

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

www.nac-usa.org

Spring 2017

Dear brothers and sisters,

With great enthusiasm, let us continue to embrace the motto for 2017 - **Glory be to God, our Father!** There are many aspects of this word that we can discover. Already in the New Year's service, our Chief Apostle has outlined a number of ways to glorify our Father, which you can read more about in a following article in this edition of the Vision.

I would like to focus on the first task: recognizing the creative power and goodness of God. It is so easy for us to take for granted what God has created around us. It starts with a simple fact – I am here! God has allowed me to be, He has revealed Himself to me, and He has called me to be His own. Our wonderment continues as we begin to survey the natural creation around us. For thousands of years, mankind has studied what God has made and we still have not been able to understand all its mysteries and are still continually amazed by new things. Even recently, evidence of another ancient life form was discovered. On land, in the ocean, and in the heavens, God's creative, evolving power is manifest again and again.

Many times throughout my life, I have often pondered the words in Numbers 23:23. They made a deep impression on me when I learned in school that they were the first words tapped in Morse code by Samuel Morse in 1844.

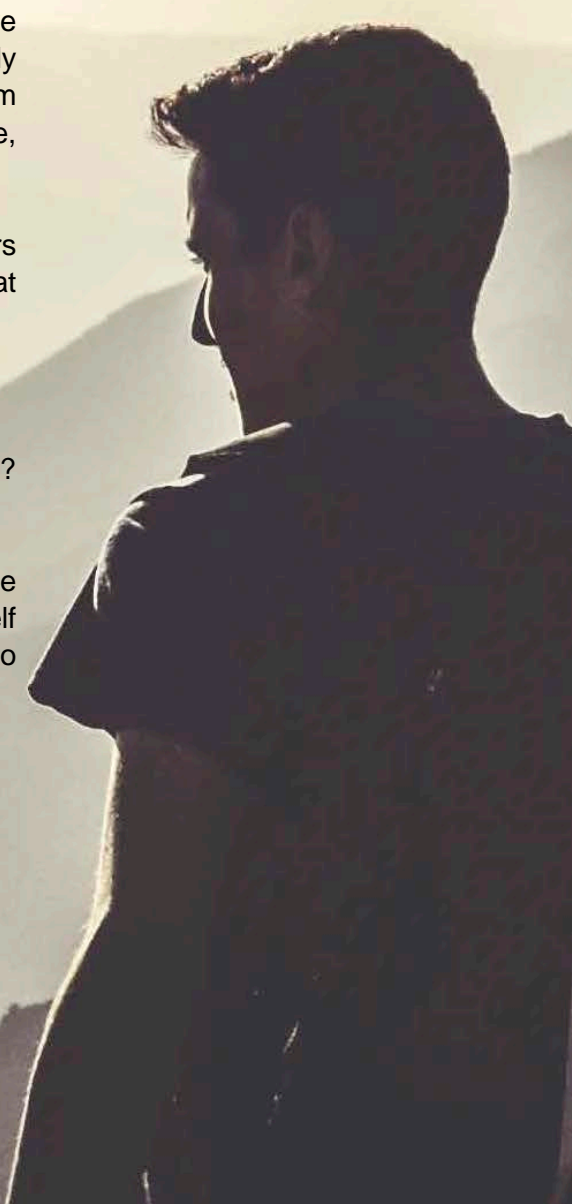
"What hath God wrought?" (KJV)

It is good for us, from time to time, to stop and consider, what has God made? What is He creating today? And what will He yet do?

When we survey our life and that which surrounds it through the eye of the Holy Spirit, with childlike wonderment we begin to perceive what God Himself said in the beginning, *"It is good."* After such meditative moments we come to the conclusion – how great is our God! Thanks and praises be to Him...

Wishing you wonderful discoveries into the greatness of God, our Father,

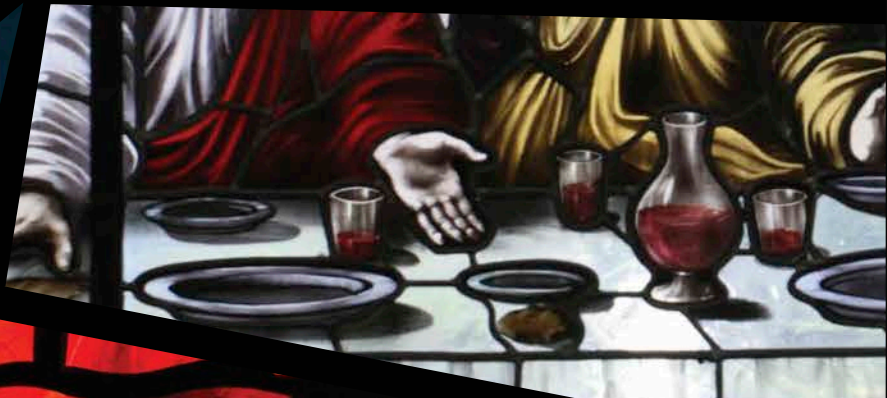
A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to the Chief Apostle, positioned at the end of the letter.





JESUS

THE PASSOVER LAMB



When we approach holy days in the Christian year, there is always a sense of familiarity. Some of us have celebrated these holidays ever since we can remember. When something is so familiar to us, we could easily pass it by without giving it much thought. This is especially true as we approach Holy Week and the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us. In order to never take His sacrifice for granted, we should always dive a little deeper into some of the events of Holy Week to make it come alive for us again. There are always new meanings and understandings to be discovered through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

When we look at the Bible in its entirety, it's amazing how the Old Testament connects to the New Testament and how often it alludes to Jesus' life and sacrifice. One instance of this is the Passover Feast and the Last Supper. We may already know that when Jesus and His disciples gathered at the Last Supper, they were together to celebrate Passover. However, it is more than just a coincidence that the Last Supper happened to be during Passover. We can look all the way back to Exodus 12, when the Passover Feast was instituted, to see how that moment was a foreshadowing for what Jesus would do for all humanity.

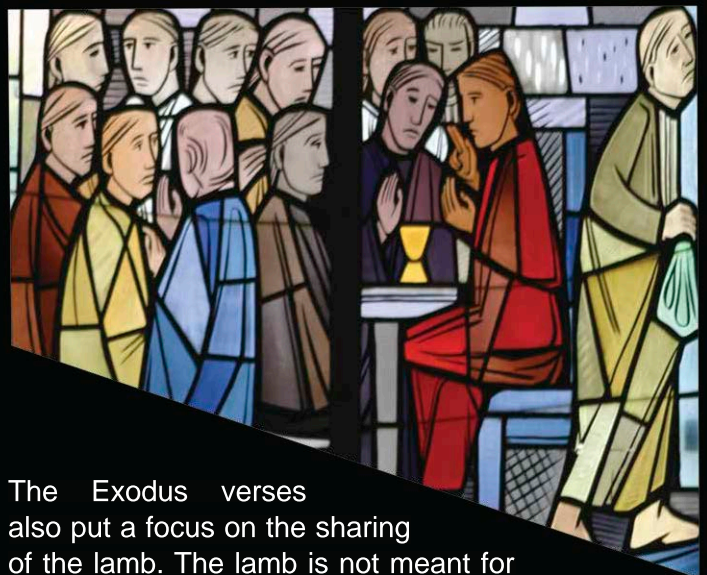
Passover was first established right before the Israelites fled Egypt to escape slavery, as we can read in Exodus 12:11 where the Lord states the Passover meal should be eaten in haste and with all of their things ready so they could leave Egypt quickly. After this initial Passover Feast when the Israelites left Egypt, Passover was then celebrated every year as a remembrance of their freedom and is still celebrated by Jewish people today.

WHY IS THE IMAGE OF A LAMB APPLIED TO JESUS?

The first and last portions of Exodus 12 are God's instructions to Moses and Aaron on how to celebrate the Passover meal. His specific directions are what reveal the connections to His Son, who would come to earth many years later to give His life for our sins.

In Exodus 12:3 and 4, the Lord instructs Moses and Aaron to tell the Israelites, *"On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb."* From

these verses, we can see that the lamb is given great significance; it is to be shared as the main part of the Passover Feast among many people. We can draw a parallel between the Passover lamb and Jesus as the new Passover Lamb. Jesus is often referred to as the Lamb of God, as seen in John 1:29, and also as "our Passover" by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7. Why is the image of a lamb applied to Jesus? Not only does the animal represent the meekness and gentleness of Christ, but just as the Jewish people would bring a lamb to the priest as an atonement for their sin, Jesus was brought before God as a sacrifice on behalf of man's sin. One difference between the two, however, is that the Jews' sacrifice was repeated, but Jesus' sacrifice was once and lasts for all time. We are reminded of this every Sunday when we hear the words during the consecration of Holy Communion, *"the once brought, eternally valid sacrifice of Jesus Christ."*



The Exodus verses also put a focus on the sharing of the lamb. The lamb is not meant for just a few people, it is meant to be divided by many, even sharing it with a neighbor's family. This is true of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb. He did not die for the sins of one person, but for the sins of *all people in all times*. His love and sacrifice should not be hoarded by a small group, but should be shared with as many people as possible.

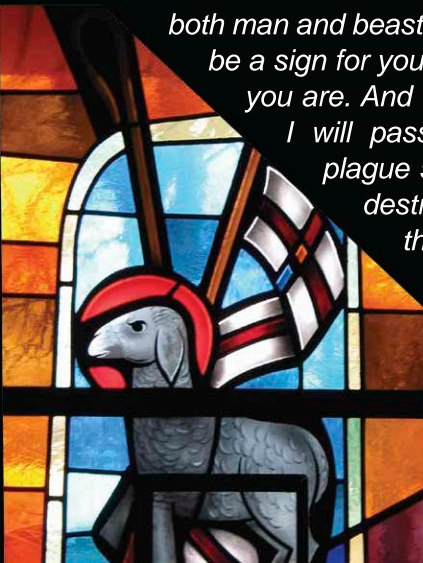
Isaiah also paints a strong picture of the Messiah's sacrifice, further reinforcing the image of Jesus as the Lamb of God: *"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent"* (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus is the Lamb of God because He is both the sacrifice presented to God and the sacrifice provided by God, removing the world's sin and taking it on Himself alone.

Continuing with God's instructions for the Passover Feast, Exodus 12:5 states that the *"lamb shall be without blemish."* The Passover lamb's connection here to Jesus is more evident. While Jesus was fully man, He was also fully God and therefore, perfect. He was without sin and faithfully submitted to His Father's will.

In verse 6, we're told that the Lord then says to Moses and Aaron, *"Now you shall keep [the lamb] until the fourteenth day of the same month."* The Israelites were instructed to keep their lamb in their house for four days, from the *"tenth of this month"* to the *"fourteenth day of the same month."* Their sacrificial lamb wasn't just something they picked up at the local farm when they were ready to slaughter it. They had to let the lamb stay with them for four days. Anyone who is a lover of animals may understand the implication of this. The family may have started to care for the lamb, seen it as something valuable and precious to their family, so when it was later sacrificed, it affected those who had to care for it in those four days. We also want Jesus' sacrifice to affect us. He wasn't just a stranger who decided to give His life for us; He is someone we know, who we love, and we can feel the loss of His death all the more for those reasons.

JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD BECAUSE HE IS BOTH THE SACRIFICE PRESENTED TO GOD AND THE SACRIFICE PROVIDED BY GOD

Exodus 12:7 describes that after the lamb is killed, some of its blood should be put on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house where it was eaten. God explains the importance of this in verses 12 and 13: *"For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt; both man and beast...Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."* The



Israelites who followed this instruction could rejoice in the fact that God spared their firstborns. God knew that this plague would urge the Pharaoh to release

the Israelites from slavery because of the fear of inciting more of God's wrath. As God said of the houses that had the lamb's blood on the doorposts, *"I will pass over you,"* slavery passed over the Israelites and they now had access to freedom. While slavery has been a reality for different groups of people over time, what has held all people captive since the time of Adam and Eve? Sin is the heaviest chain and we cannot lift it ourselves. And God knew this. So, He sent His only Son to earth to die for our sins, to release us from those chains. Because of Jesus' blood on the cross, judgment for sin can pass over us and we can have access to a relationship with God again. Just as the lamb's blood on the doorposts ultimately provided the Israelites their freedom, Jesus gives us freedom from the weight of our sins.

And so the Israelites made their exodus from Egypt and continued to celebrate the Passover every year, and Jesus and the twelve disciples at the Last Supper was just another celebration of that same Passover Feast: Until Jesus was betrayed and turned over to the Romans. Until He was hung on the cross. Until He willingly gave His life for all people. That year, Jesus breathed new life into the celebration of Passover, which would have an eternal effect on all people, not just the Israelites.

For one more example, we can look at John's account in John 19:31-37. Here, he tells of how the day after Jesus' crucifixion, the Jews asked Pilate if the dying process could be sped up so that no bodies remain on the cross on the holy Sabbath day. This is done by breaking their legs, so that they had no way to support their bodies, quickly causing death by asphyxiation. The soldiers went to the two men who had hung next to Jesus and broke their legs, so that they immediately died. When they came to Jesus, they found that He was already dead (cr. John 19:30). Therefore, Jesus' legs did not need to be broken. John, a witness of the breaking of the legs, said that this was done that *"Scripture should be fulfilled"* (John 19:36). What is John referring to here? We can go back to Exodus 12:46 to see one other rule from God regarding the Passover lamb: *"nor shall you break one of its bones."* Jesus' bones were not broken during His sacrifice. This happened so that Scripture could be fulfilled and that we could see that it was fulfilled.

Jesus' death gives a special meaning to the Passover meal. It gives further clarity to us on what Jesus's death is about and the vital role He has in our lives: the Lamb of God gave **His** life to give **us** life. - VAA/MJB/LRK



PICTURE THIS

WHAT DO YOU SEE?



JOHN 1:29



LIVING TO THE
GLORY OF GOD



RECOGNIZE



GIVE THANKS



PROCLAIM

RECOGNIZE THE GREATNESS OF GOD

God's omnipotence, His unlimited power, is clearly expressed in His creation. By His word alone, everything came into being from nothing, both the visible and the invisible creation. While certain aspects of creation seem to be chaotic or random, there is still order to be found, even if we may not be able to see it. This order bears witness of God's wisdom. Just as God is good and perfect, so is His entire creation. Even though we, imperfect beings, make up part of His creation, we can still be assured of God's perfectness and kindness because of His plan of salvation. Hence, our task is to know God more and continually develop a culture of learning.

GIVE HIM THANKS

As we learn more about our Father, we are inspired to deep gratitude. We show our thankfulness by accepting God's will, even though it can be difficult. We can look to Jesus as our example in this, particularly when He prayed to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane. Even though He asked to have the cup of suffering on the cross pass over Him, He prayed, "not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

We show our thanks by bringing Him offerings. Everything we have belongs to God. Our offerings to Him give back to Him what was His from the beginning. When we realize that all things come from God, we make every effort to take care of what He has given us and use it for His glory.

We trust in God. We do this by spending less time complaining about our cares and earthly struggles. Even though we are sinners, we know that God takes care of us and is with us every moment in our lives. When we are assured of this knowledge, we display our trust and thanks for God and His will, and our prayers become expressions of praise and thanksgiving in lieu of lists of our expectations.

God's will is to save every soul and open a path for people to restore their relationship with Him. We show our thankfulness to Him by respecting the dignity of every person and praying for their salvation.


PROCLAIM HIS GLORY

In order to proclaim God's glory, we must first acknowledge His authority. Compared to the One who knows everything, we know so little and submit ourselves to His authority because of our trust in Him and our knowledge of His goodness and perfectness. When we recognize God's authority, we realize that His laws are holy and that one aspect of His glory is His giving of the law. Through the law, God aims not to suppress us, but to preserve us from evil, which was true in the time of Moses and is true for us today, reflected in the two commandments that Jesus gave.

We live our lives in a way that speaks of God's glory to those around us. **We accomplish this by behaving like children of God.** With Jesus as our example, we can live a life that emulates His attributes by: learning more about our Father, allowing that knowledge to inspire us to trust Him and to understand His will and intentions, and loving and serving one another.

Our God is greater than everything and nothing can prevent Him from giving us His kingdom. His love and faithfulness to His plan to save us is a sign of glory. When we consider all that our God is, we are inspired to worship and glorify Him. This further deepens our relationship with Him.

God's life has been laid into those that have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. After receiving such a gift, how should we respond? We want keep developing so that our nature can be transformed by this gift. Our journey of growth bring us into oneness with each other as we understand that there is "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6).



As we contemplate this year the behavior that glorifies God, our Father, we realize the life of a Christian has many aspects. It begins with believing in Christ's life, teaching, death, resurrection, and ascension into His Father's kingdom. With this, we know that if we believe in Him and have faith in His teachings, then we must also act according to these teachings. As Christians, we are called to witness and testify of God's presence in our lives; we are called to worship Him; we are called to serve Him by serving those around us. And we are called to give; give of our life, our time, our money, our love.

This is the first article in a series that addresses some important questions: How should a Christian, steeped in the Gospel, view the subject of giving? What in our lives can we give in order to praise and offer thanks to God? Further to our understanding, terms such as giving, offering, and tithing are often used interchangeably with different interpretations of their meanings and significance.

Objectively, we may see many factors that have influenced our thinking. We have gathered our understandings from various sources in both the Old and New Testament, but also from our culture and traditions. It is important that our beliefs are accurate and reflect the teachings of Jesus to remain relevant today in shaping our decisions and behavior.


For many, the subject of giving is shrouded in mystery, lack of transparency, and discomfort, as though the subject of our giving should not be discussed openly. However, Jesus did not shy away from the topic. He was quite transparent. While He advised the Pharisees to keep their personal giving secret to teach humility and avoid a self-promotional public display, the subject of giving was not taboo.

Is giving important?

Perhaps we may have been influenced by the thinking that the church does not need our giving. Clearly, God does not need our money, but the visible church, a distinctly human institution, requires the financial support of the believers. Jesus intentionally created this institution, charged it with His mission, and then placed the responsibility for managing it into human hands. He gave His Spirit to lead our decision-making, but He did not give us an endowment to fund the mission. He left that to us. The institutional human church is dependent upon our giving to fulfill the Divine purpose found within the Great Commission.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20



But, beyond the practical needs of the church lies one very important, vital fact: believers have a need to give - *for their own spiritual growth!* How do we know this? Because the Gospel tells us so.

Over this series of articles, we would like to explore the origins of our present beliefs, clarify assumptions and terminology, and provide a sound and authentic understanding of Christian giving based upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the writings of the apostles, and the New Apostolic doctrine.

However, before we begin, let's acknowledge that a search for simple, easy rules by which to live our life may leave us a bit frustrated. We won't find a checklist in the Bible. Jesus intentionally moves away from strict definitions and easy-to-apply formulas in favor of self-responsibility, self-discipline, and the condition or attitude of the giver's heart. Not surprisingly, just like the limitless generosity of God towards humankind embodied in the sacrifice of Jesus to pay for our salvation, the Gospel is quite open-ended on the subject of giving. It is rooted in the law or commandment of love towards God and our neighbor.

We will examine this topic from three perspectives, in future articles:

GIVING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, we can trace the origins of giving as an expression of worship starting very early in history with Cain and Abel and continuing as a thread through the lives of the patriarchs. We will also discover the very practical concept of tithing as prescribed within Mosaic Law. What is a tithe? What was it used for? You may find some interesting, and possibly surprising, discoveries that shed light on our own experience today.

GIVING ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Jesus had a lot to say about giving. But what did He say about tithing? Was it relevant to Him and should it be for us today? And what did He say about the heart of the giver? And lastly, what will we learn about giving and mission from His example and supreme sacrifice?

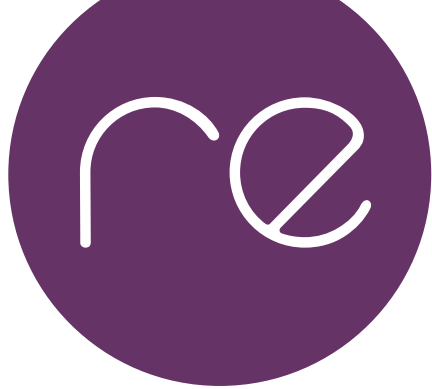
GIVING ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE FIRST APOSTLES

The writings of the first apostles describe their struggle to embrace the divine mission of Christ and to convert it into



the daily functions of a human institution. We can see a very practical side of the church.

Our series will conclude with some observations and teachings from our Chief Apostle to help us pull it all together. We look forward to sharing the journey with you and hope to make some wonderful discoveries together with real life applications.

**This article is taken from a study done by the NAC-USA Work Group Giving, comprised of apostles, ministers, and members.*



GO OR GIVE



I AM ONLY ONE,
BUT **I AM ONE.**
I CANNOT DO EVERYTHING
BUT **I CAN DO SOMETHING.**
AND I WILL NOT
INTERFERE WITH ANYONE ELSE.

KING'S
HOME WATER
FUNDRAISER

FAMILIES
WELCOME!



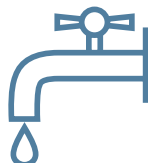
ONE WAY FARM

PROJECT WEEKEND
CINCINNATI, OHIO

JUNE 1-4

18 SPOTS AVAILABLE

\$400 REGISTRATION + TRAVEL



KCH WATER SYSTEM

PROJECT TRIP
BELMOPAN, BELIZE

JUNE 17-24
JUNE 24-JULY 1

12 SPOTS AVAILABLE (21 YRS+)

\$550 REGISTRATION + TRAVEL



COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PROJECT TRIP
MACKENZIE, ZAMBIA

AUGUST 1-12

8 SPOTS AVAILABLE (21 YRS+)

\$650 REGISTRATION + TRAVEL

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ANYTHING,
SOMETHING.
LET WHAT I CANNOT DO
WITH WHAT I CAN DO.

CHILDREN'S
PROJECT

ON FORMS.



Since 2012
re Charitable
Ministry has been a
long-term partner of the
Kings Children Home (KCH) in
Belmopan, Belize.

At any given time, 65 to over 100
children depend on KCH for a safe living
environment, schooling and care.

KCH depends on donations for the major-
ity of its operating budget. Together with
their leadership team, re Charitable Minis-
try has made it a special focus in 2017 to
identify and facilitate projects that ensure
KCH's long-term sustainability.

EVERY DROP COUNTS!

Monthly water charges are one of the highest
operating costs of KCH.

THE SOLUTION?

A rain water collection and supply system that is
estimated to reduce KCH's water bill by
more than 66%!

\$10,000

Our Fundraising target for 2017 for this project!

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help of three re Charitable Ministry volunteer
teams this will complete the new rain water
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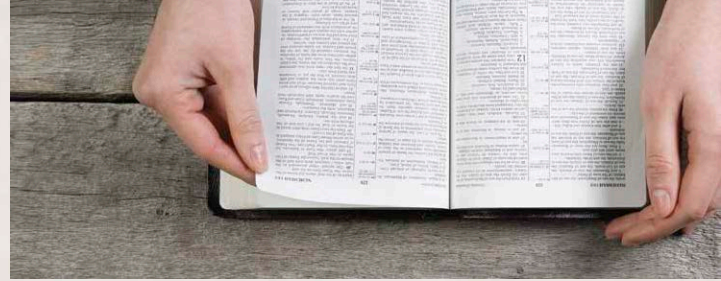
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Check back with us on our Facebook page to see
progress updates on our fundraising and our
volunteer teams!

<https://www.facebook.com/re.Charitable.Ministry>

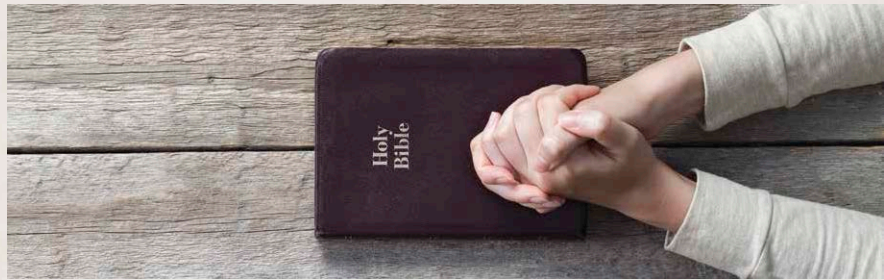
*Sustainable development is that which
meets the needs of the present without
compromising the ability of future
generations to meet their own needs.*

- Gro Harlem Brundland



DOCTRINE & THEOLOGY

ORIGINAL SIN / GOD'S ELECT



ORIGINAL SIN OR INHERITED SIN?

Receiving the sacraments is part of being a Christian and they are a prerequisite for salvation. Because the sacraments are so essential to our understanding of Christianity and salvation, it is important that we deepen our knowledge of them. In this article, we are going to focus on Holy Baptism and the difference between original sin and inherited sin.

Holy Baptism with water dispensed in the Triune name of God allows us to enter into our first close relationship with Him. Through Holy Baptism, we become a Christian and part of the church of Christ. Baptism with water is an act of God that He alone does and it forever changes the relationship between God and a person. It is a true expression of His love for us.

Through baptism, original sin is washed away. This image of "washing away" brings to expression that God has removed the condition of permanent separation from Him that began with mankind's fall into sin. With original sin removed from us, we can enter into a relationship with God. Even though original sin is washed away in Holy Baptism, we still have the propensity to sin. Referred to as "concupiscence," the human inclination to sin persists after baptism as another consequence of the Fall. Concupiscence brings to light the brokenness that we all have as sinners, but it is also a reminder of our dependence on God and His grace in our lives.

BAPTISM FOREVER CHANGES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND US - IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF HIS LOVE

Now that we understand that original sin is our permanent remoteness from God and that Holy Baptism washes away that permanence, we can look at what inherited sin means.

The term "inherited sin" was coined by Saint Augustine. His study of Scripture led him to believe that all of Adam's descendants biologically inherited his sin through the sexual act of procreation, therefore equating sex with sin. Although we do not align with this concept, for many years, our church considered "inherited sin" to mean the sins we obtained from our parents and ancestors, which are washed away in our baptism. However, inherited sin cannot exist when we believe in the eternal love of God. In consideration of His limitless mercy, how could we reckon that He would allow a parent's sin to pass on to their children when He allows each soul to have an individual relationship with Him? **Thus, we no longer use the term "inherited sin."**

Our relationship with God is the greatest gift of His grace. Once the connection is made with Him through baptism, it can never be severed. His love for us is so deep that even if we turn away from Him or become unfaithful, the opportunity for a relationship with Him, created by our baptism, will remain. How comforting it is that God expresses His love for us in this way! - VAA/LRK

**This article is written based on a presentation from the international church theologian, Dr. Reinhard Kiefer.*

GOD'S ELECT

Children of God who have been reborn out of water and the Spirit are elected for salvation. So what does it mean for us to be elected by God?

God calls all to salvation, but He determines the timing and the purpose that each person will have in His plan. God is sovereign, so He chooses whomever He wants, whenever He wants, without having to justify Himself. We see examples of timing and purpose when we look at the teachings of the Old Testament: God first called the people of Israel and He chose Noah for a specific purpose. Noah was elected by God in order to be saved from the flood. The people of Israel were elected by God in order to obtain His blessing and deliverance. In the New Testament, election takes on a slightly different understanding. In the new covenant, the salvation that comes from being elected by God means that we are liberated from sin and a path is opened to eliminate the separation between us and God. This salvation is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ.

Our story of salvation does not end after we are elected. Our election does not give us a free pass. We have to continue to make our election sure. What does this mean? It means accepting God's salvation and purpose in our lives. Noah did this by being faithful and obedient to his task of building an ark. The Israelites had to remain faithful to the Mosaic Law. Making our election sure is not determined by our own criteria, but rather by what God wants of us.

As part of the church of Christ, how can we make our election sure? As Noah and the Israelites did, we also want to demonstrate our faith and serve our God. We do this by bringing praise to God, being credible witnesses of His presence in our lives, following Jesus' teachings, and spreading His Gospel. We can see from these examples that serving God and others is at the crux of our faith. When we are elected by God, this not only means that we have been granted a path to salvation, *we are also called to do something, to serve Him*. James perfectly summarizes the importance of serving when he writes, *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"* (James 2:26).

Another aspect of divine election is the election of the firstfruits. Being reborn out of water and the Spirit means that we have also been chosen to become firstfruits in

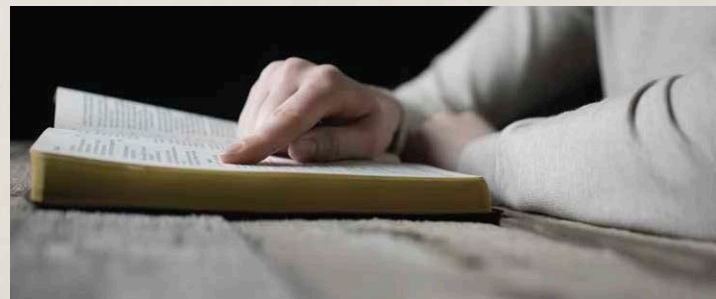
God's kingdom. We can read in James 1:18, *"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of **firstfruits** of His creatures."*

When Jesus Christ returns, He will come to seek the elect, both among the living and the dead. At that point, we have the opportunity to enter into fellowship with Christ without having to wait for the Last Judgement. This election also involves more than just being baptized in water and Spirit. We want to make our election sure by allowing ourselves to be prepared by the apostolate of Christ. We believe that, through the Holy Spirit, they discern God's will and bring Jesus' teachings to us in the divine services.

MAKING OUR ELECTION SURE MEANS ACCEPTING GOD'S SALVATION AND PURPOSE IN OUR LIVES

Being elected by God does not make us better than someone else. God is faithful to His promises and in His own time, He will see to it that every person is given the chance to be saved. Because we love God and He wants everyone to have salvation, we also desire the same thing. This is why we are called to spread the Gospel and our knowledge of God to those around us, so that they might also come to know Him and understand His offer of salvation. This is our mission as the church of Christ and God has always seen to it that the church is able to fulfill its mission on earth. With this knowledge and trust in our great God, we can accept His salvation and purpose in our lives by doing our part in His plan of salvation. - VAA/LRK

**This article is written based on thoughts from Chief Apostle Schneider.*



FaithArc

The FaithArc was introduced in the 2016 October webcast. It is the strategy for the continual spiritual development of a soul to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, whereby they become integrated into the congregation as His disciple. The FaithArc affects various elements of the church, including Sunday School, Confirmation, youth, young adults, parents, youth leaders, and the congregation, as a whole. The first visible changes to come into effect will be for Confirmation and we want to clear up any confusion that there may be over some of these changes.

The changes to Confirmation are being made because of an increased realization that youth may separate themselves from the church after making their Confirmation vow because their spiritual development may have needed more time to grow in order for them to make an informed vow of their commitment to God. The first change that comes out of this realization is that Confirmation is no longer the entrance marker of when a student enters the youth group. This adjustment allows

The age of Confirmation has increased from 14 to the time when a youth is in 10th or 11th grade (typically ages 15-17).

the Confirmation age to be at a time when a student is truly ready to make their vow. Because of this, the age of Confirmation has increased from 14 to the time when a youth is in 10th or 11th grade

(typically ages 15-17). The flexibility between the two grades allows a youth to decide, in collaboration with their parents, youth leader, and rector, the appropriate time for them to be confirmed. This change of moving towards an academic grade-based model means that after this year's Confirmations (2017), there will be a gap until the next Confirmation services are held.

Previously, confirmands would have started their Confirmation classes around Eastertide, after the previous class of confirmands was confirmed. With the FaithArc in place, this is no longer the case. The essential content of Confirmation classes is now included in the new youth small group curriculum called THRIVE, and there are no separate Confirmation classes. Through

the new curriculum, a youth will receive the necessary preparation to make their Confirmation vow in their 10th or 11th grade year. The THRIVE youth curriculum starts when a student enters the youth in the Fall of their 8th grade year and finishes when they graduate high school. The THRIVE curriculum, along with the beginning of the new youth group ages (when a student is between 8th and 12th grade), will begin in the Fall of 2017.

The youth small group curriculum, THRIVE, is what prepares a student to make their confirmation vow.

Since there are no separate Confirmation classes, Confirmation teachers may wonder what their new role will be. The youth leader is responsible for the THRIVE youth curriculum being taught and may utilize existing Confirmation teachers to help facilitate the youth group discussions when they start in Fall 2017. This will allow them to continue with their passion of teaching teenagers important spiritual lessons.

If you have more questions about the changes to Confirmation or other aspects of the FaithArc, you can visit www.nac-usa.org/connect/faith-arc.html and click on "Faith Arc FAQ" in the sitemap on the right side of the screen. - TDL/VAA

**Since Confirmation no longer signifies the entrance into youth, use the chart on the next page to determine when a student enters the youth and then becomes eligible for Confirmation.*

Youth

This new youth group has refined and defined goals, based on the international mission and vision statements. They are:

- in order to better ‘align their lives to the Gospel of Jesus,’ the new youth program will deepen spiritual maturity
- in order to ‘reach out to all people,’ the new youth program will expand the missional reach God has given us in our spheres of influence
- with an amplified focus on soul care, the new youth program will build stronger relationships with students and engage parents in the process

Confirmation

Why are these changes to Confirmation being made? This decision is rooted in the realization that many have distanced themselves from the church after making their Confirmation vows. This triggered some additional investigation and even a national survey of youth parents a few years ago. Our investigation suggests that confirmands were often not spiritually developed enough to make an informed vow of commitment to God at the time of Confirmation, and so the age has been increased. The flexibility between 10th and 11th grade is intended to accommodate the natural variation from individual to individual that is neither better or worse.

All of these decisions have been made to adapt the organizational process that helps prepare a soul for Christ’s return to be more fitting for the present context.

Young Adults

How can young adults become more integrated into the congregation? If the young adults (those 18-35) choose to still be involved in the youth group in some way, it is expected that they do so with an understanding that they are now adults that are helping out in the youth group rather than participants. They can help serve the youth group by facilitating youth small group discussions, mentoring, providing transportation, among other ways to get involved. In addition to the opportunity to provide support to the youth group, young adults have the ability to be catalysts in almost every area of the congregation. They should help bring together all ages of a congregation. The adults in the congregation have a responsibility to help the young adults feel the love of God by intentionally reaching out to them as they transition out of the youth group.

Questions?

Visit www.nac-usa.org/connect/faith-arc.html for more FAQs

Parents

A new resource for parents that will be available starting in April is our “Partnering with Parents” email. Each month, those subscribed will receive 2 short emails and 1 short video on a relevant parenting or family monthly topic. It is encouraged that parents get together to discuss these materials and support each other on the journey of raising Christian children. To subscribe, visit www.nac-usa.org/connect and select “Parenting and Family” from the subscription dropdown menu at the bottom of the screen:



GRADE IN FALL 2017	JOIN YOUTH	FIRST ELIGIBLE TO MAKE CONFIRMATION VOW
9th	Spring 2017 (after their Confirmation)	Confirmed in 2017
8th	Fall 2017	Spring 2020
7th	Fall 2018	Spring 2021
6th	Fall 2019	Spring 2022
5th	Fall 2020	Spring 2023



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Chief Apostle Service

CHICAGO, IL | JUNE 11 2017

As recently announced, Chief Apostle Schneider will be visiting the United States in Chicago, IL during the weekend of June 10th-11th in 2017. Since this service will not be a webcast, everyone is invited, so please mark it on your calendar!

Register by clicking on the banner on **www.nac-usa.org** or by going to **<http://events.nac-usa.org/home-cap2017>**

Information about the venue and hotels can be found there as well. You can also sign up for a newsletter about the event to receive updates.