And so it came about that the Church, throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, enjoyed peace and became firmly established; and, ordering its life by reverence for the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers (Acts 9:31 TCNT)

Imagine the joy of seeing the church increase daily. The Lord will add to His church every day (Acts 2:46-47). How can this happen?

You should personally commit to lead at least one person to the Lord every year. You must also commit to disciple that person until they become a strong mature believer like yourself. You should commit to planting, or helping to plant another assembly of believers in your city, county or region.

When you commit to being fruitful, to multiply by discipling others, to be personally involved in planting new assemblies of believers, then you will see the Lord fill and replenish territories the devil had stolen. Souls will be saved daily as all believers embrace this mission.



Subdue...

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19)

Whenever there is a genuine move of God, there will be opposition (1Corinthians 16:9). The devil will use any tactic he can in an attempt to stop the will of God in the earth. The Lord has commanded us to subdue the earth, which is to make everything subject to Him (Matthew 28:18; 1Corinthians 12:7-11; 15:25; Ephesians 1:22; Philippians 2:10; Revelation 11:15).

You subdue the enemy through:

- Prayer (Luke 18:1; 21:36; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2)
- Living Holy at all times (Ephesians 1:4; 1Peter 1:15-16; 2Peter 3:11)
- Obedience to the Word of God (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; 11:28; 1John 3:7)
- Obedience to Godly leadership (1Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:17)

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment
(1Corinthians 1:10)



The New Testament reveals five core values that are important in the church. These values help us to understand each others motives and increase our ability to walk as one.

The Values of

The New Testament Church

Memorize these values, and learn how they apply to you.

We value:

1. The Lordship of Jesus Christ

Jesus is Lord! Every knee shall bow, every tongue must confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:11). Salvation is impossible without first acknowledging that Jesus is Lord (Romans 9:9). The Holy Spirit empowers you to say, “Jesus is Lord” (1Corinthians 12:3). If we miss, misunderstand or neglect this first and primary value, then everything else we do is null and void. There is no reason to discuss any other value if we overlook this first and primary value – the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. The Priesthood of every believer

The priesthood of the believer must be understood in functional terms rather than in titles. God sees us as kings and priests. It is not important that we are called priests, it is only important that we do what the priests are called to do. To be a priest unto the Lord is to minister TO Him and not FOR Him. It is when we acknowledge Christ in each other. It is

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

allowing each person to express Christ as He is revealed within them. More importantly, it is submitting to that expression of Christ in our brothers and sisters.

3. The Holy Spirit – His Acts and His gifts

Jesus is Lord over His Church. The Holy Spirit is the sole managing agent of His church in the earth. No decision should be made, or action taken if it is not directed by the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit was normative for first century believers. It is also normal for believers today. His grace, spiritual and ministry gifts are the divine tools He entrusts to believers to accomplish the work of ministry in the earth today.

4. Growing spiritually and numerically through covenant relationships

Growth, spiritual and numerical, is a value we must embrace. A healthy body grows. Individuals must grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). Equally, believers must grow in covenant relationship with each other.

5. No one among us shall lack

The principle behind '*no one lacking*' is that I will lay down my possessions for the benefit of other believers. Our goal is more than meeting their needs in the time of crisis. It is to insure that they do not lack so that they can function in the body more effectively. *No one lacking* is not an empty promise to pay bills, provide food or make believers wealthy, but rather a practice geared to make every believer productive.



BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

WE GATHER EVERY WEEK IN HOMES

The church is simply a '*gathering of believers*'. The believers in the first century church met in their homes (Acts 2:26; 20:20; Romans 16:3-5; Colossian 4:15). We believe that the primary location for the church to gather is in the house of believers. The church in the house is the best place for individual believers to grow spiritually, express themselves and be strengthened (Matthew 18:20; Romans 15:14; 1Corinthians 14:26; Hebrews 10:25)



WE GATHER COLLECTIVELY AS THE WHOLE CHURCH

To avoid isolation from other believers, we regularly gather with other house churches

creating the *whole church* in our city (Acts 15:22; Romans 16:23; 1Corinthians 14:23). In *whole church* gatherings we reinforce our vision, we make our unity

stronger, and we celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ with many other believers. We believe that whole church gatherings are a visible expression of the Body of Christ to the world.

WE GATHER FOR PRAYER, TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION

In the first century, prayer, both personal and corporate was held in the temple (Acts 3:1; Acts 22:17). Current church buildings, or other designated places should be established as places for believers to get alone, or come together corporately for prayer.

Doctrinal truths must be taught in order to insure continuity and balance in the church. New leaders must be instructed and prepared in an environment conducive for study and learning.

We commit ourselves to learn the structure, values and doctrines in the New Testament Church.

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Making a transition can be daunting. You are learning how to BE THE CHURCH rather than simply GOING TO CHURCH.

NINE PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL GATHERINGS

At times you may not be sure of your activities. You may have friends and relatives who have questions about what you are doing. That is okay. What is most important is that you KNOW that you are in the will of God, and that what you are doing can be confirmed by the Word of God.

The following nine principles are provided to help you successfully navigate in New Testament values and structure.

1. IT'S OKAY TO MEET ON DAYS OTHER THAN SUNDAY, AND AT TIMES OTHER THAN 11 A.M.

Like most believers, we have been programmed to 'go to church' every Sunday morning. Now that you are primarily meeting in homes, you may feel a little out of place at first, but rest assured, there is no scripture that mandates that you meet on Sundays. Meet at a time that is most convenient for you and the sisters and brothers in your gathering (Colossians 2:16).

2. IT IS NOT THE PLACE – IT IS THE PURPOSE

The primary place we gather is in the homes of believers. You are no less spiritual because you gather in a home rather than a dedicated building. Remember you are allowing the Holy Spirit to build a 'family' not an organization. (John 4:21-23)

3. YOU ARE GATHERING TO 'LIVE LIFE' AMONG OTHER BELIEVERS

Those who gather with you are your family. You are not 'members' of an organization – you are the church. You gather once each week, but your

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

relationships should extend beyond the weekly get together (1Corinthians 12:25-26). Make a strong and intentional effort be involved in the lives of your sisters and brothers throughout the week. Don't simply settle for seeing and ministering to each other one day each week.

4. COMMIT TO BUILD TRUST AMONG EACH OTHER

The more you gather, the more you will learn about each other. You will build trust with each other as you keep each others personal matters confidential, and pray for each others needs. You build trust by being open and honest with one another in love (Romans 12:13-15; James 5:16).

5. YOUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IN EVERY GATHERING IS TO EDIFY, EXHORT AND COMFORT ONE ANOTHER.

Prophecy edifies the church (1Corinthians 14:3). Every time you gather with your brothers and sisters, seek ways to build life in each other.

6. EVERY GATHERING MAY NOT BE THE SAME – FOLLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING

Don't get locked into a format. The Holy Spirit leads your gathering. One week you may find yourself discussing scripture. Another week may be all praise, prayer and worship. Then there may be times when all you do is fellowship with each other. Even when ministry gifts visit your gathering, they too must be led by the Holy Spirit in order to be the most effective.

7. DON'T LOOK FOR ONE PERSON TO 'PREACH' OR TEACH DURING YOUR REGULAR GATHERINGS

Whenever you gather, everybody should have something to contribute. The strength of New Testament gatherings are every one allowing Christ in them to connect with Christ in others. Allow the gifts of the Spirit to flow through you (1Corinthians 12:7; 14:26).

8. DON'T PUT TIME LIMITS ON YOUR GATHERING

Your gathering is a family of believers. You are living life among each other. Being cognizant of your time

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

is not the same as setting time limits on your gathering. Spend whatever time you need. Some gatherings may be shorter or longer than others. The key thing is to allow the Holy Spirit to work His work among you.

9. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL RESOURCES

Regularly invite trans-local apostolic workers to teach and instruct you in Kingdom principles. Don't hesitate to contact your leadership. The leadership of your gathering, ministry gifts, deacons and elders can answer questions you may have. Whenever possible, take advantage of classes offered to build and strengthen you. Make sure to attend whole church gatherings where you will be encouraged by many other believers. Above all, pray and trust the Holy Spirit as you grow in the things of the Lord.

Jesus was not into building programs, technology, media, or megachurches. He was about the business of empowering people to seek the lost, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the injured, and bring back those who had strayed. Not a program, but a radical demonstration of the power of God.

Page 77

UNLEARNING CHURCH

*just when you thought you had leadership
all figured out*

Copyright © 2002 Michael Slaughter

Published by Group Publishing, Inc.

20 Things I Need To Consider Every Week

1. Do I make every effort to gather with my sisters and brothers every week?
2. Do I seek the Lord for ways to encourage my brothers and sisters who gather with me each week?
3. What has the Holy Spirit given me to strengthen my gathering?
4. What have I learned in the Word of God this week that will build the faith of those I gather with?
5. Am I prayerfully considering planting a gathering of believers in my home?
6. Am I praying for our elders, deacons and ministry gifts?
7. Am I praying with or for someone who will be planting a gathering of believers in their home?
8. Who have I invited to our gathering this week?
9. Have I prayerfully sought to resolve any issues or conflicts I may have had with another believer?

RESTORING FIRST CENTURY VALUES AND STRUCTURE TO THE
21ST CENTURY CHURCH

10. What experiences have I had this week that can bless and encourage my gathering?
11. Have I shared the love of Jesus Christ with an unbeliever this week?
12. Am I making a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ?
13. Am I being discipled by another believer?
14. Have I fasted at least one day this week?
15. What instructions do I have from the Lord that my brothers and sister can help me with?
16. What can I do to help my brothers and sisters fulfill their instructions from the Lord?
17. What needs are unmet in my gathering, and what am I doing to help meet them?
18. Am I tithing consistently?
19. Am I giving offerings to the Lord Jesus Christ?
20. Will I fellowship with other believers outside of our gathering this week (going to a movie, dinner, or event)?



BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Esteeming Our Leadership

Jesus is Head of His Church (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). Yet, He has entrusted some who provide leadership and oversight. These leaders are called to serve the purposes of God in the Body of Believers. We honor those who are called to support the work of ministry we do.

Most importantly, we understand New Testament leadership as functional in nature. They are believers called and entrusted by God to serve in various disciplines in the church. We must esteem them highly for their works sake. Make the following confessions regarding your leadership.

House Church Leaders

I esteem our house church leaders. These saints have opened their homes for believers to gather each week. I thank God for the consistent hospitality they show towards the saints (Romans 12:10-13; Hebrews 6:10). I am vigilant to treat their home with care and respect.

The Elders of the Church

I esteem our elders. They provide government in the church. They have been made overseers by the Holy

Ghost. I willingly submit to their God given authority as they watch for my soul. I thank God for the protection they provide to our body of believers. I am committed to praying for them, their wives and their children (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1Peter 5:1-3).

Deacons

I esteem the deacons who serve us. I will pray for them as they distribute resources to meet needs in our church. I will give of my time, finances, materials and resources to assist them in their ministry to us.

Ministry Gifts

I esteem the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers among us. I trust them to equip me for the work of ministry God has called me to. I will embrace the apostle's doctrine. I will honor the prophets and prophetess who give Godly direction. I will make full proof of my evangelist by doing the work of an evangelist. I will respect the pastors who nurture our relationships. I will receive from teachers who impart divine truth into my life (Ephesians 4:11-16).

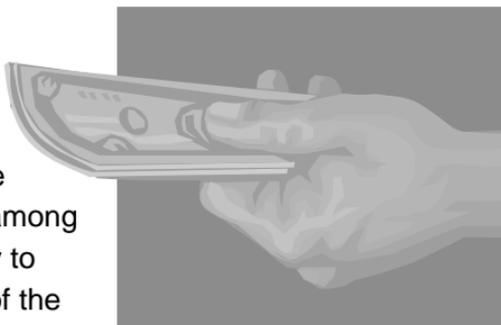
how we give

We Tithe

My commitment to tithing comes from my love of the Lord and His Church. I recognize that the Lord trusts me with resources from which a tenth is used to support the expense of ministry. I commit to tithe from all my income (Malachi 3:10; Hebrews 7:5-9).

We Give Offerings

I commit financial and material resources to insure that no one lacks among us. I will give freely to supply the needs of the saints so that they will have everything they need to fulfill their calling purpose and ministry (Acts 4:32; 2Corinthians 9:12).



From time to time, at the leading of the Holy Spirit, I will sell excess resources and entrust proceeds to the Apostles so that needs can be met among us

(Deuteronomy 15:11; Acts 4:34-35; Romans 15:26). I am committed to remembering the poor. I will give liberally to help meet their temporal needs (Proverbs 14:31; Luke 18:22).

I thank God for five-fold ministry gifts who give of their time and resources to impart spiritual truths to me. Therefore, I will encourage them with financial gifts according to the Word of God (2Chronicles 31:4; 1Corinthians 16:1-3; Galatians 6:6).

Scripture teaches me that I should not hamper the work of those doing their assignment. Any elder who rules well is worthy of double honor. Therefore, at the leading of the Holy Spirit, I will give financially to encourage our elders and deacons in the work they do in the church.

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Statement of Faith

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We hold to the complete inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. This Statement of Faith is edited from a greater work New Testament Doctrine and Kingdom Theology. It is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e. that we all speak the same thing, 1Corinthians 1:10, Acts 2:42). No claim is made that it contains all Biblical truth, only that it covers our beliefs as to these fundamental doctrines.

We do not presume to say the phraseology employed in this Statement of Fundamental Truths is inspired or that it is the final work on Bible truth. However, we are persuaded it is proper and consistent with the Holy Scriptures to “set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us.” (Luke 1:1).

The Holy Scriptures

Both Old and New Testaments were written by holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit and are God’s revealed word to man. They are sufficient infallible rule and guide to salvation and all Christian worship and service (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2Timothy 3:15-17).

God

Scripture teaches that there is one and only one true and living God, who is self-existent, and eternal “I AM,” the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of all mankind. That He has chosen to reveal Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the same in essence, though distinct in personality (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matthew 28:18-19; Luke 3:22). These three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and perfection and are worthy of the same homage and obedience. (Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3,4; 2Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 1:4-6)

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the son of God and the son of Man, was born miraculously of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31,35). He lived a sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1Peter 2:22). He came into the world to save men from the guilt and condemnation of sin (John 3:16), offering His blood as an atonement (1Corinthians 15:3; II Corinthians 5:21) and making it available to all who exercise faith in Him; His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1Corinthians 15:4). His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11: 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1-3). Also that His

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Divinity is proved from His titles, His attributes, and His works (John 1:14; Luke 1:26-35; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31). That He is presently seated at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for His redeemed. We also acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord over all things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the Earth (John 1:1,2,14; 1Timothy 3:16; Acts 7:37-38; Philippians 2:9-10; Hebrews 7:25).

The Holy Spirit

The scriptures ascribe to the Holy Spirit the acts and attributes of an intelligent being. He guides, knows, moves, gives information, commands, forbids, sends forth, reproveth, as the instrumental segment of the God Head in the liberal dispersion of spiritual gifts, and can be sinned against (John 16:13; 1Corinthians 2:11; Genesis 1:2; Acts 10:19; 13:2; 16:6; 13:4; John 16:8; Mark 3:29; Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; 1Corinthians 12). The works of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; creation; inspiration, giving of life, and sanctification (Job 33:4; 2Peter 1:21; 1Peter 3:18; 1Corinthians 6:11).

Sanctification

That sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we become partakers of His Holiness; that it is begun at regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer (1Thessalonians 4:3; 1John 2:29; Romans 8:5; Philippians 2:12-13).

THE SALVATION OF MAN

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by Grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life. The inward evidence of salvation is direct witness of the Spirit and the outward evidence to all men as a life of righteousness and true holiness (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7; Romans 8:16; Ephesians 4:24; Titus 2:12).

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

We believe the New Testament teaches at least three Baptisms. First, there is the baptism by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1Corinthians 12:13). Secondly, there is water baptism by immersion for believers only. This we believe to be an ordinance of the church, whereby the believer experiences the reality of the death, burial and resurrection with the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-6). Thirdly, there is the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ, which may occur at or subsequent to conversion.

We believe that speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance is the normative evidence of this baptism. Further, we believe that by the believers continued submission to the Holy Spirit, his very weakness is transformed into strength to witness for Jesus Christ in power, and to live according to the will of God (Acts 1:5-8, 10:46, 11:28, 19:6).

We believe in baptism by immersion. We do not embrace the concept of a verbal baptismal formula (i.e. In Jesus Name or In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). We hold that the understanding of the one being baptized has more value than the words of the baptizer. Therefore our focus will be on insuring that

each new believer understand the inward change through Jesus Christ required before the outward demonstration of water baptism (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)

The Church

The church is the body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission and purpose. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the church of the firstborn, whose name is written in heaven. As such, the Bible reveals that we are members one of another and the basis of our fellowship is in Christ in the power of the Spirit (Ephesians 1:22, 2:19-22; Hebrews 12:23; 1Peter 2:5).

The mission of the church is to advance the authority of the kingdom of God in the earth, and to demonstrate the wisdom of God to principalities and powers in heavenly places (Matthew 24:14; Ephesians 3:10).

The church is governed by a plurality of elders appointed by apostolic leadership (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

Responsibility of the Believer

We believe that it is essential that each believer lay a foundation of Biblical truth and experience upon which he-she builds his/her life. These foundation stones are: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, all of which are prerequisites to going on to perfection (spiritual maturity) (Hebrews 6:1-2). We believe the goal of every believer should be to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). We believe that every believer should become a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to edify, exhort and comfort other disciples (Luke 14:33; 1Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrew 3:13)

We accept as true that each believer is called and chosen in God as priest unto God to offer up the sacrifice of praise (the fruit of the lips), to give of his time, strength, and material possessions to the service of the Lord (2Corinthians 9:6-9; 2Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 13:15; 1Peter 2:9)

The Blessed Hope

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the blessed hope of the church (1Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1Corinthians 15:51).

Gifts of the Spirit

The nine gifts of the Spirit set forth in I Corinthians 12 should be and must be operative in the church to enjoy the fullness of God. These gifts are imparted by the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit and only work, or are operated by this one and the self-same Spirit (1Corinthians 12:11). The ministry gifts identified in Ephesians 4:11-16 are necessary for the maturing of the church. The grace gifts identified in Romans 12:1-13 provide the church a foundation for ministry to one another.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

The second coming of Christ includes the visible and physical return of Jesus Christ to the earth (Matthew 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1Thessalonians 4:16-18; 2Thessalonians 1:7).

BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

The Final Judgment and Eternal State

We believe that at death, the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body, when Jesus Christ returns. Whereupon soul and body reunited shall be with Him forever in glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death, conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the Great White Throne when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power (Luke 16:19-26, 23:42; 2Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Revelation 20:11-15).

Tithes and Offerings

Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work. These are to be practiced continually by all believers and are outward expressions of the unity of the church, the Body of Christ, as it joins together in support of the work of the Lord (Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Genesis 28:22; Matthew 23:23;

Deuteronomy 26, 14:28-29, 15:7-11; Numbers 18:8-11; Ezekial 44; Proverbs 14:21, 29:7; Luke 11:41, 12:33).

The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God is eternal. It is divine intent that rule, reign and authority of God be manifest in the earth as it is established in the heavens. The expansion of the Kingdom in the earth is the mission of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The believers inherit the kingdom and its manifested benefits in the earth (Psalms 145:13; Daniel 7:27; Matthew 6:10; Matthew 24:14; Luke 10:9; 2Peter 1:11).



BELIEVERS HANDBOOK FOR NEW TESTAMENT GATHERINGS

THE ABC'S OF BECOMING A NEW TESTAMENT GATHERING

Apply yourself to knowing the facts

Believe God for direction

Commit to complete the process

Disciple one another

Elders will guide, guard and protect

Fast and pray throughout the process

Gather weekly and encourage one another

Holy Spirit and His gifts must be valued

Intercede for each other

Jesus is Lord must be your most important value

Know those who labor among you

Love one another

RESTORING FIRST CENTURY VALUES AND STRUCTURE TO THE
21ST CENTURY CHURCH

Ministry gifts are vital to your gathering

No one shall lack among you

Overcome all obstacles in the power of the Lord

Pray without ceasing

Quit looking back at what you use to do in church

Resist the devil at all times

Submit to one another

Training is a never ending process

Use every resource the Lord provides

Vigorously pursue biblical results

Win the lost to Jesus Christ

X-pect to be victorious

You are vital to the success of this transition

Zion (the church) will be reached



