

MEMBERSHIP

IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY
OF BORN AGAIN BELIEVERS

Being a HEALTHY MEMBER of the Body of Christ

This leaflet is written with the intent that each born-again member of the local church and each prospective member would be aware of his or her RELATIONSHIP TO and INVOLVEMENT IN the local assembly of believers.

May this result in the Middletown Bible Church being an increasing *delight* to its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ and a living *example* and *witness* to those near and far who will hear of and observe GOD'S GLORIOUS PERSON AND WORK because of His Life being exhibited in this local assembly (Col. 1:27; Eph. 3:20-21)!

The following characteristics should be true in the life of the born-again believer:

1. Assurance of Salvation

He should **KNOW** that he is saved and he should know **WHY** he is saved (1 John 5:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:5-6). Also he should be able to accurately and clearly present the way of salvation to another person (Acts 8:30-37; 16:30-31).

2. Putting a Label on the Can

He should gladly and willingly CONFESS and ACKNOWLEDGE the Lord Jesus Christ as his living, personal Saviour and Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32 Luke 12:8; Acts 19:18; 2 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 1:16; 1 John 4:2-3,15). Just as a label on a can confesses its contents, so a believer ought to confess his Lord and Saviour clearly without being ashamed (Rom. 1:16). “Christ liveth in me!” (Gal. 2:20). How many people in the church know that you are saved? How will they know? Why not take the next opportunity in the services of the local church to share with us vocally and publicly that you belong to the Son of God who loved you, saved your soul and made you whole! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so! (Psalm 107:2)

3. The Importance of Water Baptism

He should be **baptized** in obedience to Christ’s command (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 10:48; 2:38,41) and as a public testimony of his NEW LIFE in Christ (2 Cor. 5:14-17) and his identification with and in Christ (Rom. 6:3-11; Gal. 2:20). Water baptism is one of the first steps of obedience after a person gets saved.

4. The Bible and Prayer

He should stay spiritually HEALTHY (in fellowship with the Lord) and he should “go on” and “GROW UP” and mature (learning God's Word and thus practicing it—James 1:19-25) according to God's commands (Eph. 5:18; Heb. 5:11-6:3; Col. 1:28; 2 Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 14:20). The healthy believer is one who feeds upon God’s Word by reading the Bible daily (1 Pet. 2:2). The Word of God places a foundation under him so that he can find solid ground on which to think and act. The believer must continuously exercise an attitude of dependence upon God’s Word and conscious submission to His sovereign Presence in his or her daily living (1 Thess. 5:17), learning and growing (2 Pet. 3:17-18). The healthy believer also

spends time before the Lord in prayer each day (Heb. 4:16; Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2). This right relationship to the living God (PRAYER) should be exercised at all times both publicly and privately, especially as the believer takes time daily in reading and studying God's Word and petitioning God in Christ Jesus on account of persons, places, problems, pressures and so forth.

5. Discernment and Doctrine

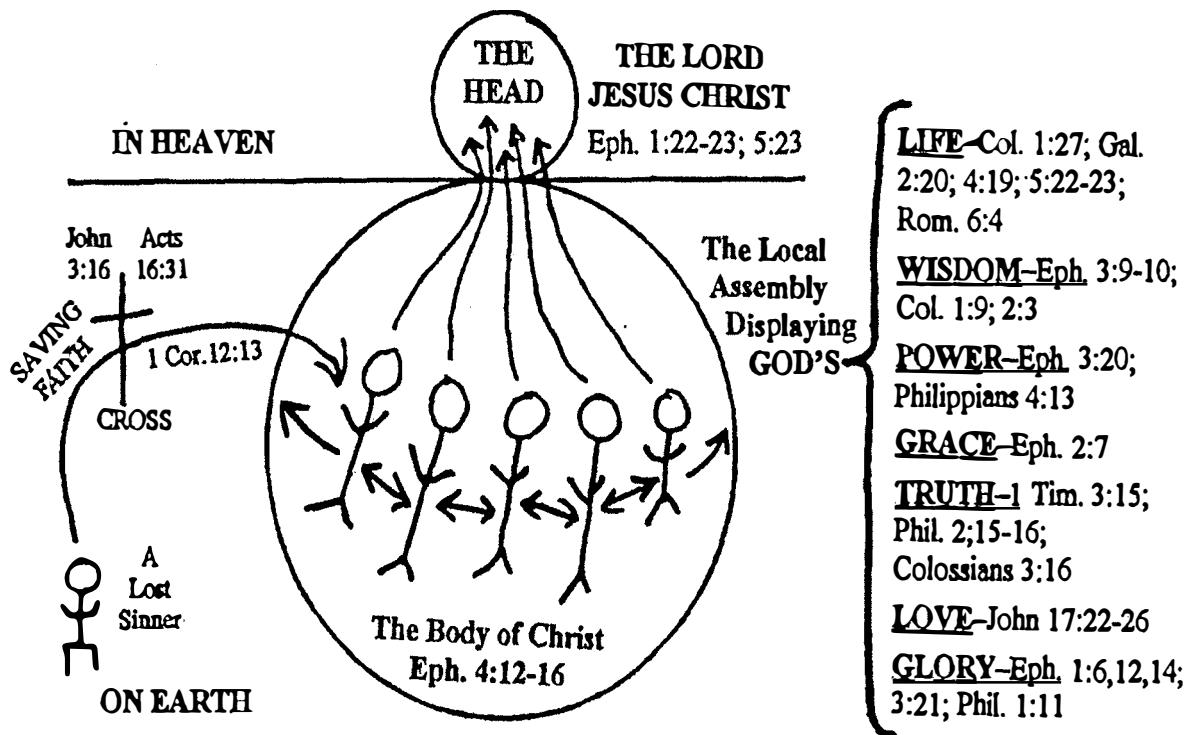
He should know the difference between *religion* and *true Christianity*. He should know why he is in THIS local church and not in some other church in the area. A born again believer belongs with other believers of like precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1). He does not belong in a liberal or "middle-of the road" type of church where the Bible is not taken seriously. He belongs in a church where the WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD (the whole Bible) is preached (Acts 20:20,27; Matt. 28:20) and where he can be well-fed and well-taught in the truth of God's Word (Col. 1:28; Eph.4:11-16). He should also be moving in the direction of having a good understanding of the basic and fundamental teachings of the Bible and a basic grasp of what God has said about Himself, His Son, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the cross, sin, salvation, the security of the believer, separation, the church, the devil, spiritual gifts, baptism, the Lord's supper, the second coming of Christ, the kingdom and the destiny of the saved and the lost (see our *Statement of Faith* as well as the set of worksheets entitled BASIC DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE).

6. God's Program for Today

He should realize and understand that the LOCAL ASSEMBLY is the very CENTER of God's work today. The Lord Jesus Christ personally ministers there (Rev. 1:13,20; chapters 2-3). It is also the place for purposeful growth and personal development (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:26-28; Acts 2:42). The local assembly is the place for the expression of GOD'S GLORY (the manifestation and demonstration of WHO GOD IS). It is here for the purpose that people might know that there is a living God and Saviour as seen in His living body which is on the earth, even His Church. The

local church is here to display the invisible God and this requires TEAMWORK! Each one must take his proper place (1 Corinthians chapter 12), with the right attitude and for the glory of God. Every single member of the body is important and must be healthy and well fed (Col. 1:28). When the members are healthy, the body will be healthy! When the body is healthy the life of Christ will be manifested and God will be glorified! This glorious and precious truth is illustrated below:

The Local Assembly Displaying the Living God



7. Faithful Attendance

He should be FAITHFUL to God's Word and thus God's will for his life. In order to stay healthy and to grow one must be in REGULAR ATTENDANCE at the Sunday services, prayer meeting services, special meetings, *whenever possible, not whenever convenient* (Heb. 10:25-39; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:10).

8. Remembering Him

He should joyfully participate and share in the COMMUNION SERVICE as it is regularly observed by the local assembly of believers. This ordinance, which was instituted by our Lord, has been called by several names:

- 1) **Communion** (fellowship, the sharing of a common life, participation)—1 Corinthians 10:16.
- 2) **The Lord's Table**—1 Corinthians 10:21.
- 3) **The Lord's Supper** (actually the bread and the cup were instituted by the Lord after they had supper, that is, *after* the meal; see Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25)—1 Cor. 11:20.
- 4) **Eucharist** (from a Greek word meaning "giving of thanks")—Matt.26:27; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24.
- 5) **The Breaking of Bread**--Matt. 26:26; Acts 2:42.

The significance of the communion service involves a fourfold "looking" on the part of the believer:

- 1) **A BACKWARD LOOK**—looking back to the cross to see and to remember what the Lord Jesus *has done* for me by the offering up of His sinless body and the shedding of His precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; 2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph. 1: 7; Matt. 26:28).
- 2) **AN UPWARD LOOK**—looking unto Jesus who is *presently doing* a work for me as my Intercessor (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34) and Advocate (1 John 2:1-2), having sat down at the right hand of the Father (Heb.1:3; 8:1).
- 3) **A FORWARD LOOK**—looking for Jesus (Tit. 2:13) and expecting and waiting (1 Cor.1:7-8) for what *He will do* as He comes again to complete the great work of salvation which He began in me the day I was saved (1 Cor.11:26; Phil. 1:6; 3:20-21).
- 4) **AN INWARD LOOK**—looking at what Jesus *is doing in me* (1 Cor.11:27-32). The believer must "examine himself"(1 Cor.11:28) and "judge himself" (1 Cor. 11:31) and confess all sins (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13) lest he should partake of the Lord's

table in an unworthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27). The healthy believer is thankful to God for Christ's blood which keeps on cleansing us from all sin (1 John 1:7-10). We can confess and acknowledge anything in our life that we know to be out of harmony with our Saviour's WILL and WORD, all the while thanking Him for His forgiveness which cares for our sinful nature. God graciously convicts us so that we might *face* and *fix* that which would hinder our good progress: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24).

9. Grateful and Cheerful Giving

He should be a willing and cheerful SHARER and SUPPORTER in God's work, committing his life, his time, his talents, his activities and his money to the Lord and to the Lord's assembly. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7), one who gives with joy and satisfaction. Christ Jesus invests HIS LIFE in the believer, and the believer in turn invests the life of Christ which he possesses into the local body of believers, and finally the corporate life of Christ in the body is invested into the believer. As the LIFE OF CHRIST is thus shared in the body (common participation in the life of God, hence "FELLOWSHIP"), all of the members are mutually affected by joy, sorrow, success, failure, etc. (1 Cor. 12:20-27; Eph. 4:16).

The believer can joyfully enter into the greatest investment program that there is, namely God's PROGRAM which is centered in the local assembly of believers. TITHING involves the thankful giving of one-tenth of one's income: \$1.00 out of \$10.00; \$10.00 out of \$100.00; etc. Though not directly mentioned in the letters of New Testament, tithing is a good STARTING POINT in one's stewardship. Notice the following:

Tithing before the law:

Gen. 14:20; 28:22

Tithing during the dispensation of law:

Lev. 27:30-32; Matt. 23:23

Giving and faithful stewardship in New Testament days:

2 Cor. 8:1-15; 9:1-15; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32.

Today the believer is to be motivated in his giving by the GRACE OF GOD and by the LOVE OF CHRIST. We gladly give BECAUSE HE FIRST GAVE TO US (2 Cor. 9:15). We gladly give, not just our money, but *ourselves* (see 2 Cor. 8:5).

10. Personal Separation Unto Christ

He should live in a manner befitting someone who is SEPARATED unto Christ. He is *in* the world but not *of* the world (John 17:11-19; Phil. 2:15). As a believer grows his life is brought into adjustment with the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:5; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:13-19). There must be a change in his attitudes, his thoughts and his ways in order that he might be brought into harmony with God's ways and God's thoughts (cf. Isa. 55:8-9). The process of growth involves LEARNING, RE-LEARNING and even UN-LEARNING! The believer is separated the moment he is saved and he does not need to pray about being separated unto Christ (because he already is!) but he needs to *practice* separation because of the standing and position that he already enjoys in Christ (Eph. 4:1; John 15:18-21; 1 John 2:15-17; 4:4-6; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:19; 2 Cor. 6:11-7:1; 1 Thess. 5:22).

REMEMBER that every born again believer belongs to the Holy Spirit of God, and this includes his body, soul and spirit (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Thess. 5:23). The local assembly also belongs to Him (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Every believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) by fulfilling the following conditions:

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:30). “Grieve” means to cause pain, distress, grief. Our Holy God is grieved by sin.
“Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19). “Quench” means to hinder, to put out a fire. We hinder and quench the Spirit's working whenever we say “NO” to God or to God's Word by our stubborn refusal to do His will. Instead we must YIELD to God by saying “YES” to the will and Word of God
“Walk in the Spirit”(Gal. 5:16). Walk in complete dependence and reliance upon Him--cf. John 15:5

All of this is for our benefit and HIS benefit and the benefit of the

world around us, all to and for HIS GLORY (ROMANS 11:33)! The GLORY of a person is that which makes an impression on others. It is that which attracts ATTENTION and demands RECOGNITION. Let us DISPLAY God's GLORY NOW (John 17:22) in and through the local assembly (Eph. 3:21) and thus by our united WITNESS causing men and angels to have an EXALTED OPINION of the LIVING GOD!!

NOW UNTO THE KING, ETERNAL, IMMORTAL,
INVISIBLE, THE ONLY WISE GOD, BE HONOUR
AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN!!

(1 Timothy 1:17)

The Pastor and/or the elders would be happy to sit down with you and go over these pages. Our desire is that we all might come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (mature) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). May we grow up into Christ in all things, who is our HEAD, the One who is over all, God blessed forever (Eph. 4:15-16; Rom. 9:5)!

Other Literature that might be helpful:

Basic Doctrinal Worksheets for New Believers, \$2.00.

Assurance of Salvation by Theodore Epp, 30¢.

Baptism and Communion, 30¢.

The Purpose of the Local Church, 10¢.

The Biblical Doctrine of Separation, 25¢.

Spiritual Life—How To Grow in the Lord, \$1.50.

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A Complete Literature List is Available Upon Request

www.middletownbiblechurch.org