



The Tenth Synod Address (2022)
The Episcopal Address to The Anglican Diocese of the West
(USA, Canada, and the Persian Gulf)

“The Mandate, Message, and Method of Evangelism and Discipleship”

By

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I. Welcome to Synod –

“The Church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning.” Dr. Emil Bruner

We welcome all the Laity, Clergy, and Suffragan Bishops of this Diocese, and our guests, especially our visiting Bishops, and those who are with us in spirit but cannot be physically present due to distance. We have received your congratulatory messages with gratitude. You all make me proud, under God, to serve as your Bishop. I am also delighted to welcome the Dean of the Church of Nigeria, The Most Rev'd Dr. Ali Buba Lamido. He is also the Diocesan Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Wusasa and the Archbishop of the Province of Kaduna in the Church of Nigeria. Archbishop Lamido is a very good friend of mine and of this Diocese. He will be preaching this evening at the service commemorating the 10th anniversary of my consecration as a Bishop in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Please join me in welcoming him. And I must not neglect to welcome our plenary speaker, The Venerable Michael Kelshaw. Michael is the Rector of Trinity at the Marketplace in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Regional Archdeacon for the New Mexico Archdeaconry of The Anglican Diocese of the West. Thank you, Michael, for agreeing to speak at this Synod. Michael's father, Bishop Terence Kelshaw, was my Diocesan Bishop when I was a priest in the Episcopal Church (USA). He was a godly, Bible-believing Bishop, and when he retired, I knew my days in the Episcopal Church were numbered. And, to the glory of God, that was precisely the case!

It is most appropriate to express our gratitude to the Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Primate of our Church, The Most Rev'd Dr. Henry C. Ndukuba, and to his wife, Mama Angela Ndukuba, for their unceasing prayers and support. We thank everyone who made it possible for us to conduct this Synod and celebrate the 10th anniversary of my consecration and enthronement as the Diocesan Bishop of this Diocese. Special thanks to the Clergy, the Diocesan Board members, parishes, individuals, my noble Knights/Dames, and Ladies (see Appendix 8) for your financial giving to the Diocese. My deep appreciation and profound gratitude goes to all the members of the Synod and Anniversary Committees, especially Sir Forster Duru for going the extra mile, Sir Chidi Chiege, Sir Ike Oraedu (chair of the Anniversary Committee), Sir Chuks Onubogu, Sir Paul Chukwujekwu, Sir Charles Onuogu, Lady Dr. Bernadette Iguh, Sir Andrew Ikele, Sir Henry Eke, Sir David Branch, Engineer Frank Akoh, Mr. Oladimeji Adeleja, Canon Folusho Kolawole, Canon Rob Goodman, Venerable Tosin Onaseso, Venerable Don Armstrong, Venerable Isaac Rehberg, Venerable Chukwuma Ubadinobi, Venerable Layne Hansen, Venerable Ugochukwu Okoroafor, Bishop Scott Seely (Chair of the Synod Committee), and Bishop Celestine Ironna for your commitment and hard

work to make these events a reality. I want to commend ALL the laymen and women of every parish in this Diocese who are peacemakers and who labor much for the good and growth of God's church and our Diocese. I make special mention of Mr. Benjamin & Barrister Mrs. Abiodun Olayemi for their sacrificial labor at Our Savior Anglican Church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. You have all been blessings to me, and it has been a joy to work with all of you this past year.

Many of you have sacrificed personal and family time to ensure that our ministry in The Anglican Diocese of the West is both faithful and effective. You have been of tremendous help to me personally. Mama Lilian and I, along with our children, are grateful to EVERYONE who has contributed financially to our 10th consecration anniversary celebration, and to the Diocese for its support, prayers, love, and partnership with me in the ministry of the gospel for the past ten years. I thank God for you! The Lord knows who you are, and I am convinced that He will bless you and replenish you abundantly in His time and in his own unique manner, in Jesus's name. Amen!

I would be remiss if I did not express my deep appreciation to my dear wife, Mama West, and to our children for their patience and faithful support over the years. Above all, I am very grateful to God for His many blessings on our Diocese and for His grace and mercies which have enabled us to gather together for this Synod of The Anglican Diocese of the West.

New Clergy, New Congregations, and New Legal Officers –

We heartily welcome our new clergy and congregations:

A. Canada –

The Venerable Temidayo Fasan, Rector of Anglican Church of the Trinity, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, and Regional Archdeacon for Cornerstone Archdeaconry, Canada;

The Venerable Christopher Ogundare, Assisting Priest at Anglican Church of the Trinity, New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada;

The Rev'd Canon Adewale Makinde, Rector of the Anglican Church of the Advent, Calgary, Alberta, Canada;

The Rev'd Jeremiah Aderemi, Rector of All Souls Anglican Church, Calgary, Alberta, Canada; and

The Rev'd Godwin Babajide Olutimi, Deacon-in-Charge of the Anglican Church of the Divine Shepherd, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

B. USA –

The Venerable Elias Yinka Eniade, Rector of The New Evangelical Anglican Church, Fulton, Missouri, The Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, St. Louis, Missouri, and Regional Archdeacon for the Missouri Archdeaconry;

The Venerable Dr. Chris Odoemana, Rector of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Gardena, California, Regional Archdeacon for the Arizona & Nevada Archdeaconry, and Archdeacon Missioner for the Pacific Region;

The Venerable Innocent Nwogwugwu, Rector of St. Peter's Anglican Church, Dallas, Texas, and Regional Archdeacon for the South Dallas Archdeaconry;

The Venerable Cyprian Okere, Rector of Christ Ambassadors Anglican Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and Regional Archdeacon for the Oklahoma Archdeaconry;

The Venerable Gus Calvo from Fort Smith, Arkansas, Archdeacon for Mission Outreach/Societal Engagement;

The Venerable Elias Mburu, Rector of Christ the King Anglican Church, Kent, Washington, Regional Archdeacon for the Northwest Archdeaconry and Canon for our Kenyan Mission;

The Rev'd Innocent Obinwane Umunna, Rector of
Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Antioch, California;
and

The Rev'd Deacon Daniel Clark, St. Benedict Anglican
Church, San Antonio, Texas.

We welcome the following new church plants:

1. All Saints Anglican Church, Tampa, Florida, by Venerable Dr. Charles Tashie;
2. Anglican Church of the Resurrection, Antioch, California, by Rev'd Innocent Umunna;
3. New Testament Anglican Church, Richmond, California, by Rev'd Joe Eze;
4. Church of the Redeemer, New Braunfels, Texas, by Bishop Scott Seely (Three Streams Anglican Church, San Antonio, Texas);
5. St. John's Anglican Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, by Venerable Dr. Shola Falodun and Venerable Solomon Kanu (Louisiana/Mississippi Archdeaconry); and
6. Anglican Church of the Epiphany, Tennessee, by Venerable Ishmael Boms.

The Regional Archdeacon for Northern California, Venerable Aaron Ajoku, is exploring the possibility of a church plant in Modesto, California, led by Rev'd Canon Progress Okoroafor.

The mission of every local church is to be a training ground for disciples to become true worshippers of God, spiritually mature, and prepared for service and evangelistic ministry within and outside the church. Those trained in this manner will be equipped, by God's grace, to reach the world for Christ with zeal and knowledge.

We thank God for our new Priests:

The Rev'd Augustine Igbonagwam, The Rev'd Sunday Ikenador, The Rev'd John Mack, and The Rev'd Adam Wade;

... and Deacons:

The Rev'd Godwin Babajide Olutimi, The Rev'd Jesse Kibe, The Rev'd Joseph Nderitu, The Rev'd Michael Aveledi, The Rev'd Dr. Valentin Ekiaka, and The Rev'd Alain Ikouba.

It is my pleasure to introduce Barrister Kene Ilochonwu, the newest Legal Advisor for The Anglican Diocese of the West in Canada. He lives in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada, and is a member of Our Savior Anglican Church, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We congratulate him on his appointment as Queen's Counsel (QC – Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law, the Canadian equivalent of SAN in Nigeria). We appreciate all our Diocesan Officers and Staff, especially those who work with me on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis: Chancellor Judge Job Serebrov, Deputy Chancellor Sir Solomon Kanu, Esq., Mr. David Avren, Esq. (Chief Legal Officer for Canada), Mr. Christopher Lee Milner, Esq. (Chancellor Emeritus), Sir Charles Napier (Diocesan Treasurer), Mama West (Lilian Orji), Venerable Dr. Myles Calvin (Executive Archdeacon), Venerable Don Armstrong (Canon to the Ordinary), Venerable Chukwuma Obadinobi (Registered Agent for the Diocese), Venerable Layne Hansen, Lady Dr. Obiageli Obijiofor (Diocesan Medical Officer), JoAnn Casper, Lea Magruder, and Gabriella Cerrito for the excellent work they do for the Diocese.

II. Gratitude for Former Chancellor Christopher Milner and Welcome for New Chancellor Judge Job Serebrov –

This Synod is a great opportunity to recognize our former Diocesan Chancellor, Christopher Lee Milner, Esq., who stepped down from the office of Chancellor on February 1, 2022. On behalf of my wife and the Diocese, I wish to express our profound gratitude to Mr. Milner and to his wife, Candyce, for his faithful, sacrificial, and generous service as our Diocesan Chancellor these many years. And we thank him for agreeing to continue serving on our Diocesan Legal team in a new capacity. May the Lord's blessing continue to abound in Candyce's and his lives. We are pleased that Mr. Milner has agreed to continue his service as a Diocesan Legal Advisor (and as Legal Consultant to the new Chancellor), Diocesan Registrar (custodian of records), and Canonical Investigator, and that he is willing to oversee ecclesiastical

disciplinary proceedings if and as requested by the new Chancellor of the Diocese. It is my pleasure to honor Mr. Milner with the Diocesan Medal and Commendation. Thank you very much, Chancellor Emeritus!

It is also my pleasure now to introduce our new Diocesan Chancellor, Venerable Judge Job Serebrov, whose appointment as Chancellor became effective on February 1, 2022.

Venerable Judge Serebrov is an Anglican priest who currently serves as Vice Chancellor for the Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplaincy (“JAFC”). He is the founder and CEO of the Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies and is a Board member and General Counsel for Our Faith Under Fire and Anglicans in Action (which deal with Anglican national and international governmental affairs).

On the secular side, Judge Serebrov has been an attorney for more than thirty years, an Appellate Judge for the San Manuel Tribe for more than eleven years and has served as Presiding Appellate Judge for the San Manuel Tribe for more than six years. He held an appointment under President George W. Bush as a Deputy Undersecretary/Deputy General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and held appointments under Arkansas Governors Mike Huckabee (as Deputy Director of the Department of Environmental Quality) and Asa Hutchinson (as Associate Deputy Director of the Department of Health and Human Services). Judge Serebrov also served as a Law Clerk for Chief Judge Lavenski R. Smith of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Judge Serebrov also taught administrative law in the Master of Law International Food Law program at Michigan State University College of Law and served as Director of the Office of International Development at Louisiana State University. Please join me in welcoming him and his family to our Diocese.

Judge Serebrov has earned eight graduate theology and law degrees. He is married to Mari Serebrov, who serves as Executive Regulatory Editor for Bioworld, an international biopharma daily online publication, and is also an author. The Serebrovs have two adult children, seven grandchildren, a great granddaughter on the way, and a five-year old Komondor dog.

III. The Mandate, Message, and Method of Evangelism and Discipleship –

(Texts: Matthew 28:16-20; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Romans 1:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 20:17-32; Ephesians 2:1-10)

“The central mission of the church is to point people continually to the Messiah: he alone fully reveals the love of the Father and pours out his Spirit on us. The goal of all our good efforts is to draw people to the embrace of the triune God, not to serve as a replacement for him. All the gifts we exercise must ultimately point back to the true Giver.” Dr. Kelly Kapic

“Christianity is a story of how the righteous king has landed and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.” C.S. Lewis

“It is the whole job of the whole church to preach the whole gospel to the whole world.” C.S. Spurgeon.

“A Church that knows its Lord and is possessed by its gospel cannot but propagate creatively the life that it has found. A Christian who is taking his faith seriously cannot but evangelize. Now the first axiom of effective evangelism is that the evangelist must be sure of his message. Any haziness or hesitation there is fatal.” Dr. James Stewart

The theme of this Synod is the Great Commission. Therefore, I shall focus our attention on the topic of this address: **The Mandate, Message, and Method of Evangelism & Discipleship.**

Let us pray:

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* (Collect for Third Sunday after the Epiphany)

A. The Mandate (Matthew 28:16-20) –

Several years ago, a fairly well-known educator, author, and management consultant, Peter Drucker, said that there are at least three questions an organization that wants to succeed must answer clearly and satisfactorily. Here are the questions: First – What business are we in? Second – Do we have a passion for it? Third – Is it relevant? The answers to those questions, he stated, would largely determine the structure, effectiveness, growth, stability, viability, and future of that organization.

When we apply the first question to the Christian church of which our Diocese is a member, the answer is obvious. Here it is – we are in the business of worshipping God in spirit and truth; edifying the church through preaching the gospel, teaching God’s word, prayer, and fellowship; evangelizing and discipling others; and pursuing outreach in our communities and other places to help those in need (material, emotional, etc.) with church members as our primary focus, and then those who are outside the church.

At this Synod, we will focus attention on the third business (or function) of the Church – evangelism and discipleship. Our primary mission in the world is to make disciples of all nations for Christ through evangelism and discipleship. Dr. Kelly Kapic made a similar point when he noted,

“The central mission of the church is to point people continually to the Messiah: he alone fully reveals the love of the Father and pours out his Spirit on us. The goal of all our good efforts is to draw people to the embrace of the triune God, not to serve as a replacement for him. All the gifts we exercise must ultimately point back to the true Giver.”

This is the corporate responsibility of the church as well as the individual responsibility of anyone who considers himself or herself a Christian, irrespective of his or her denominational ethos, bias, or temperament.

Let us read the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20:

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All

authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

I want you to notice six things in this passage.

1. First, Discipleship/Evangelism is the divine command of our risen King, Jesus Christ (vv.17-19). Matthew alludes to Jesus’s divine status in v.17 (“... they worshipped him ...”) and Jesus draws our attention to his divine and kingly authority in v.18. He rules all people and all things in heaven and on earth. On that basis he then issues the imperative in v.19 – “[as you go,] MAKE Disciples of all nations ...” so that they can enter his kingdom and serve him as their rightful king. That is what C.S. Lewis meant when he wrote that “Christianity is a story of how the righteous king has landed and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.” So, Evangelism is about bringing people to bow at the feet of the rightful king, it’s not just about justification by faith (in the present) and glorification (when we die). No, discipleship is about bringing people into the kingdom of Christ and helping them learn to submit to the King of kings and Lord of lords – Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The king has commanded and commissioned us to go and make disciples for him. We need to obey him. In the 1800’s Charles Spurgeon reminded the church, “It is the whole job of the whole church to preach the whole gospel to the whole world.” A century later the indomitable C.S. Lewis stated rather bluntly in these words:

“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the Cathedrals, clergy, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time.”

2. Second, Evangelism is not just a program but a way of life. Notice that v.19 says, in effect, “as you go.” As we go worshipping, fellowshiping, shopping, teaching, parenting, being a student, being with our friends, doing our business, Jesus commands us to make disciples of all people for Him: all nations,

ethnicities, races, gender, all ages, neighbors, enemies, friends, family, and colleagues. Tony Merida identifies five groups of people in almost everybody's network: vocational, familial, geographical, commercial, and recreational/relational. Discipleship is not a program but a lifestyle and should permeate everything we do and affect every relationship we have, wherever we find ourselves.

3. Third, we are to make disciples of ALL nations and ethnicities for Christ, not disciples for anyone else or anything else. Notice first that we are to reach ALL people and all ages and all sexes. There should be no room for phyletism or ethno-phyletism in our Diocese. What is phyletism? Phyletism is the doctrine or dogma that subtly practices and believes that a nationality should be served by its own independent ecclesiastical administration even on the territory of another church; it is an excessive emphasis on the principle of nationalism in the organization of church affairs; a policy which attaches greater importance to ethnic identity than to bonds of faith and worship; [originally] specifically the claim of the Bulgarian Church to jurisdiction over Bulgarian nationals in all parts of the world). Similarly, there should be no room for racism, tribalism, or elitism in the work of the gospel. This is why I have been clear and insistent that even though this Diocese is a Diocese in the Province of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), we are not a Diocese for Nigerians only. To the glory of God alone, I believe that The Anglican Diocese of the West is the most racially and tribally diverse Diocese in the Anglican Communion – and I love that! So, my friends, we are all together brothers in Christ, citizens of heaven, and missionaries in North America, set apart and empowered by the Holy Spirit to reach everyone with the saving and sanctifying gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we are NOT to make disciples for our nation, denomination, or Prayer Book. Rather, we are to make disciples for Christ whose lives are characterized by: faith in Christ alone for salvation, commitment to Christ as the Lord and master of their lives, love for Christ above all, willingness to deny themselves of all comfort and carry their crosses to follow Christ, willingness to give up everything and pay the cost of following him, commitment to obeying Christ and acknowledging him as King, and loving others as Christ has loved them. This is the kind of disciples we need to make: Christ's disciples, that is, disciples who look up to Christ for salvation

and who act like Him. The goal is not just to be saved from the wrath of God in an eternal Hell, but to be *like* Christ (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 4:13).

4. Fourth, we are to baptize disciples into the name of the Trinity (v.19). In The Book of Common Prayer, we note Article XXVII, titled “OF BAPTISM.” It states, “Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.”
Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration by God (new life through death and resurrection imagery), God’s commitment to us, and our belonging to God and his Church. Baptism is a public sign and symbol of cleansing from sin through the blood of Christ (water = blood of Christ). It is a picture of our identification with and participation by faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and of commitment to Christ. Baptism is the divine seal of incorporation and submission to the Trinity, and covenant relationship with the Trinity. Baptism is an important aspect of Christian discipleship indicating God’s mark on us as his own and the sign of our belonging to him.
5. Fifth, we must teach disciples to obey everything Jesus has commanded us (v.20a). This is the crux of discipleship and perhaps where the modern church has dropped the ball because of fear or self-interest. Dr. J.I. Packer wrote: “Anyone who is in a position of spiritual leadership who fails to teach the more demanding less comfortable ‘narrow gate’ and ‘rough roads’ side of discipleship becomes a false prophet.” This, I believe, is the problem with happy-clappy, cultural Christianity that continually harps about a prosperity gospel: happiness, health, and wealth for believers who have enough faith. Such a gospel cannot engender maturity in Christ – it is spurious and encourages selfishness and an overblown sense of entitlement. Dr. R.C. Sproul raised a similar point when he wrote, “The Christian who seeks a deeper experience of God by ignoring the hard sayings of Scripture gets nowhere. The full nourishment of the soul requires feeding on the whole counsel of God.” If your gospel presentation is

only about forgiveness, justification, glorification, and divine blessing of all sorts, you have missed the point of New Testament teaching on salvation. Reformed pastor and teacher Kevin DeYoung, in his book titled “The Hole in our Holiness,” writes:

“What does Jesus commission us to do in the Great Commission? You may have said, ‘He sends us into the world to evangelize.’ Or maybe you said, ‘He wants us to preach the gospel to the nations.’ Or perhaps you said something about making disciples. Those aren’t wrong answers. But do you recall Jesus’s precise instructions? ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.’ (Matthew 28:19-20a). The word ‘observe’ means more than ‘take notice of.’ It means ‘obey.’ We aren’t asking the nations to look at Jesus’s commands like an interesting Rembrandt. We are teaching the nations to follow his commands. The Great Commission is about holiness. God wants the world to know Jesus, believe in Jesus, and obey Jesus. We don’t take the Great Commission seriously if we don’t help each other grow in obedience. And yet, how many of us usually think of holiness when we think of mission work? How easy it is to be content with leading people to make decisions for Christ instead of focusing on making disciples of Christ. Of course, this doesn’t mean we are merely trying to make good people who live like Jesus. The Great Commission would mean nothing and accomplish nothing were it not for the fact that the one who issued it has ‘all authority in heaven and on earth’ (Matthew 28: 18). It is only by trusting in him and being forgiven by his substitutionary sacrifice that we are even capable of walking in his ways. You can’t make good fruit grow from bad trees. The demands of Jesus cannot be separated from his person and work. Whatever holiness he requires is as the fruit of his redeeming work and for the display of his personal glory. But in all this necessary nuance, do not miss what many churches

have overlooked: Jesus expects obedience from his disciples. Passing on the imperatives of Christ is at the heart of the Great Commission.”

Jesus didn't tell us to teach Christians evangelical, biblical, and conservative theology only, but to teach them to 'obey' everything he has commanded!

Dr. James M. Boice noted,

“One of the most important universals in the Great Commission, particularly for our superficial age, is the command to teach those we have discipled. We're to teach them everything Christ commanded. Today we see what seems to be the opposite. Instead of striving to teach all Christ commanded, many try to eliminate as much of his teaching as possible, concentrating on an easily comprehended, unobjectionable 'core' of teaching. It is grace without judgment, love without justice, salvation without obedience, and triumph without suffering. The motivation of some of these reductionists may be good – to win as many people to Christ as possible. But the method is the world's, and the results (as a natural consequence) are the world's results. Disciples are not made by defective teaching. The world is not subjected to Christ's rule by demi-gospels. What teachings does today's church need to recover? Any brief listing of doctrines is inadequate. We must teach the entire Bible. Nevertheless, faithfulness to Christ must involve at least the following: a High View of Scripture, the Sovereignty of God, the Depravity of Man, the Grace of God, the Need for Good Works, and the Security of the Believer in Christ.”

A typical discipleship class will include lessons on how to become a Christian, the assurance of Salvation, Baptism, Bible Study, Prayer, living a Holy and Obedient life, the Church and Christian fellowship, knowing and doing God's Will, the Holy Spirit and his power, Evangelism, the Trinity, and more.

Dr. Boice further stated,

“In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded his disciples to make disciples of others. They were to lead others to faith through the preaching of the gospel, to bring them into the fellowship of the church through the initiatory rite of baptism, and then, within that fellowship, to continue teaching them everything Jesus had commanded them. It is not easy to follow Jesus Christ. He never suggested it would be. But it is far better than not following him, for not only do we have his command to teach everything, but we also have the sure and certain promise of the Lord’s presence with us as we go.”

(See the new edition of “The Heart of the Cross” by James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, P&R Publishing – 2022)

6. Finally, we have the assurance of Jesus’s presence as we carry out his commission (v.20). It is very important to know that we do not do this ministry alone, and that as we evangelize, he is with us as he promised. He is present with us in his fullness and power, not to protect or preserve us from persecution, but to encourage and empower us, give us wisdom, open doors, and enable us to persevere both in good and in bad times. He is present to convict and convert his elect. Darrell Johnson was correct when he wrote, “Evangelism is joining a conversation the Holy Spirit is already having with another person.” Satan will not succeed in his campaign against us and the ministry of the gospel because evangelism is teamwork with God and with other Christians. There is definitely spiritual warfare in the ministry of evangelism. Satan, the flesh, and the world will do all they can to stop us from sharing the good news of Christ. We must resist them, knowing that the Lord is with us. God is already at work and will be at work long after we’re done sharing the gospel. We can and must trust the Lord to do what we cannot do. Evangelism is His work, and we are merely helpers in His vineyard. He has promised us His presence and the Holy Spirit to enable us to do the work of Evangelism and Discipleship.

B. The Message of Evangelism

What are we supposed to say to people when we evangelize? In other words, what message must people hear and believe in order to be saved? Dr. James Stewart drew attention to the importance of this when he wrote,

“A Church that knows its Lord and is possessed by its gospel cannot but propagate creatively the life that it has found. A Christian who is taking his faith seriously cannot but evangelize. Now the first axiom of effective evangelism is that the evangelist must be sure of his message. Any haziness or hesitation there is fatal.”

Here, then, are several Bible truths – the message – that a sinner needs to hear even if he doesn’t want to hear them:

1. First, God is a gracious, loving, holy, and just God. Rightly knowing God is a matter of grave importance. Dr. D.A. Carson rightly reminds us that the “one thing we most urgently need in Western Christendom is a deeper knowledge of God. We need to know God better.” We need to know God because a wrong view of God will undermine the gospel message while the right view of God opens the door to understand the gospel. Dr. R.C. Sproul once said, “The greatest crisis in the Christian church today is that they don’t actually know God. They don’t know who He is or what He’s like ...” So, I ask you, do you know this God? John Calvin asks in his catechism, “What is the chief end of human life?” He answers, “To know God.” There are several reasons the knowledge of God is central and supreme for all human life, including: eternal life, better relationships, power, faith, and effective, true worship and ministry.

This is what the LORD says: “Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me.” (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

2. Second, we are sinners and ungrateful rebels before God and, consequently, justly subject to his wrath and eternal condemnation in hell for our sin. The wages/penalty for sin is death (physical, spiritual, and eternal). We need to know

ourselves and our true condition and plight before God – otherwise, we will fail to see the need to be rescued and reconciled to Him. Inasmuch as people don't want to hear this, it is important that we declare God's truth concerning his righteous judgment of our rebellion. Bishop J.C. Ryle counsels that:

“We need to be straitly warned, that it is no light matter whether we repent or not. We need to be reminded, that there is a hell as well as a heaven, and an everlasting punishment for the wicked, as well as everlasting life for the godly. We are fearfully apt to forget this. We talk of the love and mercy of God, and we do not remember sufficiently His justness and holiness. Let us be very careful on this point. It is no real kindness to keep back the terrors of the Lord. It is good for us all to be taught that it is possible to be lost forever, and that all unconverted people are hanging over the brink of the pit.”
(J.C. Ryle, Commentary: Matthew 3)

3. Third, God in His great mercy and amazing grace so loved us that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to make atonement for our sins on the Cross of Calvary by His death. The Bible teaches that without the shedding of blood (death) there is no forgiveness of sin. God will NOT forgive sin that is not atoned for. Repentance and good works cannot atone for sin. No one can determine what is acceptable atonement for sin, except God who is, indeed, the offended One! His determination is that sin will be forgiven only on the basis of atonement by death of a sinless substitute. In His mercy He sent His sinless Son to atone for our sin. On the third day of his death, Jesus rose as evidence of the fact that His atoning sacrifice for our sin was accepted. Hence, we who believe can now be justified by faith alone and have victory over sin, Satan, and death. (*cf.* John 3:16; Numbers 21:4-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11).
4. Fourth, in order to receive the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection, the sinner must repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ. In Mark 1:14-15, the Bible says, “Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel’.” What is repentance? Here is Dr. J.I. Packer:

“Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past; repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as King in self’s place ... More than once, Christ deliberately called attention to the radical break with the past that repentance involves. ‘If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross daily, and follow me ... Whosoever will LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, the same (but only he) shall save it. [Luke 9:23-24, cf. Luke 14:27, 33] ... The repentance that Christ requires of His people consists in a settled refusal to set any limit to the claims which he may make on their lives.”

C.S. Lewis agreed, and wrote:

“Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying you are sorry, realizing that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor – that is the only way out of a hole. This process of surrender, this movement full speed astern, is what Christians call repentance.”

Repentance from sin is not an option for a sinner who desires to be saved and it is not optional in our evangelistic and discipleship ministry. Dr. R.C. Sproul rightly noted, “No one can enter the kingdom of God without repentance, without fleeing from sin and putting his trust in Christ alone.”

In addition to repentance from sin, the penitent sinner must believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. To believe in him is to lean only on his sacrificial death for full salvation. To believe is to trust that Christ in his sacrifice has made full payment and atonement for one’s sins, satisfying the justice of God and quenching his wrath, whereby our punishment is averted and we are made safe for ever. Faith in Christ as Savior is to believe that he died for us to save us from the wrath of God, and faith in Christ as Lord is to accept the fact that he has divine power, authority, and sovereign control over us, and, consequently, deserves our love and obedience. Without faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord, repentance and religion have no eternal value in regard to salvation.

5. Fifth, when we turn away from sin to Christ by faith, we receive the blessings (or benefits) of Christ's death. As Melancthon reminded the church, "To know Christ is to know his benefits," which are: forgiveness, justification, righteousness, union with Christ, reconciliation with God, access to the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit, eternal life, adoption, glorification, membership in the invisible universal church militant, power, peace, and more.

6. Sixth, having turned to Christ as Savior, we must begin to obey him as our Lord and King. This is the point of James chapter 2: 17, 26 – faith without works is dead faith. Dr J.I. Packer tells us, "In reality, holiness is the goal of our redemption. As Christ died in order that we may be justified, so we are justified in order that we may be sanctified and made holy." Dr. Sinclair Ferguson agreed with this truth when he wrote, "It is misleading to say that God accepts us the way we are. Rather, he accepts us despite the way we are. He receives us only in Christ and for Christ's sake. Nor does he mean to leave us the way he found us but to transform us into the likeness of his Son." Martin Luther concurred when he wrote, "there is no justification without sanctification." John Calvin added his voice, stating, "Those who are justified by true faith prove their justification by obedience and good works, not by a bare and imaginary semblance of faith. And as Paul contends that men are justified without the aid of works, so James will not allow any to be regarded as justified who are destitute of good works."

In addition, we must help new believers become actively engaged in the worship, ministry, and mission of a local church. Every discipleship ministry needs to include a plan to incorporate new Christians into ministry, worship, mission, discipline, and fellowship of both the local and universal church. The new Christian grows through trials of faith and practicing the means of grace, such as: daily Bible reading/study, prayer, attending worship services where the Bible is preached, involvement in ministry/mission, sharing the gospel with others, obeying the Word of God, and giving of their financial resources for the work of the church.

Everything we have and do for God is by His enabling grace. This concept troubles the self-righteous and prideful, who think they can save themselves by doing things their way. Hence John Wesley writes: "Nothing is more repugnant to capable, reasonable people than grace. We repent by grace, we believe by grace, we are pardoned and justified by grace, we are sanctified and live holy by grace, and we will persevere and receive eternal glory by grace, and

that grace is His grace, the grace of God in Christ Jesus.” The Bible says it well in Ephesians 2:8-10,

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them,”

... so that ALL the glory goes to God alone.

C. The Meaning and Methods (Practice) of Evangelism

What is evangelism and how do we go about it? The Primates of the Anglican Communion have defined Evangelism thus: “To evangelize is to make known by WORD and DEED the love of the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people will repent, believe, and receive Christ as their Savior and obediently serve him as their Lord in the fellowship of his Church.”

“Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where to get bread.” – D.T. Niles

“Evangelism is joining a conversation the Holy Spirit is already having with another person.” – Darrell Johnson

So, how do we proceed?

1. Prayer – Pray for wisdom, guidance, boldness, and freedom to share the gospel. Pray for deliverance of sinners from Satanic blindness and bondage. Pray for direct Divine intervention. Sometimes the Lord uses dreams, discipline, trials, and supernatural activity to begin to draw people to hear the gospel. Dreams and discipline won't save people, but in some cases can prepare the ground for the reception of the gospel. We must pray so that our gospel work does not depend on the arm of flesh, which will always fail.
2. Heart-Work and Words – Evangelism is first and foremost a heart issue before it is an action matter. In other words, we speak based on what is in our hearts and

what the passion of our hearts is. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If there is no passion for Jesus in our hearts, we won't have anything (or much) to say. So, we must first do heart-work in order to do gospel-work, which involves:

- preaching and teaching
- testimony/witness
- personal exhortation and admonition

As important as our testimony of conversion and godly life is, we need to be aware that neither of those things is the gospel. The gospel is about Jesus – his perfect life and his atoning death for, his resurrection and his ascension; and the invitation to repent of sin and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation and reconciliation with God.

3. Good deeds and a godly life – As Christians, we cannot effectively separate ourselves from the gospel we claim to believe and preach to a skeptical world. Our actions or inactions affect the reception of gospel we proclaim whether we like it or not. In 1974, Os Guinness, speaking at the Lausanne Congress regarding evangelism, made the following observation:

“... Part of our failure to get thinking people to take the Gospel seriously is born of a credibility gap. We claim Christianity is true – a claim which is awesome by contemporary standards, but then we whittle down our claims by the patent incongruity of our practices of the truth. The way we operate speaks louder than what we say. Without the practice of truth, evangelism is in danger of becoming a giant institutional mouth or as E.M. Forster dismissed it scornfully, ‘poor, talkative, little Christianity!’”

John R.W. Stott echoed a similar sentiment:

“No church can spread the gospel with any degree of integrity, let alone credibility, unless it has been visibly changed by the gospel it preaches. We need to look like what we are talking about. It is not enough to receive the gospel and pass it on; we must embody it in our common life of faith, love, joy, peace, righteousness, and hope.”

Dr. Michael Green stated it well when he wrote,

“One thing is certain: unless people are impressed by the Christian lives they see, they are not going to want to go further and examine the truth of the Christian message we proclaim.”

Clement of Rome made a similar point in the second century:

“For when unbelievers hear from our mouth the oracles of God they wonder at their beauty and greatness. Then, discovering that our deeds are not worthy of the words we utter, they turn from their wonder to blasphemy, saying it is all a myth and delusion.”

Every day of your life you are either writing and living the gospel of Christ or the anti-gospel by your deeds and word – a chapter a day for people to see, so to speak. There is no middle place. And people read what you write – whether our writing is distorted or true. So, the question we must answer as Christians is this: what are you/we writing ... Christ’s gospel, or your own distorted anti-gospel?

4. Build Relationships and networks with people for the sake of the gospel and make sure you truly care about them as people, not just as evangelistic prospects to be “exploited” for God’s sake. Be real!
5. Invitations to church events: worship, Bible Study, Prayer meetings, parish or private dinners, hunting, shooting range, sporting/football games, potlucks, movie nights, picnics, etc.
6. Endeavor to have a welcoming, loving, and gracious attitude. Your church building will not necessarily attract new people. And even if it did, they wouldn’t stay long. People want a loving and welcoming church. They need and desire love and truth, and both are found in Christ and his church.
7. Evangelism Programs & Events: Christianity Explored (Rev’d Rico Tice); The Word 121 (Richard Borgonon); Alpha Course (Rev’d Charles Marnham and

Rev'd Nicky Gumbel); Evangelism Explosion (Dr. James Kennedy); Guest Services, etc.

8. Christian Literature: tracts such as “What is the gospel” by Greg Gilbert, and “Two Ways to Live” by Matthias Media, and more ...
9. Liturgical Seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday/Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, Christ the King, All Souls/All Saints ...
10. Pastoral visits/events and sacramental occasions: Baptism and Confirmation preparations/classes, funerals/service of songs, Eucharistic Worship, Marriage Preparations, marriage counseling, etc.
11. Train the congregation on the Mandate, Message, and Method of Evangelism (please see the appendices of this document for additional valuable material).
12. The Prayer of Commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord:

“Father, I’m sorry for sinning against you in thought, word, and deed, by what I have done and by what I’ve failed to do. Please forgive me of my sins against you. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to save me. I believe in my heart, and I confess with my mouth, that Jesus died for me, thereby paying the penalty for my sin, and that he rose again from the dead. I now surrender my life to you, and, by your grace, I will follow you in obedience as my Savior and Lord for the rest of my life. *Amen.*”

Our Lord Jesus meant it when he said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). J. Mack Stiles reminds us of the importance of that statement, writing:

“A little later, during the same time with his disciples, he prayed that they would be unified, ‘so that the world may believe that you have sent me.’ (John 17:20–21). Understand this: Jesus says the love we have for one another in the church is a statement that we are truly converted. And when we are unified in the body, we show to the world that Jesus is the Son of God. Love confirms our discipleship.

Unity confirms Christ's deity. What a powerful witness! There are many passages that instruct and shape our evangelistic efforts, but these verses are the Biblical foundations that show us that the church is to be a culture of evangelism. This means that the local church is the gospel made visible. If we are to picture the gospel in our love for one another, that needs to take place in a local congregation of people who have covenanted together in love to be a church. It's not abstract love, but love for real people in the real world. I can't tell you how many times I have heard from non-Christians that the church was strange to them, but what drew them into the fellowship was the love among the members. But the gospel is pictured not just in our love. Have you ever thought of how many biblical instructions God has built into the fabric of the church that, if done correctly, serve as proclamations of the gospel? In pursuing a healthy culture of evangelism, we don't remake the church for evangelism. Instead, we allow the things that God has already built into the church to proclaim the gospel. Jesus did not forget the gospel when he built the church. For example, baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It shows how his death is our death and his life our life. The Lord's Supper proclaims the death of Christ until he returns and prompts us to confess our sins and experience forgiveness anew. When we pray, we pray the truths of God. When we sing, we sing the great things God has done for us through the gospel. When we give financially, we're giving to advance the gospel message. And of course, the preaching of the Word brings the gospel. In fact, the preaching of the Word is what forms the church to begin with. And, once formed, the church is given the task of making disciples who then are sent to preach the gospel to form new churches. This cycle has been happening since Jesus ascended into heaven and will continue until he returns for the second and final time. A culture of evangelism is grassroots, not top-down. In a culture of evangelism, people understand that the main task of the church is to be the church."

The gospel also calls us to commit ourselves to being the church as Jesus intended it. Whenever we proclaim the gospel, we tell people that Jesus came to save us from sin's penalty, power, and presence. But it's also important to proclaim that he came to adopt us into the family of God and bring into being the church in which Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, educated and non-educated, white and black, are united with one another in love as brothers and sisters. Christ came to reconcile us to God and to one another, thereby creating one new humanity in Christ and with Christ as Lord and Savior. I love the way Dr. John R. Stott expresses it:

“The good news of the unsearchable riches of Christ which Paul preached is that he died and rose again not only to save sinners like me (though he did), but also to create a single new humanity; not only to redeem us from sin but also to adopt us into God’s family; not only to reconcile us to God but also to reconcile us to one another. Thus, the church is an integral part of the gospel. The gospel is good news of a new society as well as of a new life.”

God’s intention for the church is that it be a multilingual, multiethnic, and multicultural community of those who are disciples of Christ, knitted together in love, and united in the mission and worship of the triune God. Does your church truly welcome those who are different from the majority of your members? Or do you just give them a condescending, nodding recognition? Be the gospel Church as God intended it in his Word through commitment to Christ and his gospel. Being a gospel church is the antidote to racism and tribalism and political rancor to a watching world. Being a gospel church makes us a catalyst for change in our world and in the Anglican Communion.

D. Conclusion

Our mission is to make disciples of all nations for Christ and to help those who are in need. I believe that leading sinners to Christ to be reconciled to God, saved from an eternal Hell, and discipling them to become mature disciples and genuine worshippers takes precedence over every other activity in Christian ministry and secular occupation. C.S. Lewis put it well when he said, “The salvation of a soul is more important than the production of all epics and tragedies in the world.” This is because in and through the gospel, as Henry Smith noted, God “hides our unrighteousness with his righteousness. He covers our disobedience with his obedience. He shadows our death with his death, so that the wrath of God cannot find us.”

But God does more than “cover” and “hide” our sins and disobedience – He washes, forgives, sanctifies, transforms, and sends us out to do good works, especially the good work of spreading the gospel and holiness of life. Charles Spurgeon clearly reminds us of God’s thorough saving and sanctifying work in these words,

“Christ will be master of the heart, and sin must be mortified. If your life is unholy, then your heart is unchanged and you are an unsaved person. The Savior

will sanctify His people, renew them, give them a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness. The grace that does not make a man better than others is a worthless counterfeit. Christ saves His people, not IN their sins, but FROM their sins. Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.”

Spurgeon provided a further warning:

“Beware, I pray thee, of presuming that thou art saved. If thy heart be renewed, if thou shalt hate the things that thou didst once love, and love the things that thou didst once hate; if thou hast really repented; if there be a thorough change of mind in thee; if thou be born again, then hast thou reason to rejoice: but if there be no vital change, no inward godliness; if there be no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit, then thy saying ‘I am saved’ is but thine own assertion, and it may delude, but it will not deliver thee.”

The point is clear – the gospel, when faithfully preached and truly received, ALWAYS CHANGES a person’s life!

The call to evangelize, that is, to be witnesses of Christ is a call to all Christians, not just clergy. In the early church, every Christian was expected to be involved. Edward Gibbon noted that by 49 A.D., the gospel had reached India, and the borders of China by 61 A.D. How did that happen? Gibbon responds, “It became the most sacred duty of a new convert to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessing which he had received.” Another historian by the name of Adolf Harnack declared,

“The most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the regular teachers but Christians themselves in virtue of their loyalty and courage ... it was characteristic of this religion that everyone who seriously confessed the faith proved of service to its propaganda. We cannot hesitate to believe that the great mission of Christianity was, in reality, accomplished by means of informal missionaries.”

So, as you live every day of your life as a Christian, let the Holy Spirit enable you to live a life worthy of the gospel. Let the Holy Spirit use you to bring many to Christ by letting the light of Christ shine forth through you in holiness and obedience to God, to the end that God be glorified. The Lord has made each of us a new creation in Christ and given us a new vocation –

the ministry of reconciliation – with the message of reconciliation through penitent faith in Christ alone. We are Christ’s ambassadors to the world.

In practical terms, first we need to engage in Personal evangelism, Church-based evangelism, and Planting of new churches in this Diocese. The Lord wants all of us to engage in this kingdom work because the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers (preachers) are few. Sinners are everywhere, so do not steal members from one church to plant a new church – that is NOT gospel work. Everywhere in this Diocese we have concentrations of clergy, and we need to begin working out how some of them will be sent out to plant churches. If you don’t, won’t, or can’t initiate it, I will help you do it very soon!

Second, to be effective in personal and corporate evangelism we must realize that what we are, what we do, what we say and how we say it, and where we go affect our effectiveness. It is important that we let the word of God rule our lives in all those areas (and in the choices we make) so that our witness will be authentic and have integrity when viewed through the eyes of a skeptical world.

Third, we need to be clear on our strategy and tactics. Use the acronym “PICSIT” – **P**ray for those on your list to win for Christ; **I**nvite them to Church or to Church events; **C**are for and spend time with them; **S**hare the gospel of Christ, that is the good news that Jesus died and paid the penalty for their sins thereby making forgiveness, transformation, eternal life, sonship, and peace with God possible for those who repent and believe in Christ; **I**nitiate them into the life and ministry and mission of the local church; and **T**rust God to do his work of regeneration and conversion even with your fallible and terribly incomplete message and method. He will accomplish his purpose through us despite our limitations.

So, let us go forth armed with the gospel as we dutifully and faithfully carry out our heavenly ambassadorial assignment for Christ in the world!

IV. RESTRUCTURING OF CHURCH OF NIGERIA NORTH AMERICAN MISSION (CONNAM)

The three CONNAM Dioceses, The Anglican Diocese of the West (ADOTW), Anglican Diocese of the Trinity (ADOTT), and the Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplaincy (J AFC), were previously unrestricted in the planting and oversight of parishes across North America. Most of the parishes planted by ADOTW and ADOTT are situated in urban areas with considerable Nigerian populations. To enhance inter-Diocesan coordination and effectiveness in Christian mission, a Restructuring Committee was commissioned by the Primate, The Most Rev'd Henry Ndukuba, to propose a restructuring of CONNAM's current Diocesan jurisdictions and structures on the basis of geography alone. Since the J AFC locates parishes in and near military and other traditional chaplain locations, it was not affected by the Committee's proposed geographical realignment.

The Restructuring Committee was comprised of the following members: The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Felix Orji (ADOTW Diocesan), as Chair; The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Derek Jones (J AFC Diocesan); The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Augustine Unuigbo (ADOTT Suffragan); The Ven. Dr. Barnabas Emenogu (ADOTW); The Ven. Don Armstrong (ADOTW); The Ven. Dr. Femi Adetoro (ADOTT); The Ven. Matthew Olajide (ADOTT); Sir Nkemdi Innocent Ohalete (ADOTW); Sir Dr. Benjamin Udoh (ADOTT); and Ven. Temitayo Fasan (ADOTT), Secretary.

RECOMMENDED GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION OF DIOCESAN JURISDICTION IN THE USA & CANADA –

Based on the current location of ADOTW's and ADOTT's respective cathedrals and other logistical considerations, the USA and Canada were divided as shown below:

The Anglican Diocese of The West (**ADOTW**) – USA

1. Missouri
2. Arkansas
3. Louisiana
4. Mississippi
5. Alabama
6. Georgia

7. Tennessee
8. Florida
9. Arizona
10. New Mexico
11. Texas
12. Oklahoma
13. Utah
14. Colorado
15. Kansas
16. Nevada
17. Alaska
18. Hawaii
19. Montana
20. Idaho
21. Washington
22. Wyoming
23. Oregon
24. California

ADOTW – CANADA

1. Yukon
 2. Northwest Territories
 3. Nunavut
 4. British Columbia
 5. Alberta
-

Anglican Diocese of the Trinity (**ADOTT**) – USA

1. Iowa
2. Illinois
3. Wisconsin
4. Michigan
5. Minnesota

6. Indiana
7. North Dakota
8. South Dakota
9. Nebraska
10. Maine
11. New Hampshire
12. Vermont
13. Massachusetts
14. Rhode Island
15. Connecticut
16. New York
17. New Jersey
18. Pennsylvania
19. Delaware
20. Maryland
21. District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.)
22. Virginia
23. West Virginia
24. Ohio
25. Kentucky
26. North Carolina
27. South Carolina

ADOTT – CANADA

1. Saskatchewan
 2. Manitoba
 3. Ontario
 4. Quebec
 5. New Brunswick
 6. Nova Scotia
 7. Prince Edward Island
 8. Newfoundland and Labrador
-

NOTES & RECOMMENDATIONS –

- A. The Area designated for ADOTT in Canada includes the largest population areas, the majority of provinces, and, thus, encompasses the majority of Nigerians in Canada.
- B. Both Dioceses currently have parishes across most of their respective allotted geographical areas. Adopting the Committee’s recommendation minimizes the overall impact of “change” based on geography.
- C. Clergy could transfer from one Diocese to another without taking their churches with them (as is the custom in Anglicanism).
- D. To minimize administrative hiccups, emotional trauma, and/or discomfort, the Committee strongly recommended the adoption of a “grandfather clause” to permit existing parishes to remain in their respective current parent Dioceses unless and/or until such time that they decide to transfer to what would otherwise be their respective geographically assigned Dioceses.

(NOTE: THIS RECOMMENDATION WAS REJECTED BY THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS)

- E. ADOTW and ADOTT will maintain their respective existing cathedrals, and the Diocesan Bishops will allocate geographical areas for their respective Suffragan Bishops.
- F. After geographical boundaries are established, any Diocese that thereafter plants a church within the geographical boundaries of the other Diocese must relinquish that church to its natural geographical Diocese.
- G. The Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplaincy (JAFC) will remain unchanged.
- H. The Coordinating Bishop of CONNAM will provide general supervision (coordination) of the North American Mission as directed by the Primate of the Church of Nigeria.

V. REGIONS FOR THE SUFFRAGAN BISHOPS OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE WEST –

We are blessed to have two Suffragan Bishops in the Anglican Diocese of the West in North America – Bishop Scott Seely and Bishop Celestine Ironna. Both Suffragans together with their wives have been tremendous blessing to me, Mama West, and to this Diocese. I count it a great privilege to serve the Lord together with them as we carry out his mission as servants of the gospel.

It was my plan from before their election for these two men to assist me in specific areas in the Diocese. The Suffragan Bishops assisting the Diocesan Bishop in assigned regions helps the Diocese function more effectively. As the Diocesan, I ask our Suffragans to perform episcopal duties that normally reside with the Diocesan Bishop, such as episcopal visits to parishes in their region, confirmations, admission of women to the Women’s Guild and Mothers Union, and other specific roles within the Diocese. The investiture of Knights, however, will remain centralized under the Diocesan. Suffragans can perform ordinations when the Primate approves them to do so, and the Diocese remains one single Diocese under the supervision of the Diocesan. In other words, with respect to the administration of the Diocese, all clergy and parishes in The Anglican Diocese of the West are under the direct authority, supervision, and discipline of the Diocesan Bishop.

In addition to other responsibilities that may be assigned from time to time, the Diocesan Bishop, at his discretion, has assigned Suffragan Bishops to assist in the following designated geographical regions within the Diocese.

Regions of Episcopal Ministry for ADOTW’s Suffragan Bishops –

The Anglican Diocese of the West Suffragans will assist me in the following regions:

REGION ONE – Southwest USA/Canada: Suffragan Bishop Scott Seely

1. Arizona
2. New Mexico
3. Texas
4. Oklahoma

5. Utah
6. Colorado
7. Kansas
8. Nevada
9. Washington
10. Wyoming
11. Oregon
12. California
13. British Columbia
14. Alberta
15. Nunavut

REGION TWO – Southeast USA/Canada: Suffragan Bishop Celestine Ironna

1. Missouri
2. Arkansas
3. Louisiana
4. Mississippi
5. Alabama
6. Georgia
7. Tennessee
8. Florida
9. Alaska
10. Hawaii
11. Montana
12. Idaho
13. Northwest Territories
14. Yukon
15. Persian Gulf

SUFFRAGAN BISHOP RESPONSIBILITIES –

ADOTW Suffragans shall:

- A. Remain Rectors of their respective churches;

- B. Assist the Diocesan Bishop with administration, church planting, and evangelistic efforts in assigned geographical areas, working with Regional Archdeacons and local clergy to this end;
- C. Assist the Diocesan Bishop with pastoral care of clergy;
- D. Visit churches in their respective regions at least once per month, and endeavor not to be away from their own parishes more than once per month (the parish being visited will bear the cost of air travel and hotel accommodations, and honorariums offered for such visits shall belong to the Suffragans);
- E. Assist the Diocesan Bishop with Confirmations, the Ordination of Deacons or Priests (when approved by the Primate), and the Admission of women to Women's Guild and Mothers Union in their respective regions;
- F. Assist the Diocesan Bishop with other ministry, administrative, and management matters he may assign to them from time to time;
- G. Support the leadership of the Diocesan Bishop;
- H. Attend Diocesan Board meetings;
- I. Attend Diocesan Synods and other special meetings;
- J. Serve as members of a Council of Advisors to the Diocesan Bishop;
- K. Attend Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria at least once per year;
- L. Bishop Seely will assist the Diocesan Bishop with Missions/Church Planting and Synods;
- M. Bishop Ironna will assist the Diocesan Bishop with Stewardship & Clergy Retreats; and
- N. Suffragan Bishops shall be members of the Diocesan Board serving as one house with the Diocesan Bishop.

VI. DIOCESAN YOUNG ADULTS FELLOWSHIP & MINISTRY

I ask all Clergy, parishes, and archdeaconries to reach out to our Young Adults and assist them to stay connected to one another. The Venerable Dr. Barnabas Emenogu and his team have done a fantastic job of leading this ministry. We are grateful to The Rev'd John Stonestreet for giving his time whenever asked to minister to our young adults. And our gratitude also extends to my son, John Orji, for setting up a social, yet private media network to enhance communication among the young adults in our Diocese. This network, known as a **Discord Community Server**, can be accessed at:

<https://discord.gg/wmEV8FwnYw>

Please forward this to the Young Adults in your parishes to join. This network is not for Clergy or for older adults – it is only for the Young Adults in our Diocese from 20-35 years of age.

VII. CLERGY PREFERMENTS

It is my pleasure to prefer the following individuals as Canons in the Diocese:

1. The Rev'd Joe Eze
2. The Rev'd Eze Akoma
3. The Rev'd Richard Bates
4. The Rev'd Jeremiah Aderemi

VIII. FINAL REMARKS

We are in our Decade of Evangelism. As we begin this season of our lives together, I would like us to pray for a mighty work of revival in our hearts, our countries, our communities, our parishes, our families, and our Diocese. We need revived and renewed hearts to accomplish God's purposes. The Lord renews our hearts through his Word and prayer. As Dr. Douglas Sweeney correctly notes,

“Bible and church history show us over and over again that when God's people come together, repent of their sins, cry out to him for mercy, and expect him to respond, God uses them to bring about needed reformation. And when their leaders help each other to promote such behavior, there's no limit to the scale on which the Lord will bless his people. There's no simple *quid pro quo* in the history of redemption. But there is a correlation between mortifying sin and walking by the Spirit, between humbling ourselves in God's sight and being exalted.”

I ask you to commit yourself and your congregation to preaching and sharing the full gospel of grace – a gospel that offers forgiveness and summons us to living a holy life. I ask you to live a life worthy of the gospel so that the gospel will be attractive to others. Your life as a Christian matters to the non-believer. In his Apology (Defense) to Emperor Hadrian Caesar in approximately 137 A.D., the Athenian Christian philosopher Marcianus Aristides described the winsome life of Christians that contributed to the growth of Christianity in the first and second centuries:

“It is the Christians, O Emperor, who have sought and found the truth, for they acknowledge God. They do not keep for themselves the goods entrusted to them. They do not covet what belongs to others. They show love to their neighbours. They do not do to another what they would not wish to have done to themselves. They speak gently to those who oppress them, and in this way they make them their friends. It has become their passion to do good to their enemies. They live in the awareness of their smallness.

“Every one of them who has anything gives ungrudgingly to the one who has nothing. If they see a traveling stranger, they bring him under their roof. They rejoice over him as over a real brother, for they do not call one another brothers after the flesh, but they know they are brothers in the Spirit and in God. If they hear that one of them is imprisoned or oppressed for the sake of Christ, they take

care of all his needs. If possible, they set him free. If anyone among them is poor or comes into want while they themselves have nothing to spare, they fast two or three days for him. In this way they can supply any poor man with the food he needs. This, O Emperor, is the rule of life of the Christians, and this is their manner of life.”

My prayer is that the Lord our God will grant us:

More faith and more faithfulness;
More patience and more kindness;
More humility and more obedience;
More strength and more wisdom;
More grace and more anointing;
More revelation and more guidance;
More mercy and more power;
More health and more favor;
More breakthroughs and more testimonies;
More provision and more joy;
More peace and more protection;
More love and godliness;
More blessings and more of all God has in store for you, your family, and your Ministry; and
More grace and power to faithfully fulfill the task he has given us through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Please stand as we sing:

1. Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labor to pursue;
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know
In all I think or speak or do.
2. The task Thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfill;
In all my works Thy presence find,
And prove Thy good and perfect will.

3. Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes mine in-most substance see,
And labor on at thy command,
And offer all my works to Thee.

3. For Thee delightfully employ
What e'er Thy bounteous grace hath given;
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with Thee to heaven.

* * * * *

The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

APPENDIX 1 –

“How to Lead Someone to Christ” (adapted from the Oaks Fellowship)

by Bishop Scott Seely

God wants us to love people unconditionally ... to serve them, to help them, to pray for them, to show compassion to them in tangible ways. And in doing so we will show forth the love and grace of our God to a lost and dying world. But, all the love and service in the world can't save a person. There has to be a point where someone opens their mouth and tells people the truth about sin, eternity, Christ's love, and the saving grace that's only found in Jesus Christ.

One of the most important and fulfilling parts of being a follower of Christ is leading someone to receive salvation and start a relationship with the Lord. Here's how ...

1. Act as the Spirit prompts you to act –

How do you know if God is prompting you? There are two things you need to know in that moment when you think God might be speaking to you:

- a. If it's a good thing, do it ...
- b. It will either be a 'God thing' or a 'godly thing.'

The only way you will ever learn to hear God's voice is to step out in faith to obey what you think might be Him. When you step out and it's amazingly awesome and timely you can know that it was God prompting you and you'll start recognizing His voice. If it's not God, you still haven't messed up by acting in a kind and godly manner towards someone. You can't miss!

2. Tell people your story –

If you are a follower of Christ, you have a great story. There are three simple components of your God story:

- a. How life was before Christ ...

- b. How you found hope in Christ ...
- c. How life is different now that Christ is in your life ...

3. Lead them to Christ –

Here are five Scriptures you can walk through with the person:

- a. All have sinned ... (Romans 3:23)
- b. Wages of sin is death ... (Romans 6:23)
- c. Jesus took our place ... (John 3:16) – He died on the cross to satisfy the justice of God that your/our sins deserve, taking our punishment upon Himself ...
- d. Repent and confess your sin ... (Mark 1:15; 1 John 1:9) ... AND
- e. Believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36; 14:6; 6:47; Ephesians 2:10)

Then lead the person through the sinner's prayer:

“Dear God, I am a sinner in need of forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood and died for my sin. I am willing to turn from sin, believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior, and obey him as my Lord. I now invite Christ to come into my heart and life as my personal Savior and as the Lord of my life.” *Amen.*

This is the greatest news you can ever give someone: a.) that Jesus Christ died for their sins and will forgive them for every wrong thing they have ever done; b.) that they can have peace in their soul that they are right with God; and c.) that they will be in heaven with the Lord for eternity.

APPENDIX 2 –

What Is a Christian? by Bishop Felix C. Orji, OSB

What does it mean to be a Christian in the Biblical sense of the word? There is significant confusion and ignorance in respect to this question. James A. Fowler once wrote, “There is much confusion among the general public, as well as the religious community, concerning what it means to be ‘Christian.’”

- Does it mean assenting to a particular belief system?
- Does it mean consenting to a prescribed morality pattern?
- Does it mean changing and improving one’s behavior?
- Does it mean joining a church organization?
- Does it mean practicing regular rituals of worship?

“Even those who call themselves Christians,” he continues, “seem to have much difficulty articulating and verbalizing what it means to be a Christian. Their ambiguous explanations often convey an amalgamated ‘mish-mash’ of affirmations of the above-mentioned activities.”

It is necessary to clear this confusion for two reasons. First, we do not want to be deceived into thinking that we are Christians when we are not. Such deception is very costly. Listen to the words of Jesus as He concludes His sermon on the mount in Matthew 7:21-23:

“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day (the Day of Judgment), ‘Lord, lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness.’”

The people Jesus is addressing in this sermon are not your ordinary secular pagans, rather they are churchgoers. They are people who profess Jesus as Lord, people who consider themselves Christians, people who are sure that they will enter the kingdom of God. But sadly, as the text indicates, these people will be terribly shocked to see themselves excluded by Jesus from entering the Kingdom of heaven on the final Day of Judgment. The real problem is that

those to whom Jesus was speaking had never truly repented of their sin. Here is what Dr. J.I. Packer and C.S. Lewis have to say on that topic:

“Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past; repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as King in self’s place ... More than once, Christ deliberately called attention to the radical break with the past that repentance involves. ‘If any man will come after me, let him DENY HIMSELF, and take up his cross daily, and follow me ... Whosoever will LOSE HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE, the same (but only he) shall save it. (Luke 9:23-24, cf. Luke 14:27, 33) ... The repentance that Christ requires of His people consists in a settled refusal to set any limit to the claims which He may make on their lives.” – Dr. J.I. Packer

“Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying you are sorry, realizing that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor – that is the only way out of a hole. This process of surrender, this movement full speed astern, is what Christians call repentance.” – C.S. Lewis

You or I may be one of these people. Some professing Christians and clergy we know may be in this group of people. God is no respecter of persons. So, it is important to clear this confusion and be rescued now from a form of deception that leads to damnation. More so, clarity will enable us to enjoy the blessing of God’s assurance when Satan tries to assault and assault us with doubt.

Second, we need to be clear because it is dangerous to be ignorant on a matter that God wants us to be clear about. Not only for our sake, but for the sake of our calling to witness to the truth of the gospel. How can we share a message concerning which we are either ignorant or by which we lead people astray by sincerely but sadly misrepresenting it? It is dangerous to lead people in the wrong direction on a matter as serious as their relationship with God – after all, their eternal destiny depends upon it. This was the point that Dr. John R.W. Stott emphasized when he wrote,

“Ignorance is probably the greatest enemy of the Christian faith today, and muddle-headedness is one of the sins of the age. Hundreds of people reject

Christianity without any clear understanding of what it is and hundreds more would like to become Christians if only they knew how.”

So, what, then, is a Christian? The answer is simple. A Christian is a person who has entered into a personal relationship with God by turning away from sin against God and neighbor (repentance), who trusts in Jesus Christ as the one who died and rose from the dead to save him or her from the penalty and power of sin (faith); and who has committed himself or herself to obeying Jesus as Lord and King through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (submission). In other words, claiming to be Christian does not necessarily mean that you are one, and being a member of the church does not mean you are a Christian unless you have turned to Christ in penitent faith. You may not remember when you became a Christian. What is important is that right now you know from the evidence (fruit) of your present life of repentance and obedient faith that you are, indeed, a Christian.

To be Christian is to belong to Jesus and to His church. It is to be a disciple – a follower – of Jesus for the rest of your life. It is a wonderful relationship with God through repentance and faith in Christ. And as episcopal theologian Timothy Sedgwick put it, the Christian life is life lived “in the presence of God and His forgiving and transforming grace – in love, obedience, faith, and hope.”

When a person turns to God through repentance and faith in Christ, he is reconciled to God and regenerated (born again) by the Holy Spirit. He is forgiven and given eternal life by God. He is made a member of God’s family and Christ’s church. He is given the gift of divine righteousness, receives hope of heaven, and is justified forever before God; he will never come under condemnation. He is given the Holy Spirit, Who enables him to live the Christian life.

Do you want to be a Christian? Then you need to do three things:

1. First, turn from your sin (give it up) and ask God to forgive you.
2. Second, confess your faith in Jesus, telling Him that you believe He died on the cross and rose again from the dead for you – in order to bear the punishment for your sins and deliver you from the power of death and Satan.
3. Third, tell Jesus that you want to follow Him in love and obedience as the Lord of your life and begin doing that in earnest.

Finally, tell someone about your decision to follow Christ. Find a Christian believer or a pastor and tell them as well so that they can help you grow in your faith. Immediately become involved in the worship and ministry of a church that faithfully follows the teaching of the Bible. In addition, make time every day to read your Bible and talk to God, asking Him to help you obey Him – He will do it!

May the Lord Jesus bless you as you take these steps!

APPENDIX 3 –

How Can We Know If Our Faith Is Real?

by Dr. John MacArthur

The Bible provides a clear understanding of genuine saving faith – true faith produces good fruit. In His parable of the soils and the seed, the Lord Jesus taught that while unbelievers are unfruitful, those who are saved would bear fruit. In this parable, three of four soils produced fruitless plants, vivid pictures of the reception of God’s Word that would never result in salvation.

In contrast, fruit-bearing plants thrive in the good soil that depicts a redeemed heart. Jesus said, “But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty ...” (Matthew 13:23). All believers are fruitful, even though not equally fruitful.

The Bible also describes what good fruit looks like. The following chart lists the characteristics of genuine saving faith. In essence, it serves as a guide for spiritual fruit inspection (2 Corinthians 13:5). If you are unsure about the reality of your faith, please take the time to study this chart, taking care to read each of the accompanying Scripture passages.

The Character of Genuine Saving Faith –

I. Evidence That Neither Proves Nor Disproves One’s Faith

- Visible Morality: Matthew 19:16-21; 23:27
- Intellectual Knowledge: Romans 1:21; 2:17 *ff.*
- Religious Involvement: Matthew 25:1-10
- Active Ministry: Matthew 7:21-24
- Conviction of Sin: Acts 24:25
- Assurance: Matthew 23
- Time of Decision: Luke 8:13, 14

II. The Fruit/Proofs of Authentic/True Christianity:

- Love for God: Psalm 42:1 *ff.*; 73:25; Luke 10:27; Romans 8:7
- Repentance from Sin: Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; Romans 7:14 *ff.*; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 John 1:8-10
- Genuine Humility: Psalm 51:17; Matthew 5:1-12; James 4:6, 9 *ff.*
- Devotion to God's Glory: Psalm 105:3; 115:1; Isaiah 43:7, 48:10 *ff.*; Jeremiah 9:23, 24; 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Continual Prayer: Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18 *ff.*; Philippians 4:6 *ff.*; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; James 5:16-18
- Selfless Love: 1 John 2:9 *ff.*, 3:14; 4:7 *ff.*
- Separation from the World: 1 Corinthians 2:12; James 4:4 *ff.*; 1 John 2:15-17, 5:5
- Spiritual Growth: Luke 8:15; John 15:1-6; Ephesians 4:12-16
- Obedient Living: Matthew 7:21; John 15:14 *ff.*; Romans 16:26; 1 Peter 1:2, 22; 1 John 2:3-5

If List I is true of a person and List II is false, there is cause to question the validity of one's profession of faith. Yet if List II is true, then the top list (List I) will be, also.

III. The Conduct of the Gospel:

- Believe it: Mark 1:15(added)
- Proclaim It: Matthew 4:23
- Defend It: Jude 3
- Demonstrate It: Philippians 1:27
- Share It: Philippians 1:5
- Suffer for It: 2 Timothy 1:8
- Don't Hinder It: 1 Corinthians 9:16
- Be Not Ashamed: Romans 1:16
- Preach It: 1 Corinthians 9:16
- Be Empowered: 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- Guard It: Galatians 1:6-8

(Adapted from John MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 2190)

APPENDIX 4 –

MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS FOR CHRIST

by Bishop Felix Orji, OSB

“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:16-20)

A. Introduction

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone. Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

God has been gracious to us. He has blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” It is only by His grace and mercy that we are Christians, and able to do what he calls us to do.

My goal is not only to motivate you to disciple others, but also to equip you to do one-to-one discipling. There is much talk about discipleship, but not so much action. Several books have been written about discipleship, but we do not have clarity concerning how to take one person and disciple him or her to maturity for Christ. This is the focus of the episcopal address to which this appendix is appended.

Three years ago, I was asked by the Dean of Trinity Theological Seminary in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, Dr. Justyn Terry, to speak to students and faculty on the subject of making

disciples. I was delighted to do so despite my busy schedule because it was, and still is, my belief that seminaries must teach clergy how to disciple believers. Seminaries must ask and continue to ask themselves this question: “How does our training intersect with the Lord’s command to make disciples of all nations?” How our seminaries answer that question will affect the ministry of clergy in our churches and our dioceses. There is, most certainly, a “trickle down” effect!

We must be intentional about “discipling” others. I find it refreshing that Trinity Seminary is very intentional about this vocation and task. Here is the Trinity Seminary’s Vision Statement:

“Trinity School for Ministry is an evangelical seminary in the Anglican tradition. In this fractured world, we desire to be a global center for Christian formation, producing outstanding leaders who can plant, renew, and fill churches with disciples that make disciples of Jesus Christ. To this end we are forming Christian leaders for mission.”

One of the Values Statements that undergirds Trinity’s Vision Statement reads as follows:

“Being a school of discipleship: We believe that the discipleship of the whole person is essential preparation for ministry. We commit to foster in all our seminarians – men, women, single, married, married with children – spiritual and emotional maturity, integrity, grace, and holiness of life.”

I am glad that Trinity Seminary gets it right! My own seminary, however, did not! My seminary trained us to be disciples of social change – radical, religious, and social leaders – but not to be disciples or disciple-makers for Jesus Christ.

Every Diocese and every local parish must ask itself a similar question: How does what we do enable us to fulfill the Lord’s command to make disciples of all nations? What role does the discipleship process play when we plan our programs, and when we come together for worship, or for Synods?

Why should we be asking these questions? The answer should be obvious: our Lord has commanded and commissioned us to make disciples of ALL NATIONS. If we are not intentional about discipleship, we just won’t do it because it goes against the spirit of the age!

We are not commanded to become Bible scholars and armchair theologians or opinionated liturgists and traditionalists! We are commanded by the Lord to make disciples for Him. So, we need to take the discipleship process seriously. We must not disappoint God in this very important task. It is indeed our privilege to be entrusted with such a serious and glorious responsibility.

“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons ... are simply a waste of time” (C.S. Lewis)

Our Diocese must take Discipleship seriously because Discipleship and worship should be at the very center of who we are and what we do as Christians and as a Diocese. By the grace of God, our intentionality in regard to discipleship is clear from our Diocesan Mission Statement:

“We are a fellowship of Christian believers whose mission is to make disciples of all nations by preaching the Biblical gospel, teaching God’s Word faithfully, and supporting one another in this mission and ministry of the Church, to the glory of God alone.”

How, then, should we proceed in our attempt to fulfill this Mission?

B. What is a Disciple? Luke 14:25-35

We must begin by understanding the concept of a disciple. If we are going to make disciples, we need to know what a disciple is and what a disciple looks like. The term “disciple” in the New Testament means “learner.” The disciples of Jesus were students who enrolled in Jesus’s peripatetic rabbinic school (the word “peripatetic” comes from the Greek word *peripateo*, which means “to walk”). They addressed Him as “Rabbi” or “Teacher” as they followed him. To follow Jesus literally involved walking around behind Him and with Him as He instructed them. Here is how our Lord Jesus described His expectations of a disciple:

From Luke 14:25-33 ...

- Prefers and loves Christ above all – vv.25-26
- Carries his/her cross and follows Christ – v.27

- Counts the cost – vv.28-32
- Gives up everything for Christ – v.33

From the other gospels and books of the New Testament ...

- Loves others – John 13:34-35; 15:12-14, 17
- Recognizes the universal authority and kingship of Christ over his/her life, etc. – Matthew 28:18
- Obeys his commands and bears fruit – John 15:1-17; 1 John 2:3-6; Mark 4:1ff
- Strives to become more like Jesus, his master in holiness of life and obedience to the Father

We often fail in the attempt to disciple others because we have a poor understanding of the nature of God’s grace in the life of the disciple. We need a high theology of grace – God’s grace is a saving, sanctifying, and truly transforming grace. (Titus 2:11-15; Jude 3-4; Matthew 28:20)

“Anyone who is in a position of spiritual leadership who fails to teach the more demanding, less comfortable, ‘narrow gate’ and ‘rough road’ side of discipleship becomes a false prophet.” (J.I. Packer, “Your Father Loves You,” Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, page for September 19)

Believing the gospel and following Jesus our Savior and Lord – as His disciple – should make a difference in the way we live.

A Youth Leader once lamented, “We build big groups and count ‘decisions for Christ,’ but the Great Commission is not to get kids to make decisions for Jesus but to make disciples for Him. We have invested heavily in youth ministry. Why do we have such a low return on our investment?” The answer is obvious in most cases ... we’ve entertained them instead of discipling them.

A disciple of Christ is a life-long believer, learner, follower, and apprentice of the Sovereign Master, Jesus Christ our Lord – ‘master carpenter’ of souls.

C. What is “Discipling”? (the process for making disciples)

The process of discipling involves personally taking another under one’s tutelage to help him or her grow in the Faith of the gospel to become a mature follower of Christ, not a follower of oneself! It is the process by which an experienced believer shares Christ and his or her life experiences in and under Christ – as a disciple – to help a ‘younger’ believer mature in Christ and become more like Him through prayer, Bible study, godly exemplary lifestyle, personal testimony, guidance, counsel, etc.

According to Dr. Tony Evans, discipling is the process of moving spiritual infants to spiritual maturity so that they themselves can help other spiritual infants grow up to spiritual maturity in knowledge, holiness, faith, love, worship, spiritual disciplines, etc.

According to Tony Payne, “It [discipling] is forming a relationship with another individual for the purpose of mutual growth in Christian understanding, obedience, and service of others.”

According to Sophie Peace, “It [discipling] is one Christian taking the initiative with another individual to help them know Christ better and obey Him more fully through studying the Scriptures, prayer (for and with them), and sharing one’s life with them and leaving the results to God.”

Discipling is very much like mentoring ...

Paul Stanley and Bobby Clinton, in *Connecting*, define mentoring as “a relational experience through which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources.” Linda Jones and Brian Jones define discipling this way ...

“Christ-centered mentoring is a broad, mutually beneficial, dynamic process in which both parties play significant roles and focus on becoming more like Christ in every area of life. Mentors and mentees, with God’s help, take on life’s issues, challenges, and goals with knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm.”

D. How do we make Disciples of ALL ethnic peoples for Christ?

So how does one disciple another? How does one empower a person to believe in Christ, be like Christ, and follow Christ in obedience instead of just being a stunted believer in Christ? See Hebrews 6:1-3.

We begin by stepping out toward people in obedience and love! Jesus said, “As you go, Make disciples of ALL NATIONS!” In our Diocese we are blessed to be surrounded by ALL Nations, even though it can sometimes make us uncomfortable! The process of discipling others involves ...

1. Evangelization – Discipleship begins with sharing the gospel with a person so that he or she will repent of sin, believe in Jesus as their Savior, and follow Him as Lord. We must first ensure that the person is converted, that is, saved through penitent faith in Christ. To the question: “What must I do to be saved?” the old gospel replies: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! To the further question: “What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?” its reply is: knowing oneself to be a sinner; knowing that Christ died for sinners; abandoning all self-righteousness and self-confidence; casting oneself wholly upon Him for pardon and peace; and exchanging one’s natural enmity and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to the will of Christ through the renewing of one’s heart by the Holy Ghost.” – Dr. J.I. Packer.

It is important that our gospel presentation be faithful to Scripture, not to what Dietrich Bonhoeffer described as ‘cheap grace.’ Here is Packer again:

“He (Jesus) did not desire to make disciples under false pretenses. He had no interest in gathering vast crowds of professed adherents who would melt away as soon as they found out what following Him actually demanded of them. In our own presentation of Christ’s gospel, therefore, we need to lay a similar stress on the cost of following Christ, and make sinners face it soberly before we urge them to respond to the message of free forgiveness. In common honesty, we must not conceal the fact that free forgiveness, in one sense, will cost everything; or else our evangelizing becomes a sort of confidence trick. And where there is no clear knowledge, and hence no realistic recognition of the real claims that Christ makes, there can be no repentance, and therefore no salvation. Such is the evangelistic

message that we are sent to make known.” – J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961/2008).

“And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’” (Mark 8:34-38)

2. Baptism – Baptism is a public witness of our faith in Christ, and a visible sign of our belonging to and identification with Christ; departure from the world and being part of the body of Christ – the church; cleansing from sin and evil; commitment/transfer of loyalty to the Trinity and to the church; death to sin and the old life and resurrection to new life; consecration (being set apart) to Christ and to His service; and enlistment as a servant and soldier of Christ!
3. Teaching – Jesus said to teach others “to obey all that I’ve commanded you” – not just teaching them to obey but teaching them to obey all his commands. So, the goals of discipling others are to Know the Faith, Live the Faith, and Explain the Faith (to others).
 - a. Belief/Doctrine: You can use the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds as guides, but the Bible is the book for doctrinal teaching, starting with God, creation, sin, the Fall, the Gospel, etc. What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news from God about his Son which states that as a result of Jesus Christ’s perfect obedience, His atoning death on the cross, and His triumphant resurrection from the dead, there is forgiveness of sin, salvation from divine wrath and an eternal hell, eternal life, justification, and the gifts of righteousness, the Holy Spirit, adoption into God’s family, and glorification for anyone who repents and believes in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (See Appendix A)
 - b. Prayer: Use the Lord’s Prayer as a guide in teaching others to pray, covering topics such as the Motivation for Prayer; Content, & Method of Prayer –

ACTS: Adoration, Confession/self-examination, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (petition and intercession)

- c. Christian Behavior/Character: The Ten Commandments and Fruit of the Spirit (Exodus 20; Colossians 3-4; Galatians 5-6; Ephesians 4-6).

Address topics such as temptations, sex, suffering, trials and persecution, commitment, and endurance in the Christian life. Christianity is a Cross-shaped life! As Dave Branon noted:

“Twice Paul asked his protégé Titus to remind believers to always be ready to do good works (Titus 3:1, 8). Although we are saved by God’s mercy and grace and not by what we do (Titus 3:4-7), our works are the evidence of our faith. Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-10: “God saved you by his grace ... Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done ... He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (NLT).

- d. The Church (its Nature, Functions, Sacraments, Ministry & Mission):

- Stewardship (giving as a command and act of gratitude): money, time, and abilities for God
- Ministry as service
- Teaching the content and method of evangelism

- e. Marriage and Family Life

- f. The role of the Believer as a political citizen

- g. Spiritual Disciplines: Silence, Solitude, Simplicity, Study, Meditation, Fasting, etc.

Discuss how to read the Bible (suggesting specific books of the Bible; reading the Bible together [beginning with the New Testament, 1 or 2 chapters a day]; beginning with a prayer for illumination; and paying attention to history, grammar, literary context, and structure). And recommend Christian books to read (that contain both theoretical and practical theology, such

as “The Anglican Rule of Life (BCP 1962).”

“Every Christian should from time-to-time frame for him/herself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he/she may consider the following:

The regularity of his/her attendance at public worship and especially at the Holy Communion;

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline;

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his/her everyday life;

The boldness of his/her spoken witness to his/her faith in Christ;

His/her personal service to the Church and the community; and

The offering of money according to his/her means for the support of the work of the Church at home and abroad.”

(This Rule of Life appears in the 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer, at page 555.)

h. The Objectives of the Christian Life

- To truly Know God and remain in Christ as Savior and Lord
- To Obey God and live a holy life
- To Worship and Glorify God
- To Love God & others
- To be Involved in service, stewardship, evangelism, and mission (helping those in need) from the heart
- To become spiritually mature in the knowledge and grace of God through the disciplines of prayer, study of the Word, worship/church attendance, fellowship, giving, fasting, simplicity, service, solitude, silence, meditation, etc.

We are transformed through the renewing of our minds as we read the Scriptures, etc. What is the PRIMARY discipleship book? The BIBLE!

We must Trust GOD'S WORD TO DO GOD'S WORK IN GOD'S PEOPLE (THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF GOD)!

4. Rebuke and Correction – As Dr. R.C. Sproul stated, “The New Testament community was forbearing and patient with its members, embracing a love that covered a multitude of sins. But in the New Testament, church discipleship also involved discipline. Part of apostolic nurture was seen in rebuke and admonition. The church had various levels or degrees of such discipline, ranging from the mild rebuke to the ultimate step of excommunication.”

There is a strange dichotomy in the language of the contemporary church. Much is said and written about the important function of “discipling” new Christians, while at the same time the function of church “discipline” has all but vanished. Today, “discipline” is a word used to refer to the instruction and nurture of the believer and does not usually carry the connotation of ecclesiastical censure or punishment.

E. The Mechanics

This is a 5-step program:

1. Personal preparation and planning
 - Motivation and rationale
 - Self-reflection and vision
 - What do you need to pull this off? Scripture knowledge; discuss with spouse, if married; time to meet and prepare for lessons; preferences about time, location, phone numbers, boundaries, extra-curricular activities; frequency: weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly; media: talking, writing, Facebooking, texting, etc.; and venue: an agreed safe place to meet

Qualities of disciplers/mentors – According to Linda Philip-Jones, a Christ-centered mentor:

- a. Knows Christ personally, and has accepted Him as Savior and Lord,
- b. Is striving to become more and more like Jesus,
- c. Seeks God's will,
- d. Helps others to become Christ's disciples/followers,
- e. Has a personal commitment to the Bible,
- f. Has knowledge of Scripture,
- g. Has love for people,
- h. Is honest, dependable, gentle, and transparent,
- i. Is willing to serve, counting the cost and sacrifice of ministry,
- j. Has an appreciation of human responsibility and divine sovereignty, that leads to work and trust in God (read Titus, I Timothy, II Timothy),
- k. Is prayerful, and
- l. Has moral integrity, lives a holy life, and sets a good example.

Clarifying the Elements and Goals of Discipleship/Biblical Mentoring:

- Bible-centered: teaching what Jesus taught (Matt. 28:19-20)
- Holistic: spiritual development and emotional/personal growth; attends to the whole person
- Involves growth in all aspects of daily life
- Comprehensive
- Mutual sharing of one's life
- Modeling
- Intentionality
- Accountability

Goals of discipling (*cf.* Peace p.15):

- Praise for God's glory (Eph.1:3-4)
- The extension of His kingdom (Matt. 28)
- Foundation in Christ (Col. 2:6-9)
- Maturity in Christ (Col. 1:26-29)
- Understanding and application

- Virtues of the Christian life
- Obedience to Christ
- Service and worship
- Helping the mentee know Christ, grow in Him, and serve the church and the world

The Ultimate Role Model – Jesus: Disciples should see Christ as the role model, patterning their actions and conducting their lives the way Jesus did. The goal of discipleship is to help others know Christ just as Jesus helped His disciples to know Him.

The example and method of Jesus (per Dr. Carson Pue):

- He was available and a good listener
- He dealt with people as unique individuals
- He used probing questions and dialogue
- His love was unconditional and patient
- He challenged, confronted, and corrected
- He identified obstacles to spiritual growth
- He used metaphors, parables, stories
- He cared for Himself (Mark 3:7-9; 6:32; Luke 6:12)

Dangers to consider – Sophie Peace identifies a number of potential dangers:

- Unhealthy intensity/sexual attraction
- Cult-like control, authoritarianism
- Legalism
- Over-dependence on the part of the mentee
- Secretiveness and exclusiveness – unhealthy emotional bond that may spill over to a sexual, ungodly, and unhealthy relationship and isolation
- Pride or fanaticism over mentor’s abilities, etc.
- Be cautious in dealing with teenagers – be open, honest, and accountable to their parents whenever possible, no full-body hugging, etc.

How to deal with these dangers – It is important to keep Christ and His glory at the center of discipling relationships, with much prayer, and in accordance with Scriptural teaching and standards:

- Be accountable to your peers and the local church
- Manage yourself appropriately
- Let your conduct as a mentor be above reproach, and ordered
- Pray for and with mentees
- Lead by example
- Love mentees enough to forgive and correct them
- Be an encourager and coach, not a Sergeant/control freak!
- Know when to let go and remain available (from a distance); hopefully, you will move from ‘spoon-feeding’ mentees to helping them learn how to ‘self-feed’ and search for correct answers themselves
- Accountability

2. Finding someone to disciple: One-to-One Discipling and Group Discipling

- Personal initiative: find your ‘Timothy’ (e.g., Wardens, vestry, etc.)
- Think through issues of Gender; other-gender discipling must be handled with extreme caution; know yourself and keep healthy boundaries clear through discussion and actionable follow-through
- Referrals from clergy, church groups, friends, etc.
- Be prayerful and listen to the Holy Spirit

3. Building a relationship/negotiating – First Session

- Getting acquainted – personal stories
- Expectations, boundaries, confidentiality, media (talking, writing, Facebooking, texting, etc.)
- Venue: an agreed safe place to meet
- What discipling/mentoring is, and what your parish distinctives are
- How it works in practice, what to study, vision, and goal (to be more like Christ, etc.)
- Frequency of meetings (weekly, bi-weekly, or once a month); the duration of each meeting (1 hr.)

- Closure (*i.e.*, how to end a formal mentoring relationship and still remain friends)

4. “Discipling” in action – Second Session, etc.

- a. Formal sessions
 - Check in (small talk), concerns
 - Prayer
 - Study the Bible – begin with a study of what a Disciple is (Luke 14:25-35; Mark 8:27-37; Colossians 1:28-29), and explore 2 Timothy 3:14-17 on the role of Scripture, looking for Teaching/doctrine and training in righteousness/godliness
- b. Encouragement (promises)
- c. Correction
- d. Rebuke
- e. Challenges
- f. Commands
- g. Promises
 - Attend to other issues they may have
 - Subsequent meetings on the chosen book of the Bible, etc.
 - Assign the next Scripture lesson, and determine the venue and time
 - End with prayer: personal concerns, lessons learned from Scripture study that day, etc.
- h. Friendship – do things together; be an encourager; remember the principle of the Looking-Glass Self (a person views himself or herself through others’ social/spiritual perceptions); and the principle of self-fulfilling prophecy (*i.e.*, positive or negative expectations about people, circumstances, and/or events that can unconsciously influence your behavior toward them in a manner that causes those expectations to be fulfilled); be trustworthy
- i. Genuine concern for the totality of the person’s well-being – family, job, fears, opportunities, etc., giving assistance when possible
- j. Pray for the disciplee (mentee) regularly in private
- k. Feedback – with much caution, provide feedback to the mentee as to how he or she is doing spiritually

5. Ending the Formal Relationship – Discipling/Mentoring relationships may continue on an informal basis, but a time comes when you, as a discipler/mentor, need to take the initiative to end things formally (in a wise, sensitive, and gradual manner)
 - a. The key to ending the relationship well is to have started the relationship well, and appropriately – that is, you ought to have discussed this reality with your mentee at the very beginning
 - b. Be up-front about winding the formal relationship down
 - c. Transition into a “cooling off period in the relationship where you no longer meet every week or fortnightly but less frequently and in a more informal way” (says Sophie Peace, at p.153)
 - d. Explain to your mentee that –
 - i. You still care and would like to be in contact with them even though the formal mentoring relationship is over;
 - ii. You would welcome any desire he/she has to contact you for questions, guidance, encouragement, etc.;
 - iii. You desire him/her to go forward in the service of Christ by discipling someone else, or becoming involved in ministry;
 - iv. Ensure that the mentee has other friends in the Christian community, that he or she is involved in a home/small Bible study group for spiritual growth, is equipped to serve Christ and others in church, and is both connected to and plugged into active ministry; and
 - v. Mentees (as well as mentors) have to let go and let God! It is necessary to entrust them into God’s hands – “... confident of this, that He who began a good work in you (*i.e.*, them) will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil.1:6).

This in no way absolves you from the brotherly responsibility of caring for a mentee when appropriate. Worry over the spiritual progress of a mentee, however, is not necessary if a mentee is committed to following Christ.

On the final day, end the discipling/mentoring relationship with one or more rituals, such as:

- A meal
- Prayers

- The gift of a Bible, Christian literature, or CD, etc. (something appropriate for the mentee in question)

F. Why Should we Disciple Others?

Why is it important that we make Disciples for Christ?

- Jesus commanded it; He is the King, and we are the subjects of His Kingdom; He wants us to grow His kingdom; Discipleship is based on His authority and is, first and foremost, for His glory (Matthew 28:18ff)
- Lack of discipling is partly responsible for our past, present, and future 'mess' in the church; for some of the troubles we encounter in ministry (and for some of the problems that you may bring into the ministry as members of the clergy); and for immaturity in the pews! We must disciple our future leaders.
- Love of the church and love for others (strong believers and strong churches result from good discipling)
- It provides a viable future for the gospel and the church
- It extends God's kingdom and furthers His purpose
- It benefits everyone involved in the discipleship process
- Sophie Peace identifies 5 advantages as well:
 - * Understanding God's truth
 - * Application of God's truth
 - * Example to offer or follow
 - * Accountability
 - * Training for ministry
- There is significant danger for us and for others if we fail to obey the Lord's command in this regard

As you engage in the ministry of discipling others, please remember:

- To pray
- To be patient and to persevere in doing it
- To trust in God's sovereignty
- To be diligent, disciplined, devoted, and determine
- To be hopeful and loving
- To ask the Lord to bless your faithfulness

“Christianity is a story of how the righteous king has landed and is calling us to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.” C.S. Lewis

God is with us to help us, even through to the gates of Hades – no Satanic or secular power can stop us. And remember, there is joy in heaven for each sinner who repents and becomes a true disciple of Christ because of your obedience.

APPENDIX 5 –

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHRISTIAN: BEING, BECOMING, AND BLOOMING AS A CHRISTIAN by Bishop Felix Orji, OSB

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ and then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’” Matthew 7:21-23.

“And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” Luke 6:46

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” 1 Corinthians 15:1-5.

Someone once quipped that sitting in a church does not make you Christian any more than sitting in a garage makes you a car! How true! The New Testament would concur with that statement, especially our Lord Jesus Himself, as the passages above indicate. In other words, professing to be Christian does not mean you are one; simply claiming Jesus as Lord with your lips without believing it in your heart does not make you a follower of Jesus, or ensure that He accepts and recognizes you as belonging to Him. If your lifestyle, values, and worldviews are not godly and discernibly different from the lifestyles, values, and worldviews of the non-believers around you, as is the case with the lives of many professing Christians today, how can you claim that you are a Christian in the Biblical sense of that word? This was one of the problems Jesus and the rest of the New Testament writers were concerned about during their ministry. It is possible to be a Christian in name only (*i.e.*, a nominal Christian) without being a Christian in word and deed. Hence, it is very important to let the Holy Spirit, through

the Scriptures, search our hearts before it is too late! If you and I do not address this issue appropriately, adequately, and in a timely manner, we may find ourselves dismissed from the presence of God on the Day of Judgment. Then we will be shocked, as the passage above indicates, because we wittingly (or unwittingly) allowed ourselves to be under the false impression that all was well with us and God, despite numerous and clear warnings from the Bible to the contrary. You may think that this message does not apply to you because you are not the religious type. The truth, however, is that your spiritual condition is probably worse than you realize because God's warning of eternal judgment is addressed to all those who refuse to repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord – regardless of whether they are religious, irreligious, areligious, secular, agnostic, or atheistic. It is time to stop running from God – one cannot escape from His presence and judgment by running, or by denying His existence or His claims over us! If we refuse to honestly examine ourselves, listen to, and conform our lives to the word of God now, this divine eternal rejection will be a shocking reality for us on the Day of Judgment. What will count eventually is not what we think, or what other religious people think and teach. What will decide our eternal destiny is what the Bible teaches on the subject of what it means to be a Christian. These warnings notwithstanding, we also do not want to miss out on the great joy and blessings of being a true Christian – forgiveness, peace with God and peace within, joy and friendship with God now, and an eternity of bliss and joy with God in heaven!

So, let me begin by asking you these questions: Are you a Christian? Would Jesus consider you to be a Christian? What evidence is there that you and I are Christians? Does it really matter that we are really Christians? What does it mean to be a Christian?

These are tremendously important questions because there is no greater disaster, says Jesus in Matthew 7:21-29, than for one to think that he/she is a Christian when in truth, one is not. You can be wrong or deceived about minor points of doctrine, but nothing is more eternally injurious to you and your relationship with God if you are wrong or deceived about the genuineness of your Christian profession or personal salvation or relationship with Christ. There are several reasons why people are deceived on the matter of salvation. Let me mention a few of them.

- False hope and assurance of salvation given to persons who, though they profess faith in Christ, have not honestly repented of their sins, are unwilling to forsake their sin, and/or are unwilling to submit to Christ as only Savior and Lord. This is known as "Easy-believism," Cheap-grace, or antinomianism – presuming on God's grace as a license to sin.

- Fixation on religious activity and self-righteousness rather than on penitent faith in Christ and personal relationship with Him.
- False teachers, false preachers, and false prophets who deceive by teaching false doctrines, that is, doctrines contrary to the Scriptures, such as: “cheap grace,” salvation/relationship with God without Christ, salvation/relationship with God by being a morally good person, following the Golden Rule, or following your chosen religious path, such as Universalism, or post-mortem conversions, among other terminally positive but false schemes of salvation.
- Refusal to engage in serious self-examination.
- Ignoring the clear teaching and warnings in the Bible.
- Unwillingness to acknowledge the seriousness of sin as God sees it.
- Making excuses for one’s sin(s), self-love, self-absorption, and love of the pleasures of this life.
- Listening to worldly thinking rather than to Biblical thinking.
- People-pleasing.
- Hypocrisy and self-deception, etc.

Stop and take a good look at your spiritual condition to be sure that you are neither deceived nor have fallen for a myth. As Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Corinthians 13:5). And, as Socrates eloquently put it, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” So, let us examine ourselves by investigating what the Bible teaches on the following four areas of the Christian faith: Being a Christian, The Marks of a Christian, Becoming a Christian, and Blooming as a Christian.

Being A Christian

So, what does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be saved? According to James A. Fowler, “There is much confusion among the general public, as well as the religious community, concerning what it means to be “Christian.”

- Does it mean assenting to a particular belief system?
- Does it mean consenting to a prescribed morality pattern?
- Does it mean changing and improving one's behavior?
- Does it mean joining a church organization?
- Does it mean practicing regular rituals of worship?

Even those who call themselves “Christians” seem to have much difficulty articulating and verbalizing what it means to be a Christian. Their ambiguous explanations often convey an amalgamated “mish-mash” of affirmations of the above-mentioned activities.

The truth is a Christian should do all the things mentioned above, but it is possible to do all those things and not be a Christian in the Biblical sense of the word. And so, what we need is a clear and perhaps repetitive enunciation of what the Bible teaches on what it means to be a Christian so that we do not forget easily afterwards.

The word “Christian” is the English translation of the Greek word *Christianos*, an adjective derived from the noun *Christos*, that is “the Christ.” The word *Christianos* is used three times in the New Testament – Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16; and in Acts 11:26, where it reads, “The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” As Frank Colquhoun wrote in the Baker Dictionary of Theology, “In the strictest sense it (the term Christian) would be applied to one who has a true, saving faith in Christ.” True saving faith is the kind of faith that turns from sin, trusts Jesus as the only way to salvation from the power, penalty, and guilt of sin, and surrenders to Him as Lord. A Christian is a disciple, a follower of Jesus. He/she belongs to Jesus because he/she is in a personal relationship with Jesus, united with Jesus through penitent faith.

Put differently, a Christian is a person who has entered into a personal relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit by turning away from his/her sin against God and neighbor (repentance), by trusting in Jesus Christ as the one who died and rose from the dead in order for him to be saved from the penalty, guilt, and power of sin (faith), and by committing oneself to following and obeying Jesus as his/her Lord and King through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (submission).

For the Christian, Jesus is the only Savior and Lord. He/she now belongs to Jesus and to His church, first, foremost, and forever. To be Christian is to belong to Jesus and to His Church by penitent faith and unalloyed continual life of obedience and worship of the Trinity through the power of the Holy Spirit, all in accordance with the Scriptures.

Becoming a Christian: How TO Become a Christian

In order to become a Christian, here are the things that the Lord through the Holy Spirit enables us to do. The Christian life begins with some foundational humble admissions or affirmations (which explain why you should become a Christian), and some necessary fundamental actions.

I. *Affirmations (Admissions)*

First of all, admit that you are a sinner because the Bible teaches that “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God,” and that “There is none righteous; no, not one” (Romans 2:23, 10; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8; Romans 1:18-31; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Kings 8:46). You have surely broken many of the Ten Commandments several times.

Second, admit that God will punish your sin if you remain unrepentant and unbelieving, as the Scriptures teach “For the wages (punishment) of sin is death,” and “The soul that sins shall die,” and since we have sinned and each of us gone his own way in outright or subtle rebellion, we are under the sentence of present and eternal death by God. We are subject to his wrath (Romans 6:23a; Romans 1:32; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:15; Romans 2:1-29; Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-8; Ezekiel 18:4).

Third, admit that your good works can neither save you nor procure forgiveness; neither can they take away the punishment for your sin because the Bible says, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin” (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Peter 1:18-19). The works of the Law cannot bring salvation (Romans 3:20,28; Galatians 2, 3, 4). Good works have never saved anyone – neither in the Old Testament nor in the New Testament. Good works, that is, works of obedience to God, are necessary signs, evidence, and the eventual outworking of God’s Spirit and genuine faith (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-15; 1 John 3:10, 17-18; James 2:16-26). Good works do not save and cannot save, only Jesus can save us because He is the God-man who took on human flesh to die for us. It is because He died for us and rose again from the dead to pay the penalty for our sins we can now be saved (Acts 4:12; John 14:6-11; 1 John 5:11-12; John 10:7, 9, 10-11, 30; John 1:1-5; Titus 2:13; Colossians 1:15-23, 2:9; John 8:58).

Fourth, admit and confess that Christ died on the cross and rose again in order to deliver you from the guilt, penalty/punishment, and power of your sin. “But God demonstrates His

own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 3:23; 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Isaiah 53:4-6; John 3:14-18, 36). In Romans 10:8-13, the Bible says, “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

II. Actions

In light of the above admissions or affirmations, what then must we do in order to be saved and become Christians? You must REPENT of your sin, believe, and confess Jesus as your personal Savior, and determine to obey Him as Lord trusting in God’s grace to enable you (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38, 26:20).

- 1. Repent of sin** (Matthew 3:2; Luke 13:3, 15:7, 24:47; Acts 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9)

To repent is to be sorry for sinning against God and to turn away from your sins such as: rejection of Jesus, selfishness, anger, lust, jealousy, lying, unforgiveness, bitterness, gossip, envy, murder, fornication, greed, adultery, homosexual behavior, idolatry, pornography, materialism, unbelief, bitterness, wickedness, witchcraft, pride, self-centeredness, refusal to do what God wants you to do, etc. Repentance is turning away from the god who is “me,” from sin that binds, from Satan that blinds, and from the values of the world that entice you away from following Christ as Savior and Lord of your life. Why is it important to repent? Jesus said, “except you repent you will likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3, 5; 24:46-49; Acts 17:30-32).

- 2. Believe in Jesus as your Savior** (John 8:24, 11:26, 1:7, 3:12; Acts 4:32, 13:39, 16:30-31)

To believe in Jesus is to trust in Him, to rely on Him, and to confess Him as the only One who by His death and resurrection paid the wages of your sin which is eternal death and separation from God in hell. He took the punishment we deserve, thereby satisfying the justice of God. As a result thereof, your sins are forgiven, you are reconciled to God, and you are no longer exposed to the penalty of death. You receive eternal life from Him because of your faith in Christ.

3. Commit to obey Him as your Lord for the rest of your life

You need to decide from the beginning of your Christian life to submit to Jesus and obey Him as your Lord because He is God. This decision or commitment is an essential aspect of our response to the gospel of grace. It is neither legalism nor salvation by works, as some claim today to obey God. The idea that one could repent and believe in Jesus but not submit to Him in obedience as Lord is both foreign and repugnant to the Scripture and the classical Tradition of the Church through the centuries (Luke 6:46, 9:57-62; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:5-11; Romans 10:9; Matthew 28:18-20; cf. Jude 3-4; 1 Corinthians 12:3; American BCP pp.847- 848, 851, 858, Article X11). Obedience to Christ is an essential dimension of the life of a truly regenerate Christian.

The above admissions/affirmations and actions reflect the baptismal covenant and vows that every Anglican confessed and made at their baptism and Confirmation (see the Book of Common Prayer).

If you wish to repent, believe, and commit your life to Christ, then this is the time to talk to Him in prayer. You can pray this prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for your love for me. I admit that I have sinned against you and that the punishment of my sin is rightly death in hell forever. I am sorry for sinning against you. I believe with all my heart that Jesus died for my sins and rose again from the dead. I confess my faith in you, Jesus, as my personal Savior. I ask you to forgive me and receive me as your child. Right now, I commit myself to obey you, I surrender my life totally to you as my Lord and ask you to take over my life. Fill me with your Spirit so that I can trust and obey you as long as I live. Thank you for loving me. Thank you for dying for me and thereby saving me, thank you for making me a Christian, in Jesus's name. *Amen.*

As a new believer in Christ, God's gifts to you that follow immediately with your conversion are the gifts of regeneration, forgiveness of sin and justification, peace with God, eternal life, access to him, friendship and acceptance with God, adoption into His family, the Holy Spirit, positional sanctification, glorification, and more. Begin immediately to attend a Church that believes and teaches the Bible! You should begin to explore what it means to live out the Christian life by trying to conform your life to this Rule of Life found in the Canadian Anglican Book of Common Prayer:

“Every Christian man or woman should from time-to-time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:

The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.

The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.

Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.

The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.

His personal service to the Church and the community.

The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas.

(Anglican Church of Canada – BCP, p.555)”

The Blessings/Benefits of God for the Christian

When you repent of sin and turn to Christ as your Savior and Lord by the enabling power of the Spirit, as a result of God’s initiative from beginning to end, a number of things become reality in your life. The blessings of God become yours by His grace. What are these blessings?

You are a new creation having the life of God and transformed from the heart by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17).

You are born-again (John 3:1-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

You are justified – that is declared righteous and given the gift of righteousness (Romans 5:9, 18; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:21-30).

You are reconciled to God (Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18).

You are made a child of God (John 1:12, Galatians 3:25-26, 1 John 3:1).

You are redeemed and forgiven – all your past sins are completely forgiven! (Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14).

You are sanctified (set apart for God) (1 Corinthians 6:9, 11, Hebrews 10:10).

You are given the gift of eternal life and a living, resurrection hope in the new heavens and the new earth (1 John 5:11-12, 1 Peter 1:3-8, Revelation 21-22, Romans 6:23).

You are given the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39, Romans 8:9, 14).

You are given the promise of continual forgiveness and cleansing from sin when you repent (1 John 1:7-9, 1 John 2:1-2).

You are delivered from the power of death and given authority over Satan in the name of Jesus (Colossians 1:13; 2:15, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58, Hebrews 2:14-15, Mark 16:17).

You have peace with God and access into the presence of God (Ephesians 2:13, 14, 17-18; Romans 5:2; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-22).

You are a joint-heir with Christ before God (Romans 8:17); Kings and priests before God (1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 1:5-6).

You are a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1) and have become a beneficiary of divine promises: answered prayer, guidance, protection, healing, and hope (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; John 16:24; Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 91).

You have God in His fullness as your Father! He is Almighty, All-knowing, All-loving, All-wise, Immortal, All-glorious, Ever-present God. He is your shield, helper, healer, hiding place, and sanctifier ... and much more. Yes, He is your everything!

These are some of the basic blessings that belong to a Christian, the best of which is being in present and eternal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and seeing His blessed face in heaven after death (Revelation 21, 22). This is the Christian hope that

keeps us strong and peaceful in the midst of the temporary trials and troubles of this life (Romans 8:18-39; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

This then is what it means to be a Christian – it is being in a settled spiritual state of repentance from sin, faith in Jesus as personal Savior, obedience to His Word (because He is Lord over us), belonging to Him and His church, remaining in intimate personal relationship with the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and enjoying all the glorious blessings of this new relationship through Christ. All these (being Christian and the blessings) are possible because of the love of the Father, the fellowship and power of the Holy Spirit, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in His death on the cross for our sins and His resurrection from the dead. In other words, a genuine Christian turns from sin, trusts Christ, glorifies Him, enjoys His blessings, and obeys Him. Is this true of you?

The Marks/Characteristics of A Christian

What are the characteristic marks of a genuine Christian, of having genuine faith, of a person who is saved, of having been born again? This is very important because statistics and experience show that many Christians are almost indistinguishable from non-Christians in their worldviews, values, and behavioral patterns. Some Christians have not been living out practically what they profess in theory. This is very unfortunate because Christians are supposed to be different in the way they live, in what they believe, and in what they value as God's children. Below is a snapshot of the Christian life as it ought to be lived out by the grace of God in the daily life of a believer. These are the characteristics that God expects in the life of a genuine Christian.

In fact, the New Testament identifies these characteristics or marks as proof of being a Christian. Without them, a professing Christian needs to seriously examine the authenticity of his claims to being a Christian. Jesus calls these marks "fruit."

"You will know them by their fruits . . . Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the rotten tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:16-17).

Succinctly, the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a true Christian includes (among others): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, holiness,

compassion, trustworthiness, truthfulness, promise-keeping, humility (Galatians 5:22-23; *cf.* Romans 12; Colossians 3:1-17; 1Peter 4).

As Bishop J.C. Ryle put it in his book “Knots Untied”, God has “mercifully provided us with a test and gauge of our spiritual condition in the First Epistle general of St. John” (1 John 5:13). Here are the marks of a genuine Christian according to Bishop Ryle. These marks appear in different degrees in each believer’s life, but essentially, they constitute the direction of the believer’s life and will increase as one matures in the faith through abiding in Christ and His Word (John 15:1-11).

First, a Christian persistently believes that Jesus Christ is his only Savior and Lord (1 John 5:1). He has made a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. He abides in relationship with Him (John 20:30-31; John 17:1-3; John 15:1-11; Acts 4:12; 2:36; John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; John 10:7, 9-10). And through Christ alone he knows he has eternal life (1 John 5:11-12; John 3:16).

Second, a Christian is hungry for God’s Word, strives to obey the Word of God, and strives to submit to the authority of Jesus as his Lord in ALL areas of life. He pursues holiness of life because, “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14), and he strives to live a righteous life because it is God’s will for him (1 John 2:3-6, 29; John 14:15; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Jude 3-4). True Christians walk in the light of God’s holiness (1 John 1:6-7; Colossians 3:1-17; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Titus 2:11-12; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

Third, a Christian does not practice sin as a habit (1 John 3:3-4, 6-9, 18). These verses do not imply that a Christian must be sinless to be a real Christian, rather they point to the fact that a habitual comfortable life of practicing sin as a lifestyle without remorse or serious attempts to repent or change is unbecoming and impossible for a true child of God who has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Genuine Christians are not sinless, they sin. But when they sin, they are eager and quick to return to Christ in repentance, confessing their sin with the right attitude and desire to change (1 John 1:8-2:1). If you do not feel that sense of desire to return to God in repentance and trust you are probably not a Christian in the biblical sense of the word. We must strive to avoid sin because not only does sin incur God’s judgment and discipline (Romans 1:18-32; 3:23; 6:16, 21, 23; Hebrews 10:26-31; 12:5-17; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8), it also breaks our fellowship with

God and with other believers (1 John 1:5-8; 2 John 6-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:16-17). In fact, continuing in a lifestyle of sin is a sure sign that the person is not a Christian and indicative of inevitable exposure to God's eternal judgment if repentance does not occur; the person's Christian profession and strong claims and protestations notwithstanding (Ephesians 5:1-6; Galatians 5:19-21). What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. It is subtle or outright rebellion against God. Sin is any disposition, thought, word, attitude, behavior, or plan that is contrary to the nature, character, word, purpose, and plan of God. We need to avoid sins such as these: gossip, unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, enmities, strife, jealousy, unbelief, lying, idolatry, witchcraft, fornication, adultery, hypocrisy, homosexual behavior, pornography, envy, pride, murder, drunkenness, dissensions, disputes, greed, materialism, narcissism, self-absorption, refusal to do what God commands us to do in His word, etc.

Fourth, a Christian loves God's people, his neighbor, and his enemy (1 John 2:9-11; 3:10, 14-15; 5:2; John 13:34-35; 15:12; 1 Corinthians 13; Matthew 5:43-48; 22:37-40; Romans 12:17-21). A believer desires to fellowship and be with other Christians because of his love for them. Christian love is the supreme fruit of the Spirit in the life of a true Christian. Jesus commands us to love one another.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

Christian love is forgiving, sacrificial, patient, unconditional, corrective, seeks God's best for the one loved, does not rejoice or condone moral or doctrinal evil, and is intensely practical.

Fifth, a Christian overcomes the lure of the world (1 John 5:4, 18). According to Bishop J.C. Ryle, the Christian “does not make the world's opinion his rule of right and wrong . . . he is careful about the employment of his time: his chief desire is to spend it profitably” in the world to God's glory. He/she does not allow the values and ambitions of this secular world to control him/her. He/she rejects the world's temptation, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).

Sixth, a Christian loves the Lord Jesus and puts God at the center of his life. God and the things of God, rather than personal comfort or other people and things, are his priority (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; John 21:15-17; Matthew 10:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:22). To love God according to Scripture is to be appreciative, grateful, and obedient to Him (Deuteronomy 10:11-13; John 14:21, 23, 24; 15:14). Jesus said, "If you love me, obey my commandments." Loving Jesus is not a feeling, but obedience to His Word.

Seventh, a Christian has the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:13; 5:10-11; Romans 8:9, 11) and shows evidence of His presence in his life by practical expression of the fruit of the Spirit such as love, joy, peace, faithfulness, patience, humility, kindness, self-control, goodness and gentleness in his daily life as he wrestles with the issues that confront him; in his dealings with other people (Galatians 5:22-23); and by manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the measure of grace given to him by God with humility and faithfulness for the benefit of Christ's church and Christ's world (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:3-8).

Eighth, a Christian carries his cross of suffering and follows Jesus. He is willing to suffer for the sake of faithfulness to Christ and His Word (Luke 14:25-33; Matthew 10:22, 34-36; Luke 12: 51-53; Mark 8:34, 10:38; cf. John 6:66-71). Genuine Christians have counted the cost and they are willing to suffer for righteousness' sake (Matthew 5:10-12; 2 Timothy 1:12). They will not, as a habit, compromise their faith because of fear, self-interest, or shame.

Ninth, a Christian is a disciple of Jesus who is willing to hold on to, continue to learn, and follow the teaching of Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures. "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples," says Jesus in John 8:31 (John 10:3-4; 15:7; 2 John 9-11).

Tenth, a Christian is not ashamed to confess Christ. He/she may be momentarily timid, but by and large he/she is joyful to confess Him and tell others that Jesus is his/her Lord and Savior. He/she is an ambassador for Christ in this world (Mark 8:38; Matthew 10:32-33; Acts 4:18-20; John 4:39; 5:15; 2 Timothy 1:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Romans 1:16). The Christian believer endeavors to preach the gospel of Christ to others because he knows that there is no other way to hope, eternal life, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God and because Christians

are commanded to take the gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:6-8).

Eleventh, a Christian desires God, desires to honor God, and enjoys worshiping Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24). He strives to worship in private and participates fully in the corporate worship of the church. He looks forward to fellowship and worship with other believers (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Twelfth, a Christian takes care of God's earth in a way that honors God's purpose and plan. He is a good steward of God's resources rather than a ravager of them (Genesis 1:26-31). He relates to and participates in the life and activities of society as a good citizen of the country, and as a trustworthy representative of heaven (1 Peter 2:13-20; 4:12-19; Romans 13).

Finally, a Christian exerts effort and is also prayerfully dependent on God, as he/she pursues the path of faithfulness and godliness in the Christian life. He trusts God in times of trial rather than blame God (Philippians 2:12-13; 4:4-7, 19; 1 Peter 5:6-11; 2 Peter 1:2-11; 1 Timothy 6:11-12, 4:7-8; James 1:2-4, 12-18; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11). The path to obedience and faithfulness in the Christian life involves two things: God's enabling power and human effort. God is not going to make you faithful, He will help you to be faithful as you trust Him, as you use the means of grace and as you strive to exert energy toward obedience.

Once again, a Christian is one who has repented of his sin, believes in Jesus as Savior, obeys him as his Lord, bears the marks of penitent faith noted in the thirteen points above. A Christian is always depending on and trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to enable him in his efforts to trust and obey Christ. He/she is committed to the Scriptures as the Word of God, and it is to this Word that he/she bows. He allows God's Word to rule and determine his faith, his beliefs, and his behaviors. A Christian has faith in Christ and bears the fruits of that faith which is obedience to God's Word. His/her ultimate goal in life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17). The Christian is never perfect in this world, but he/she trusts and obeys the Lord with the hope of a satisfying and complete obedient faith in the new heavens and the new earth.

Now that we know what it means to be a Christian and what the marks of the Christian life are, the question each of us needs to face is this, "Am I a true Christian or am I kidding

myself?” It is obviously clear from the foregoing that while it is important to be a church member, to be baptized and/or confirmed, to be morally good and religious, and to be active in the work and ministry of the church, none of these things is proof that one is a genuine Christian because a person can do all that but never commit oneself to Christ in genuine repentance, faith, and daily obedience. Once again, you and I need to face the reality of our spiritual condition now before it is too late. Remember Jesus’ warning in Matthew 7:21-23 –

“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day (the day of judgment – emphasis added) many (not a few – emphasis added) will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.’”

These were religious people who professed Jesus as Lord and who did many religious things in His name, but they did not do what God wanted them to do in order to be acceptable to Jesus as genuine followers of Him. Believing or confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior is not enough. They are simply empty and hollow if not backed with doing God’s will. The Bible says, “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder” (James 2:19). Such believing is no better than the faith of demons. The difference between “deceiving faith” and “saving faith” is doing God’s will, that is, obedience to God’s Word. The difference between “dead faith” and “living faith” is action. What action? Acting on God’s invitation to repent, believe and obey His Word. Once again, it is important to reiterate that the evidence of genuine salvation and faith is two-fold: faith in Christ as Savior, and the fruit of obedience to him as Lord. Obedience is not legalism or fundamentalism or works of righteousness. It is a divine expectation for believers. As Scripture teaches, “faith by itself, if it has no works is dead” (James 2:17). Is your faith “dead faith” or “living faith”? It may appear to you from the above that being and becoming a Christian is difficult. There is truth to that because Jesus says in Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” But we become Christians and live the Christian life by the initiating and enabling grace of God, not by our strength.

Are you a genuine believer? Are you among the many or the few? If you are not sure, then here is what you need to do in order to be a Christian – repent of your sin, believe/confess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior, and commit to follow him as the Lord of your life.

Blooming as A Christian

Now that you have decided to be a Christian, how can you grow in your faith? God wants you to blossom and mature in your Christian walk and relationship with Christ. Here is what to do.

First and foremost, begin or end everyday with at least 30 minutes time of devotion (you can increase the time as you wish), in which you read at least a chapter of the Bible and pray to God – praising and thanking Him, confessing your sin(s), praying for the needs of other people and for your own needs as well. This is how you abide in Christ. This will inevitably result in bearing the fruit of the Spirit that Jesus expects of every Christian, such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, humility, faithfulness, and self-control (John 15:1-11; Galatians 5:22). Your devotional time is one very essential and crucial way you stay in touch and in tune with Jesus and mature to the glory of God. It is good to “hang out” with Jesus. In fact, if you love Him you will want to stay close to Him. That is how you get to know him and his will better and become increasingly Christ-like. He wants you to be close to Him. He wants to embrace, comfort, empower, and assure you of His love. He wants to use you and glorify the Father through you. But you must make yourself available to Him.

Second, you need to consider practicing and adopting the spiritual disciplines of the Christian faith as a lifestyle. According to Donald Whitney, the spiritual disciplines are “channels of God’s transforming grace.” Dallas Willard points attention to two categories of spiritual disciplines that will help you grow in grace. Under the category of Abstinence are: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality (and simplicity, I assume), chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice; and under the category of Engagement are: study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. This is how you continue to make yourself available to Christ for Him to grow you, bless you, mature you, and use you.

As you begin or continue in your walk with Christ, decide to do the following if you want to grow and mature in your faith.

1. Read the Bible every day. Start with a chapter of the bible, preferably the gospel of Mark (1 Peter 2:2; Joshua 1:8-9; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Colossians 3:16; Psalm 119:9, 11, 105; Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 4:12).

2. Believe the promises of God in the Bible and obey the commands of God that you discover as you read. Obedience to God brings blessings (Deuteronomy 28-29; 1 Peter 3:8-12). In deciding whether certain things that are not clear in Scripture are right or wrong, Dr. John MacArthur suggests that you ask yourself these questions before you act:

- a) Is my motive good, and right?
- b) Will it honor God? (Principle of Divine Exaltation)
- c) Will God rejoice in it?
- d) Will it build me and others up spiritually, and help my spiritual growth? (Principle of Edification)
- e) Is it good enough for others to follow or will it hinder their faith? (Principle of godly Example)
- f) Will it enslave you? (Principle of Enslavement)
- g) Does it have an appearance of evil?
- h) Will it violate the Lordship of Christ over you and His church? (Principle of Encroachment)
- i) Will it violate your conscience and that of others? (Principle of Experience)
- j) Will it lead others to Christ or away from Christ and His church? (Principle of Evangelism)
- k) Am I being hypocritical? (Principle of Equivocation)
- l) Is this an excess of a good thing? (Principle of Moderation or Excess)
- m) Can I afford it? (Principle of Contentment)
- n) What will be the consequence of this action?
- o) Is it consistent with what Christ would do? (Principle of Emulation)

God's Word is the only dependable guide for you and the only thing that will keep you from deception. Obedience to revealed truth engenders God's guidance on unclear areas of guidance. In deciding whether something is morally right or wrong, do not look to Science, History, Tradition, 'Experts,' Reason, the Media, the Humanities, the consensus of Popular Opinion, Fortune-tellers, Superstition, Horoscopes, Dreams, Visions and Prophecy – neither should you

depend on your or anybody's feelings, experiences, intuitions, 'good intentions,' or rationalizations. Rather, look to God's Word before considering any other sources of knowledge. Some of these secular sources of knowledge will inevitably lead you into the jaws of deception. So, beware! While it is true that Reason, Tradition, and Experience are important and can enrich our understanding of truth, the Bible remains the supreme source and authority for deciding what constitutes theological, ethical, and moral truth. God in his mercy and wisdom has not left us to grope around in spiritual and moral darkness and confusion. That is why He gave us the Bible and sent His Son Jesus to authenticate it to avoid any confusion. So, my friend, where and when the Bible is clear on an issue you do not need to seek further or contrary guidance. What you need is to ask God to help you trust and obey Him.

3. Reach out to God in prayer every day (Colossians 4:2-4; Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1-8). You can use the acrostic ACTS as a guide for prayer.

A -- Adoration (praise)

C -- Confession (of your sin)

T -- Thanksgiving (for the blessings granted you and other people)

S -- Supplication/Intercession (praying for your needs and those of others)

Your prayers will only be effective if you forgive others, if you pray in faith, and if you pray according to God's will (Mark 11:20-25; 1 John 5:15-16; James 1:5-7; John 15:7).

4. Keep a tender and sensitive conscience before God by confessing your sins to Him as soon as you realize you have sinned. Keep short accounts with God. When you confess, accept His forgiveness and rejoice in His cleansing (1 John 1:7-10; 2:1-2). The evidence of his mercy is seen in John 21:1-22, where Jesus makes breakfast for disobedient but remorseful disciples, especially Peter, who had denied him three times during His trial (Psalm 51; 103:3, 8-14; James 5:16).

5. Regularly attend and participate in the worship and ministry of a church that believes in the primary authority of the Scriptures for the belief and behavior of Christians (Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:3-8). Regarding belonging to a church, there are two things to bear in mind. First, it is important to know that attending a church that does not uphold the Bible as its primary rule for faith, practice, and behavior is both wrong and dangerous for your spiritual life and relationship with Christ. Second, be consistent and committed to attending worship services because refusing to participate in the worship and ministry of the church is sinful and hinders God's purpose for you, for His church, and for His world. You are saved to be part of God's family and grand plan for His world. Avoiding the body of Christ will ultimately become a hindrance to your spiritual walk. In fact, God never intended you to go it alone. You need to be in communion with those who know, love, and celebrate Jesus as Savior and Lord, says Bishop Tom Wright. Be dependable and trustworthy in fulfilling your commitment to the church. Do not try to walk the Christian walk alone. You need the fellowship of, as well as encouragement and correction from, other Christians.
6. Reach out to others by sharing your faith and testimony with them (evangelism); and by showing them the love of Christ in practical ways whether they are Christians or not (social action/mission) (Matthew 28:18-20, 25:31-46; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; 1 John 4:16; 3:17-18; James 1:27, 2:14-26; Acts 6:1-6; Luke 10:25-37; Deuteronomy 10:17-19).
7. Release your finances that God entrusted to you for the work of ministry, for the mission of the Church, and for the needs of others (2 Corinthians 8, 9; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Matthew 6:1-6; Luke 6:38; Proverbs 3:9-10). Give your financial offerings to the church cheerfully, willingly, generously, and sacrificially as your spiritual act of worship and gratitude to God for all His goodness to you. It is not a Christian virtue to be stingy in your giving to God. What you do with your money reflects whether you love God supremely above everything else or not. It is an indicator of what your priorities really are.

8. Form a habit of resisting temptation by trusting in God's promises to you, by obeying God's Word no matter the cost (Matthew 4:1-11; Psalm 119:9), by avoiding places of temptation and the people who tempt you to sin (Proverbs 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Psalm 1; Job 31:1), by abstaining from anything that has an appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22), by calling upon God in prayer (Matthew 6:13, 26:41; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:12-18), and by counting the cost of sinning against God (Romans 6:23; Revelations 21:8, 27). Someone has said that sin blinds, sin fascinates, sin assassinates, and sin grinds you; so, avoid it by all means. God will help you in times of temptation if you listen to Him (1 Corinthians 10:13).

9. Depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. Ask Him to help you daily. Trust in the power, wisdom, and grace of God always and especially in times of trouble (1 Peter 5:7, 9; Philippians 4:6, 19; Psalm 46:91).

10. Remember that the purpose of the Christian life is to glorify and enjoy God; to be in good and right relationship with God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with others, and with all of God's creation. Christian life will be consummated in the world to come where we shall fully enjoy shalom and cosmic reconciliation which God has planned for all of creation through Christ. All evil and rebellion will be eradicated by God on the day of Judgment. He will renew the face of the earth and we shall be with him forever and ever in the New heavens and the New earth (1 Corinthians 10:31, 15:25-28; Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 1:9-12; Romans 8:18-25; Revelation 18- 22).

As you grow in your faith, recognize that your aim should not be victorious Christian living but faithfulness to Christ. This faithfulness is achieved as we ...

Devote ourselves to Christ

Discipline our thoughts, words, and actions

Determine to obey God by doing things God's way rather than our way or the way of people around us

Dedicate ourselves to the service of Christ, of His Church, of His world, of our families, and of other people in accordance with biblical teachings

Diligently use of the means of grace such as Scripture reading and study, prayer, church attendance, the sacraments, and in enduring the trials and sufferings that comes our way for your sanctification and for His purpose and plan.

Do not be content with just being a Christian in whom Christ is present as Savior and Lord, rather be a Christian in whom Christ is prominent and preeminent. Be a true soldier, a warrior for Christ. Be an example of devotion and dedication to Christ so that you will bring joy to God's heart and inspire others to follow Christ faithfully.

Conclusion

Before we end this chapter, let me ask you five “reality-check” questions. These questions will help you determine whether you will spend eternity with God in heaven, or without Him in hell. They will help you determine whether your faith is real.

Have you truly repented of your sins?

Do you believe in Jesus as your only Savior?

Do you love the Lord Jesus? (1Corinthians 16:22)

Do you strive to live in obedience and submission to His Word?

When you disobey His Word, do you have a sense of remorse and conviction and a desire to turn to God in repentance and faith?

If your answer to these questions is “Yes,” there is no doubt that your faith is real, that you are a Christian, and that you are on your way to spend eternity with God in heaven. But if your answer is “No” or “I’m not sure,” you need to read this chapter again and take the steps of repentance and faith now (see Section C. concerning how to become a Christian). It is important that you renounce your sin and trust in Christ today because God has not promised you tomorrow. As C.S. Lewis put it in his book “The Problem of Pain,”

“Sin is man’s saying to God throughout life ‘Go away and leave me alone.’ Hell is God finally saying to man, ‘You may have your wish.’”

Do you want to continue ignoring God in order to “do your own thing,” or do you want to accept God’s invitation to be His child, to be saved, forgiven, and given eternal life?

Do you want to forsake your sin right now and follow Jesus as Lord in word and deed, or will you continue to profess him as Lord without truly obeying him (as many churchgoers still do today)?

Here is a serious word from the Lord Jesus for you. In Luke 6:46, Jesus says, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Reminiscent of that verse is a painting in the cathedral in Lubeck, Germany, titled “The Lament of Jesus Christ Against the Ungrateful World,” whose corresponding text reads,

“You call Me master, and obey Me not;
You call Me light, and see Me not;
You call Me the way, and walk Me not;
You call Me life, and live Me not;
You call Me wise, and follow Me not;
You call Me fair, and love Me not;
You call Me rich, and ask Me not;
You call Me eternal, and seek Me not.
If I condemn thee, blame Me not.”

This is the stark reality of an empty profession of faith in Christ – condemnation and eternal ruin away from the presence of God! What a tragedy!

Are you willing to do God’s will? If so, I invite you to repent of your sin, believe in Christ as Savior, and begin to obey Him. Remember that a life of continued obedience is the invaluable Biblical sign of true faith in Christ. Eugene Peterson said it well when he described the Christian life as “a long obedience in the same direction,” that is, in the direction of Christ and His Word. This is God speaking to you from His Word. And Scripture reminds us, “Today, when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion” (Hebrews 3:15). Today is the day of salvation. Wait no longer. This may be your last chance to get right with God – through His son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. May God bless and draw you to Himself. *Amen.*

Recommended Books for Further Reading –

A. *Knowing your Faith*

Knowing God – J.I. Packer
Concise Theology – J.I. Packer
The Sinfulness of Sin – Ralph Venning
Authentic Christianity – John Stott
Christian Basics – John Stott
The Cross of Christ – John Stott
Basic Christianity – John Stott
Essential Truths of the Christian Faith – R.C. Sproul
Foundations of the Christian Faith – James Montgomery Boice
The Gospel According to Jesus – John F. MacArthur
Calvin's Institutes of Religion – John Calvin
Nothing but the Truth – John F. MacArthur
The Body – Charles Colson
Walking the Way – Dr. Terence Anderson
The Moral Vision of the New Testament – Richard Hays
Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision – David Wells

B. *Living your Faith*

The Cost of Discipleship – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Holiness – J.C. Ryle
Discipleship – David Watson
Following Christ – R.C. Sproul
The Pillars of Christian Character – John F. MacArthur
Faith Works – John F. MacArthur
Trust and Obey – Don Kistler (editor)
Too Busy Not To Pray – Bill Hybel
What Matters Most – Tony Evans
Moral Dilemmas – J. Kerby Anderson
The Christian – William Webster
Desiring God – John Piper
How to Listen to God – Charles Stanley
How to Pray – R.A. Torrey

How to Succeed in the Christian Life – R.A. Torrey
Take My Life – Michael Griffiths
Loving God – Charles Colson
Revival – D .M. Lloyd-Jones
Rediscovering Holiness – J.I. Packer
Moral Leadership in the Church – Bishop Felix Orji

C. *Sharing your Faith*

Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God – J.I. Packer
Know and Tell the Gospel – John Chapman
Evangelistic Sermons – D.M. Lloyd-Jones
Evangelism that Works – George Barna
Good News People – Harold Percy
His Guide to Evangelism – Paul Little and others
How to Give Away Your Faith – Paul Little
A Sure Guide to Heaven – Joseph Alleine
Evangelism Through the Local Church – Michael Green
Peace with God – Billy Graham
Becoming a Christian (booklet) – John Stott

APPENDIX 6 –

NEW LIFE BY GRACE

(Group Discussion)

1. Introduction

Sabata is a young Christian man from the Thembu tribe in southern Africa. During his 13th year, he and the boys of similar age in his village were to be circumcised together. But before this they must perform some act of bravery to prove they are courageous and ready to be a man. In the old days, they might raid cattle or even go to battle against another tribe. But in these days, they must find some other daring deed with less consequences to prove their manhood. So, they decided to steal a neighbor's pig. They used sour corn to lure the pig out into the forest, and then caught and killed it. As they were roasting it over a fire, a respected elder from Sabata's church, James, found them and began to ask what they were doing. Sabata immediately became ashamed and defensive. When James asked them why they killed the neighbor's pig, Sabata angrily replied, "We had to in order to become a man. It is our culture!"

- a. Why did Sabata feel it was acceptable to steal and kill the pig?
- b. What are some things people in your country feel they must do because it is their culture, even if it is wrong? Why do they feel they must do them?

2. Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Briefly retell the passage in your own words.

3. Discussion questions

- a. **Head** – What does it say and mean?
 1. How do the Gentiles walk who do not know God?
 2. What does it mean to "put off your old self ... and to put on the new self"? Why is this important?
 3. What are some attitudes and actions which characterize our "new self"?

b. Heart – What is my attitude?

1. Which “old self” ways of living do you find the most difficult to put off?
2. What should be our motivation for putting on the new self?

4. What is new life in God’s kingdom like?

Previously, we have learned that we become new citizens in God’s kingdom by confessing our rebellion against Him and trusting in Jesus for forgiveness of our sins. When we believe in Jesus, His Spirit makes us alive again. We are born again as a new person, and the old person we were has passed away. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come.” We have a new identity as children of the King and a new culture as citizens in His kingdom.

How are we to live as new people in God’s Kingdom? Ephesians 4:17-32 says we are to “put off the old self, and to put on the new self.” Our old self was without understanding of God, and our hearts were hard toward Him. We were deceived by Satan and believed his lies. The result was that we were like the Gentiles, characterized by sensuality, greediness, and every kind of impurity.

But now, as new people in God’s Kingdom, we are to “put on the new self” which is in the likeness of God. Our “new self” is characterized by a renewed mind, believing and speaking truth to our neighbors, not sinning in anger, working hard to provide for ourselves and our families, doing honest work, guarding our mouths from impure words, speaking words that build up others, putting away bitterness, anger and slander, being kind and tenderhearted, and forgiving one another.

Putting off our old self and putting on this new character of Christ is not easy and does not happen automatically after we trust in Jesus. Living as a new person is a gradual process of change over time. So, how do begin to live like a new person in God’s Kingdom? We do this in two ways:

- a. New beliefs** – Paul says to “be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” We must reject old beliefs that are deceitful and take on new beliefs which are true and right. We must learn to depend on God to help us walk in new life. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh *I live by faith* in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” By

faith we must believe that our old way of life is dead and gone, and that we have a new way of life because Christ lives in us. Each day we must depend on the Spirit of God in us to help us put off our old ways of living and to put on new ways.

- b. New actions** – We also have an active role to play. 1 Timothy 4:7 says, “*Train yourself for godliness.*” As new citizens of God’s kingdom, we must practice living differently than we did before. We must work hard at developing new habits and train ourselves to put old habits aside. This requires work and diligence. 2 Peter 1:5 says, “For this very reason, *make every effort* to supplement your faith with virtue ...” We also need others to help us, pray for us, encourage us, and hold us accountable to change. Living a new life requires every effort of our minds, our hearts, and our bodies, and we will find that the more we put on the new self, the less control the old self will have on us.

Finally, we must always remember that we don’t put on the new self *in order to* gain God’s favor or salvation. We put on the new self *because we are new people* in Christ by faith in Him. We give up our lives to serve Him *because* He loved us and gave His life for us. We desire to live holy and set apart lives *because* our King is holy and set apart. The result is that our lives become pleasing to our King and Savior and others come to know Him as they observe our new lives.

5. Discussion Questions

a. Hands – How can I obey?

1. Consider an area in your life where you struggle to put on the new self. What old beliefs do you need to reject and what new beliefs do you need to have concerning this issue?
2. How can you rely more on the Spirit of God to daily help you in this area?
3. What is something you can actively do to train yourself to put on the new self in this area of your life?

b. Help – How are my relationships?

1. Who can you ask to encourage and pray for you in this area of your life?
2. Is there someone you need to ask forgiveness for relating to them in the old self?

6. Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:24 “... *put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*”

7. Prayer

- a. For ourselves and for each other
- b. For those who have not believed in Jesus

Disciplined Daily Devotion

Mark 3:14 says Jesus appointed twelve disciples that they might “be with him” and that He might send them out to preach. Jesus had previously called these same disciples in Mark 1:17, saying “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Again, in John 15, Jesus tells his disciples, “Abide in me ...” for “apart from me you can do nothing.” In every case, being with Jesus precedes being sent out by Him. Following Jesus precedes becoming fishers of others. And abiding in Jesus precedes being fruitful.

When Martha complained to Jesus that she was left doing all the housework, Jesus reminded her that Mary has chosen the better thing, which was to sit at Jesus’ feet and learn from Him. Personal devotion, time spent in the presence of Jesus in His Word and prayer, is the source of motivation, power, and fruitfulness for any service we might do for Him.

Surprisingly, many believers, including pastors and church leaders, run here and there trying to live the Christian life serving and teaching, but don’t spend consistent time with the Lord personally receiving, reflecting, and responding to God’s Word.

A recent study to determine the most important factors in spiritual growth showed that the single most important factor was engaging with God’s Word personally at least 4 times per week. This means receiving God’s Word, reflecting on its meaning, and responding to it personally. We call this practice “Disciplined Daily Devotion.” It is “disciplined” because it requires an intentional process of engaging God’s Word, which, at first, may not come naturally. It is “daily” because it must be practiced regularly, just like eating and breathing. And it is “devotion” because the goal is to grow more in love with Jesus and in obedience to Him from the heart.

If you desire to be fruitful in your personal life, marriage, family, work, or ministry of disciple-making, begin the practice and privilege of Disciplined Daily Devotion. It is the most important thing you can do to grow as a disciple.

3-D is not ...

- Something we do to please others or check off a list of things to do.
- A way to compare our spirituality with others.
- Meant to replace study for teaching or preaching.

3-D is ...

- Both a privilege and a discipline. We desire it, and we must train ourselves to do it.
- Begins and ends with worship. It’s all about meeting with Jesus and worshipping Him.

- A source of inspiration and power for our ministry of teaching and counseling to others.

How do I practice 3-D?

The best time to do 3-D is early in the mornings, before the activities of the day begin. This is in keeping with the practice Jesus modeled for us in Mark 1:35 where Jesus, after a long day before of serving the crowds, arose early in the morning, went to a desolate place, and prayed.

Start with 15 minutes, and gradually increase your time as you become more disciplined and devoted to this practice. If you or others in your home find reading a challenge, do it together, with one person reading and the others listening and responding.

Begin with prayer, worshipping Christ and asking God to meet you in His Word. Then spend time reading and meditating on a Bible passage, following these 4 steps.

1. **Head** – make observations and interpret its meaning;
2. **Heart** – Examine your attitude toward what the passage is saying;
3. **Hands** – Decide how you can obey what god shows you; and
4. **Help** – Consider its impact on your relationships.

You can do all four steps in one sitting, or you can take one step each day, with review of the passage on the fifth day. You can use this discipleship series as a guide or study any part of the Bible that interests you. However, try to move consistently through a book of the Bible or a specific subject or topic you want to study, rather than skipping around to random verses each day. The Bible is not a charm for getting a “word from the Lord,” but rather a collection of history, poems, letters, and doctrines which must be read in their context in order to understand what God is really saying to us.

As you read, study, and pray, write down your observations, attitudes, lessons learned, and commitments in a journal. This will help you to clarify your thoughts and study in a consistent way. Also, write your prayer requests down so you can go back and see how God has answered them over time.

An outline has been provided on the next page, which can help guide you through the process as you allow your Head, Heart, Hands, and Help to be guided by God’s Spirit through His written Word. You can photocopy the page, using one per day, or just write the basic outline in your journal. You can write 1 or 2 sentences per category or feel free to write a whole paragraph, depending on how much time you have. Try to write down at least one specific thought for each category.

Finally, bring your journal to your mentor each time you get together so you can talk about what you are learning and your mentor can encourage you to keep going. May God bear fruit in your life as you abide in Him through Disciplined Daily Devotion.

HOW DISCIPLES CHANGE

APPLYING THE 4H'S TO LIFE CHANGE

"...put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." Col. 3:10

Introduction

Consider an area in your life where you have struggled to change. What were some factors which prevented you from seeing real change in your life?

Could it be lack of commitment, old habits, lack of help, etc.?

Text: Col. 1:9-14

Paul identifies several factors which are critical to lasting change in our lives:

- vs. 9 Spiritual wisdom and understanding (head)
- vs. 10 Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (hands)
- vs. 11 Strengthened with power, endurance, patience, joy, thankfulness (heart)
- vs. 12 Share in the inheritance of the saints (help)

In order to see lasting life change, we must change in each of these 4 areas:

Head – understanding and values (the foundation for change)

Heart – attitude and character (the power to change)

Hands – obedience and skills (the discipline to change)

Help – relationships and multiplication (the help to change)

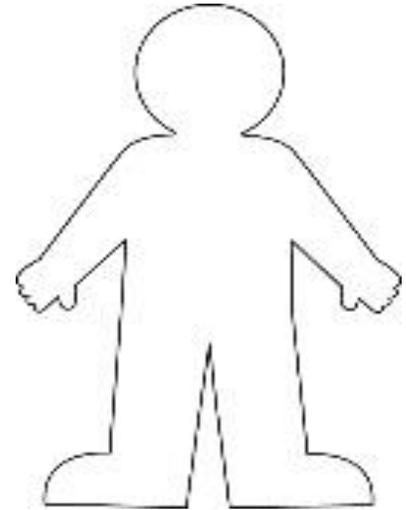
Change is described in various ways in the Bible. One of the most helpful is the concept of “putting off” and “putting on” (Col. 3:9, Eph. 4:22-24). We experience change in our lives as we learn to “put off” and “put on” our beliefs, attitudes, actions, and relationships. We often try to deal with sin in only one aspect of our lives such as our beliefs or our actions. We say, “I shouldn’t think that way,” or “You should stop doing that.” But we fail to address the problem in all four areas. Each area has specific things we must put off and put on.

- **Put off**

- Head Reject
- Heart Repent
- Hands Flee
- Help Forgive

- **Put on**

- Believe Gal 2:20
- Submit/Humble James 4:7-10
- Pursue/Walk 1 Tim. 6:11
- Seek Col. 3:13



- ☛ We must learn to identify and to *reject lies and our old way of seeing ourselves*, and *believe what is true, seeing ourselves in our new identity* instead. (Gal. 2:20)
- ☛ We must *repent of actions and attitudes* which are against God and *submit or humble ourselves before the Lord*. (James 4:7-10)
- ☛ We must *flee unrighteousness, putting off the desires of the flesh*, and pursue righteousness, walking by the Spirit and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. (1 Tim. 6:11)
- ☛ We must *forgive others and seek peace and unity*. (Col. 3:13)
- ☛ For example, suppose we struggle with anger towards others and desire to become more patient.
- ☛ We must reject the lies we have previously believed about others and begin to think on what is true about them and ourselves instead (**head**).
- ☛ We must sincerely repent from outbursts of anger, and our heart must break over how we have hurt others with our anger (**heart**).
- ☛ We must learn the discipline of self-control over our tongue and develop a strategy for how to handle situations which cause our anger to arise (**hands**).
- ☛ And we must learn how to communicate with others in ways which promote understanding and unity, while asking others to pray for us and hold us accountable (**help**).
- ☛ Only when we are constantly addressing these 4 areas will we begin to experience victory and sustained change regarding our anger.

Think of an area of your life in which you desire to grow more. It could a positive or negative area.

➤ What lie must you reject and what truth must you believe instead? (**Head**)

- How can you repent and humble yourself before the Lord? What new attitudes must you have instead? **(Heart)**
- What temptations or actions should you flee or pursue? What disciplines would help you develop more self-control? **(Heart)**
- Whom should you forgive or with whom should you seek peace? How can someone else help you to grow in this area? **(Help)**
- While these four steps to experiencing life change may be effective, they will not help anyone to change who is not motivated. Motivation is like the engine in a motorcar. Without it the four wheels (four steps) of life change will not move.

In Col. 1:13 -14 Paul shows us two key motivators for change:

Our inheritance – We have been qualified by the atoning work of Jesus on the cross to inherit God’s kingdom. This means that having been born again by faith in Jesus, we are saved to eternal life. But there remain eternal rewards in heaven, or the potential loss of rewards, which depend upon our faithfulness as followers of Christ (1 Cor. 3:14-15). Future reward in heaven for obedience on earth (and conversely, fear of discipline for disobedience) is a great motivator to diligently pursue life change.

Our identity – We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and have been transferred into the kingdom of God’s Son. By faith in Jesus, we have a new identity as children of God, freedmen, fellow heirs with Christ, friends of Jesus, and new creations in Christ (Jn. 1:12, Rom. 8:15-17, Jn. 15:15, 2 Cor. 5:17). Our new identity motivates us to live in new ways because we are new people.

The process of “walking by the Spirit”

- Daily living by faith in the atoning work of Jesus for us. “Grace trains us.” (Gal. 2:20)
- Daily depending on the Holy Spirit through prayer to enable us to put off the flesh and put on the Spirit. (Col. 1:9-14, Gal. 5:25)

Questions for discussion

- How does this change process impact how you view your own struggle to overcome sin and to grow in obedience to Christ?
- How does this impact how you counsel others who are struggling to grow in certain areas?
- How does it change how you preach and teach?

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

(Group Discussion)

1. Introduction:

Tiko and Bosi's joy in their newfound faith in Jesus was discouraged by threats of being ostracized by family and friends who are not Christians. Bosi considers the love, sense of belonging, and financial support he risks losing from family if he persists in his faith. He concludes that it would be better to keep the bond of family and abandon the faith in order for peace to prevail. On the other hand, Tiko, who is equally fond of his family and committed to peaceful coexistence, accepts the painful loss of love, sense of belonging, and financial support as the price he must pay to follow Christ. He thus, remains resolute under the same circumstances and continues his walk of faith.

- a. What accounts for Bosi's decision to abandon the faith?
- b. What encourages Tiko to hold onto faith in Christ under the same circumstances?

2. **Read Matthew 10:34-39.** Briefly retell the passage in your own words.

3. Discussion Questions

a. **Head** – What does it say and mean?

1. How did Jesus describe those who love family more than Him?
What does He mean?
2. How can a person love family or friends more than God?
3. What does it mean to take up your cross and follow Jesus?

b. **Heart** – What is my attitude?

1. What would Jesus say about your love for him as compared to your love for family, friends, and personal aspirations?
2. What motivates you to endure challenges in life in order to make disciples?

4. What does it cost to be a disciple?

The one we love most is the one we desire to please, and we prefer their will and interests in all cases. This may involve uncomfortable situations, but our love and commitment to them makes us willing to give ourselves to their demands without difficulty. Jesus requires of every disciple total surrender of mind, soul, and heart to Him. For this reason, He admonished the

crowd to count the cost before making any decision to follow Him (Matt. 6:24, 22:37, Lk 14:26-30, Jn. 14:15). The costs of being a disciple include:

- a. **Obedying Christ over other commitments.** True love and devotion to our Lord Jesus is not expressed simply by mental agreement or repeating some words in a prayer, but is made evident when we place His commands above every other commitment in life (John 8:31). These include commitments to family or community, or aspirations in life. Jesus does not mean that we are free to neglect our commitments, but that these should not lead us away from Christ's call and commands.
- b. **Loving Christ over other relationships.** Following Christ will demand that we make decisions that will not please family, friends, and even ourselves. Parents and friends may sometimes offer stiff opposition to our decisions to love and obey Christ in every area of our lives. When we are asked to either follow Christ or follow the world, the only choice we can make as disciples is loyalty to Christ more than family, friends, and self.
- c. **Seeking Christ over earthly reward.** Our personal aspirations and attachment to possessions may stand in the way of total devotion to Jesus, as in the case of the rich young man in Mark 10: 17-31. Jesus asks that we seek Him over anything we might gain on this earth. This is the only way we can demonstrate we are "worthy of him." Any pain, poverty, or loss of opportunity that comes with our decisions to love Christ more than anything else will one day be rewarded with a glory that is far beyond the cost of being a disciple of Christ (Matthew. 6:33, Luke 14:25-34, Romans 8:18).

Similarly, we must remember that this life as a disciple begins, not by earning or paying for it by our good works, but rather by receiving the free gift of life by repentance and faith in Jesus. Jesus gave His whole life for us, in order that we might receive His life by faith in Him. Having received Him, we now love Jesus with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength because He gave everything for us. As a result, we willingly give ourselves in total obedience to Him as His disciples.

In summary, we must be willing to give up everything for Jesus if we want to live as His disciples. Committing fully to Christ will sometimes bring us into sharp disagreement with family and friends, and we are likely to abandon the faith if we value their love more than Christ. Nevertheless, we are encouraged by Scriptures such as Matthew 19:27-29, which promises that "everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."

5. Discussion Questions

a. Hands – How can I obey?

1. How does your obedience to Christ compare with other commitments to follow traditions or the expectations of others? How will you make Christ your highest commitment?
2. How does your love for Christ exceed any human relationship? How will you make Christ your greatest love?
3. How does your desire for Christ outweigh desire for earthly reward? How will you make Christ your greatest treasure?

b. Help – How are my relationships?

1. How does your life or your words demonstrate to members of your family or church that you value Christ above all else?

6. Memory Verse: Matthew 10: 37

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

7. Prayer

- a. For ourselves and each other
- b. For people facing persecution from family because of the faith

APPENDIX 7 –

The Anglican Diocese of the West (ADOTW) Beginners' Bible Study Series 1

Introduction

This decade is dedicated to missions, evangelism, and discipleship, and we believe the Lord is about to grant us success in our outreaches. One of our initiatives is the Beginners' Bible Study Series. The focus of the series is to help new believers know the Lord, love the Lord, and serve the Lord.

The goal of the Christian life is perfection – a word that has been interchangeably used with “maturity” in Scriptures. These series of Bible study lessons are expected to help new believers grow rapidly and deepen the faith of established believers with fresh encounters with the Lord. It is also intended to help ensure that faith is built on the strong foundation of the Word of God, beginning with the basics.

All believers must be thoroughly conversant with the following foundational lessons in the first series titled, “The Elementary Principles of Christ” (Hebrews 6:1-3).

Series 1: The Elementary Principles of Christ

1. Repentance from dead works;
2. Faith towards God;
3. Doctrine of Baptisms;
4. Doctrine of laying on of hands;
5. Resurrection of the dead; and
6. Eternal Judgment.

LESSON 1: REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS –

Text: Matthew 3:1-2, 4:7, Acts 2: 36-39

All through the Old Testament, the Prophets were sent with only one message to God's people: to turn away from wickedness, from idolatry, unto the true and Living God. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ preached the same thing as he began his ministry. The Apostles themselves started off their ministries after being endued with the Power of the Holy Spirit, by calling the people to repentance.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is repentance? What does it mean to you?
2. From the following examples, what are the steps to repentance?
 - (i) The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-20)
 - (ii) Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
 - (iii) The People (Acts 2:37)
 - (iv) The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:30)
3. According to Acts 17:30, how serious should we take the matter of Repentance?
4. Share your testimony of repentance as you experienced it.
5. What other activities do people call repentance today and how can our repentance be genuine? Read 2 Corinthians 7: 1-11.

Conclusion:

Repentance is central to Christian faith as it sets our journey of faith on the right path. When a sinner comes to Christ through repentance, He values the forgiveness he receives from God.

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 7:10

LESSON 2: FAITH TOWARDS GOD –

Text: Romans 10:7, Hebrews 11:1-3, John 6:26-29

Introduction: Who found it most difficult to believe Jesus and His Word? Those who knew Him right from His childhood, those who knew His parents, brothers and sisters, or people in our present society? It is not easier for one group than another to believe in Jesus. Faith in God and His Word comes when we hear His Word with open hearts. Read Romans 10:7. We all have the capacity to believe.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the definition of faith and how is it important for our relationship with God to develop? Hebrews 11:2-3
2. Read the example of the people of Israel in Exodus 14:31. What factors helped their faith in God to develop? Share with us God's mighty deeds in your life that deepened your faith in Him.

3. According to John 6: 26-29, what did Jesus tell them about doing the work of God and how do you understand this?
4. Do you really believe? What difficulties do you often face in exercising your faith in God and His Word?

Conclusion:

One important foundation to our Christian pilgrimage is our faith in God. With Him, all things are possible, and the Bible tells us that the Word of God will never fail (Luke 1:37 NLT). Our faith develops as we hear the Word of God preached, shared as testimonies, and confessed with our mouths (Romans 10:9-10). Faith towards God and His Son Jesus Christ unlocks the windows of heaven for us to receive God's blessings.

Memory Verses: Romans 10:9-10

LESSON 3: DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS –

Text: John 3:5

Baptism is the act of dipping or immersing a believer in water and raising the person up to signify that the believer died with Christ and rose from death with Him (Romans 6:4). There are four references to baptism in the Bible for discussion in this lesson. Note that this doctrine refers to the doctrine of “baptisms” and not just “baptism.”

1. **Baptism with Water:** According to Matthew 3:11-12, what is the significance of water baptism in a believer's life? Read Matthew 3:7-10. What is required of everyone who comes for water baptism?
2. **Baptism with the Holy Ghost:** Read Matthew 3:11-12. Who baptizes with the Holy Ghost? What is required of a believer who desires to be baptized in the Holy Ghost? What was Jesus's promise to His disciples? Acts 1:5, 8?
3. **Baptism with Fire:** Matthew 20:20-23. In this context, what Baptism was Jesus referring to?
4. **Baptism into the Body of Christ:** According to 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, discuss the unity of believers through baptism into Christ.

Conclusion:

Through baptism, we simply put our faith in Christ, we are baptized into Christ, and we become members of the Body of Christ. When we undergo water baptism, we are professing to start a new life and walk with God (Romans 6:4). When we ask (Luke 11:9-13), Jesus baptizes us with the Holy Ghost to do His work. In times of suffering, we need not think God has forsaken us.

Memory Verse: Acts 2:38

LESSON 4: DOCTRINE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS –

Text: Mark 16:15-18

Laying on of hands is both encouraged and discouraged in the Bible. The Lord gave this charge in Mark 16:15-18 that anyone who believes “will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed”. James encouraged this practice among believers when any member is sick (James 5:13-18). However, in warning his son in the ministry, Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:22 not to lay hands suddenly on any man, neither be a partaker of other people’s sins.

1. Read the following passages and discuss what warranted laying of hands:
Luke 4:40, Acts 6:5-6; 8:14-19.
2. How may this practice be abused? Acts 8:14-24.
3. We practice laying on of hands in the Anglican Communion. Mention some of the occasions that often warrant it.

Conclusion:

We can help fellow believers in one kind of problem or another by laying hands on them. We may invite our Clergymen to come lay hands on our friends and relations who are sick or are being oppressed by the devil. We must be careful with our inner state of mind before we lay hands on people. Secret sins may be an open door for the problems to be transferred to the person laying on hands. We must not partake of another man’s sins.

Memory Verse: Mark 16:17-18

LESSON 5: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD –

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:35-5, John 11:25

Resurrection is the state of one risen from the dead, the rising again to life of all human dead before the final judgment. The concept of resurrection to us as believers helps us in our Christian journey to be very serious with our faith, knowing that everything does not end here. As we keep the hope of resurrection in view, we know that there is more to life than what we see or experience here in the world. Our Lord Jesus died and rose again on the third day. We believe that all Christians shall experience the resurrection like their Savior did.

1. Read Mark 12:18-27. What lessons about resurrection did the Lord teach here? As it was in Jesus's day and up until now, there were divergent views of resurrection (verse 18). Mention some of those views today.
2. Resurrection comes with two possible results for two groups of people. John 5:28-29. Revelation 20:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:10. Mention them from the passages.
3. What should be our attitudes in preparation for the resurrection: 1 John 3:1-6; 11-24?
4. What other views about here and the hereafter do we hear from the society today for which we must be careful?

Conclusion:

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Memory verses: 1 Corinthians 15:58

LESSON 6: ETERNAL JUDGMENT –

One of the lessons new believers should learn is that God is the final and eternal judge of all men. He is a righteous Judge, an impartial Judge. He is coming to judge according to the standards of His Word. There will be no appeal after He gives His final judgment, and the results are eternal.

1. The Judge is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. John 3:16-21; 31-36.
2. He will judge the whole world at the time of His own choosing. Matthew 25:1-13, 14-30 and 31-46.

3. In the light of the three illustrations above, what specific lessons on preparation can we learn?
4. Doctrine of eternal judgment is essential for all believers to keep in mind right from the beginning. By keeping it in mind, we shall zealously labor for the Master, endure all hardship, joyfully win souls for His Kingdom (because there is great gain awaiting us at the final day). How are you preparing for the final judgment?

Conclusion:

Will you be ready when the Lord shall come?

Memory verse: Matthew 25:46

APPENDIX 8 –

2022 KNIGHTS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE WEST

1.	Sir Michael & Lady Onuogu	\$600.00/2023
2.	Sir Collins & Lady Obioha	\$300.00
3.	Sir Johnson & Lady Nwokorie	\$300.00
4.	Sir Foster & Lady Duru	\$1,000.00
5.	Sir Okezie & Lady Nwadiuto	\$600.00/2023
6.	Sir Matthew & Lady Sandra Ehimwenma	\$300.00
7.	Sir Chuks & Lady Chisom Onubogu	\$300.00
8.	Sir Felix & Lady Veronica Obidi	\$300.00
9.	Sir & Lady Iroemeha	\$300.00
10.	Sir Chris & Lady Ike	\$300.00
11.	Dame Joyce A. Nwosu	\$300.00/2023
12.	Sir Izu & Lady Nwachukwu	\$300.00
13.	Sir Charles & Lady Onuogu	\$300.00
14.	Sir Paul & Lady Chukwujekwu	\$300.00
15.	Sir Benaiah & Lady Irondi	\$300.00
16.	Sir Godwin Nnamdi & Lady Nze	\$300.00/2023
17.	Sir Emeka & Lady Nwufo	\$300.00
18.	Sir Godson Ike & Lady Oraedu	\$300.00
19.	Sir Daniel & Lady Echeta	\$300.00
20.	Sir Joseph Okechukwu & Lady Adindu	\$300.00
21.	Sir Maduka & Lady Nwachukwu	\$300.00
22.	Sir Chike & Lady Ona Nwosu	\$300.00
23.	Dame Chinwe AdaGeo Ezeokeke	\$300.00
24.	Sir Raph & Lady Oby Obijiofor	\$300.00
25.	Sir Chris & Lady Mercy Agomoh	\$300.00
26.	Sir Godfrey & Lady Charity Enwere	\$300.00
27.	Sir Patrick & Lady Nkechi Ochei	\$300.00
28.	Sir Victor & Lady Nkwocha	\$300.00
29.	Sir Kingsley Emeka & Lady Joy Aladume	\$300.00
30.	Sir Nnodu ND & Lady Ojukwu	\$300.00
31.	Sir Fred & Lady Chinyere Ojiyi	\$300.00

32. Sir Henry & Lady Nkechi Eke	\$300.00
33. Sir Chris & Lady Iguh	\$300.00
34. Sir Joel & Lady Onunka	\$300.00
35. Sir Godson & Lady Onyediri	\$300.00
36. Sir Alex & Lady Chiaghanam	\$300.00
37. Dame Adanma A. Akataobi	\$300.00
38. Sir Ben & Lady Allison	\$300.00
39. Sir Chima G. & Lady Obichere	\$300.00
40. Sir Uzu & Lady Igbanugo	\$300.00
41. Sir Sam & Lady Uzoh	\$300.00

POSTSCRIPT: CONCLUDING REMARKS

DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST ...

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (ESV):

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: [2] preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. [3] For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, [4] and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. [5] As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

As we come to the end of this Synod, I charge you to the work of an evangelist. We ask all clergy, lay leaders, vestries, parishes, and Archdeaconries in the Diocese to pay particular attention to active personal and corporate evangelism. This year, in obedience to Christ, we must ...

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:19-20).

In carrying out this mission, it is important that we endeavor and ensure that we make disciples and preach the gospel in the way Jesus commanded. It is not enough to preach the gospel – you must do it the way Jesus intended us to do it. In other words, as you invite sinners and saints to trust in Jesus as their Savior, you are also commanded to teach them to obey Christ as Lord. The consequence of not doing so in the short run are troublesome Christians and rebellious Christian leaders whose moral lives are troubling, and in the long run it is the cause of flabby Christianity and liberal spirituality. The result of not doing so has enervated the life of the church, undermined its mission, and sullied the image of the church in the eyes of skeptical world. Alistair Begg noted, “One of the key reasons for the flabbiness of our spiritual lives is that a generation of Christians is growing up with little awareness of the necessity of dealing with sin. There are sins to be rejected. We must learn where our personal weaknesses lie – and once they are identified, we must be ruthless in dealing with them. Earlier generations

called this the “mortification of the flesh” – that is, pronouncing the death sentence upon sin and putting that sentence into daily effect by killing all that sets itself against God’s purpose in our lives.” Reformed teacher and pastor Kevin DeYoung explains the reason for this disconnect, “There is a gap between our love for the gospel and our love for godliness. This must change. It’s not pietism, legalism, or fundamentalism to take holiness seriously. It’s the way of all those who have been called to a holy calling by a holy God.” It’s apparent that both liberals and, sadly, some evangelical Christians have both come to the unbiblical conclusion that teaching Christians to obey the Word of God is not part of the gospel. Well, it is according to Jesus. Isn’t the gospel the good news that Jesus was born, died, and rose again in order to save us from the penalty and power of sin? How can one be saved from sin and still be comfortable living in it? 1 John 3:5-10 tells us:

[5] You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. [6] No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. [7] Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. [8] Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. [10] By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

As Dr. J.I. Packer rightly noted,

“In reality, holiness is the goal of our redemption. As Christ died in order that we may be justified, so we are justified in order that we may be sanctified and made holy.”

We are in our Decade of Evangelism. As we begin this season of our lives together, I want us to pray for a mighty work of revival in our hearts, our country, and our Diocese because we need hearts that are both revived and renewed in order to accomplish God’s purpose. The Lord renews our minds and renews our hearts through His Word and prayer. Let me quote Dr. Douglas Sweeney again:

“The Bible and church history show us over and over again that when God’s people come together, repent of their sins, cry out to him for mercy, and expect him to respond, God uses them to bring about needed reformation. And when their leaders help each other to promote such behavior, there’s no limit to the scale on which the Lord will bless his people. There’s no simple *quid pro quo* in the history of redemption. But there is a correlation between mortifying sin and walking by the Spirit, between humbling ourselves in God’s sight and being exalted.”

I ask you to commit yourselves and your congregations to preaching and sharing the full gospel of grace – a gospel that offers forgiveness and summons us to living a life of personal and social holiness. As we do this, God in his mercy will grant us the power and fruitfulness we ask for in this Diocese, for his glory alone. *Amen.*

Let us pray:

Gracious Father, we pray for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in anything it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son our Savior. *Amen.*

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

Benediction:

Go forth into the world in peace; Be of good courage; Hold fast that which is good; Render to no man evil for evil; Strengthen the fainthearted; Support the weak; Help the afflicted; Honor all men; Love and Serve the Lord; Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you forever. *Amen.*