

Mt Lebanon

Missionary Baptist Church



Beliefs and Practices

Introduction

This booklet has been prepared for the sole purpose of setting forth the beliefs and practices of Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church for the benefit of its members and the visitors who enter the doors of this church. It is not our intention to state the beliefs and practices of any other local Missionary Baptist Church, as each church is an independent body of born-again believers.

As you read this booklet, it is our prayer that you will gain a better understanding as to the beliefs and practices of Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church and the reason we believe them.

We realize all of our beliefs and practices are not written within these pages. There is no conceivable way to list everything we believe and practice in this booklet. Therefore, if it generates further questions for you or someone in your family, please feel free to contact the current pastor of the church or any of the deacons.

May God richly bless each of you.

Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church

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The Bible

What is the Bible?

The Bible is the written Word of God. The Bible is a collection of sixty-six books written by approximately forty different men as inspired by God, in three different languages, on three different continents, over approximately sixteen hundred years.

Taught in the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21

What is the purpose of the Bible?

To provide information to mankind:

- To teach us about God in general
- To teach us about the nature, existence, and attributes of God
- To teach the purpose of the earth and its inhabitants
- To teach the origin and purpose of man (human beings)
- To provide a history of the progressive relationship between God and man
- To teach us the commandments of God
- To teach us about the Will of God (perfect and permissive)
- To give a record of what God has told us.

Taught in the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:19-21, Psalm 119:105, Romans 1:16, Revelation 22:18-19

The Old Testament contains several books that are hard to read and understand. Is it really necessary for a person to read both the Old Testament and New Testament when studying the Bible?

The entire Bible is a treasure. Even the books which contain genealogical, geographical, historical and other seemingly uninteresting or unrelated information are essential in the development, cohesion and harmony with other parts of the Scripture.

Taught in the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21

Can everyone understand the Bible?

Many things in the Bible can be understood by practically any reader such as its history, geography, genealogy, etc. Most readers should be able to comprehend the moral precepts. However, having an understanding of the spiritual principles and meanings of the Scripture requires the guidance, leadership and assistance of the Holy Spirit. God can reveal His Word through the reading and study of the Bible, preaching and teaching from the Bible and sound Scripturally-based, spiritually-led commentary.

Taught in the Bible: Acts 8:30-35, Ephesians 1:17-18, Colossians 1:9, John 16:15, 1 John 5:10

Should an unsaved individual read the Bible?

Yes. Reading the Bible is good for every individual. It is a “GOOD” book. However, unsaved individuals should not be given the impression reading the Bible will save their souls. Salvation only comes from the power and grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Taught in the Bible: John 3:7, I John 5:11-12, Romans 8:16

How do we know the Bible, used at Mt. Lebanon, is the correct one?

We believe the 1611 King James Version remains the best choice for today's believers. We believe it is the most literal translation of the original language. Other Biblical versions include human interpretation in the translations.

Taught in the Bible: 2 Peter 1:21

Is all of the Old Testament applicable to us?

Every word applies! While we are not required to observe and perform the acts and sacrifices of the ceremonial law taught in the Old Testament, it is extremely beneficial for us to read and understand this part of The Law because it typifies and points us to Christ. The moral law applies to us as it did to those living before the coming of Christ. It is our School Master as it was theirs. The genealogy, geography, history and wisdom of the Old Testament help us understand from whence we came and where we are headed. They help us better understand the teachings of Christ and His Church. The Old Testament, in its entirety, points to the coming Savior!

Taught in the Bible: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21

Is all of the New Testament applicable to us?

Every word applies! The Four Gospels tell of the birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to the Father of the Christ – our Savior, Jesus. These books tell how Jesus, in the form of a man, established His Church while on Earth, making it complete with the mission of the Church and ordinances the Church is to observe. The book of Acts provides history of the early development and growth of the

Lord's Church. The epistles following the Four Gospels, along with Acts, provide instruction, guidance and doctrine to be followed and practiced by a Scriptural church body. The Revelation of Jesus Christ provides confirmation of all that has proceeded and commands His Church (each local body) to listen to the Spirit of God in her practice and work. It also tells the things God has not yet fulfilled.

Taught in the Bible: Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3; Romans 1:1-5; Revelation 1:1-2

The Trinity

From whence did God come and how can a person know God actually exists?

God is eternal. He has always existed and will always exist. Therefore, in terms we can understand, no description exists for God's origin except the fact He has always been; He is; and He will always be.

God's Creation proves His existence. A person can know God really exists through a personal relationship with Him.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 90:1-2; Psalm 93:1-2; Isaiah 43:10; Revelation 1:8; Genesis 1:1-31; Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 8:3; Psalm 33:6; John 1:1-5; John 1:9-13.

What is the Triune Godhead?

The Triune Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The One True Living God consists of these three distinct persons.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; John 14:26; John 15:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 5:7.

Since the Godhead consists of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, are there three Gods?

No. The One True Living God, consisting of three distinct persons, execute (perform duties within) separate and distinct offices. However, the three always execute these offices in perfect harmony with each other, thus functioning as ONE God.

Taught in the Bible: Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 4:35; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 44:6, 45:18, 21; Mark 12:29, 32; Romans 3:30; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19; 1 John 5:7.

Being Saved - The Spiritual Birth

What does “being lost” mean?

An individual becomes lost upon becoming spiritually separated from God. This condition occurs when God, through His Holy Spirit, holds the person accountable for their sins. We die spiritually when we become lost.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:3-7; Luke 15:8-10; Luke 15:11-24; John 17:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

How do I know when I am lost?

God lets you know you are lost and guilty of sin against Him by an inward spiritual condition you will feel. Individuals express this feeling in many different ways. You can have feelings of condemnation, fear, heaviness, sorrow, pressure, anxiety, or other physical and emotional states. It can be a general feeling of something being terribly wrong.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 34:18; Psalm 51:17; Psalm 6:1-7; Acts 2:37; Acts 10:1-4; Acts 16:25-30; 2 Corinthians 7:9-10

What does being saved (born again) mean?

Being “saved” or “born again” means a person has been forgiven (pardoned) by God for the sins committed against Him. When the lost sinner, feeling the heavy burden of condemnation and conviction, turns to God in humble, sincere prayer, God, through the atoning blood of His Son, Jesus Christ, forgives the individual of their sins. It is a supernatural event in which God places His Spirit within the repenting and believing heart, regenerating the spiritual part that died when the unbeliever became accountable to God. Thus, God provides the regenerated sinner with renewed spiritual life.

Taught in the Bible: 2 Timothy 1:9; John 3:8; Romans 8:16; 1 John 5:10; 1 Peter 1:18-23; Ephesians 2:8-9

Can I be saved by making a decision to accept Christ and by changing my lifestyle?

No! You cannot simply accept Christ but you must meet the conditions for Him to accept you. Christ accepts each person He saves. Salvation is not a mental or intellectual decision. Christ is not a person or object to be accepted by a human being. God’s existence is beyond the human comprehension! A repenting, believing sinner is accepted by God through Jesus Christ when drawn by the Holy Spirit of God and seeks the Lord for salvation! *Accept* and *decision*, when used in their proper context, refer to the individual’s *accepting* and

believing the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel reveals to you the only way to salvation which is through Jesus. You then make the *decision* to seek or not to seek the Lord for salvation. Christ accepts the repentance of the believing sinner, resulting in salvation when the Lord's conditions of repentance and faith are met.

Taught in the Bible: Isaiah 55:6-7; John 1:29; John 3:8; Romans 8:16; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Galatians 1:4; 1 John 2:2; John 6:44; John 14:6; John 15:16

What must I do to be saved?

You must fully repent (come to God with a sorrowful heart) and believe (placing complete faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross) through prayer from your heart. You must do this when you feel the drawing power of God.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 3:1; Matthew 4:17; Acts 2:37-38; John 6:28-29; Acts 16:30-32; Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 13:2; Acts 16:30-31; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Titus 3:5; Isaiah 55:6-7

How do I know if I have been saved?

You will know you have been saved when God removes the awful burdensome feeling of condemnation and conviction and replaces it with peace, joy and love. Descriptions of this personal experience differ in individual detail, but each person has the common element of enormous relief from the heavy burden of sin. Conviction and remorse have been replaced with Peace.

Taught in the Bible: Romans 5:1-5; Romans 8:16; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:8

Do I have to be at Church to be saved?

No. God saves anywhere a lost person is drawn to Him and meets His conditions of complete repentance and faith. Most churches which believe and teach heart-felt salvation have a mourner's bench (altar) where lost sinners seek God for salvation and where His children petition Him. While this area is a wonderful place to pray, He is found anywhere the convicted sinner is drawn to Him, meeting His required conditions for salvation.

Taught in the Bible: Luke 23:42-43; John 4:1-42; Acts 9:1-9; Acts 10:1-6, 9-16, 24-31, 34-35, 44-48; Acts 16:25-34

Can I be saved at any time?

No. God requires certain conditions for a lost sinner to be saved. You must admit you are lost to yourself and to God. You must seek the Lord when He is drawing you by His Holy Spirit. You can be saved anytime anywhere when these conditions are present. You must receive salvation during your natural life. Opportunity to seek God ends with death.

Taught in the Bible: John 6:44; John 12:31-32; Isaiah 55:6

Can I feel my salvation?

Absolutely! Fear, conflict, sorrow, sadness, and anguish are replaced as salvation brings the opposite feelings. Fear is replaced with assurance. Conflict and trouble are replaced with peace. Sorrow is replaced with joy. Sadness and anguish are replaced with contentment and happiness.

Taught in the Bible: Romans 5:1-2; Romans 8:16; Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 4:8

Do I have to be baptized to be saved?

No. Salvation is the miraculous work of God inside the soul. Every saved individual has been saved in the exact same manner. This common salvation applies inclusively to all who were saved in Old Testament times (before baptism was instituted) and all saved since the coming of Christ. Baptism is a Church ordinance. Jesus commanded it to be administered under Church authority to those who have experienced salvation, given a profession of that experience before the church body, presenting themselves for Church membership.

Taught in the Bible: Luke 23:42-43; John 3:8; John 4:1-42

How old must I be in order to be saved?

The Scriptures do not specify a particular age. You must be old enough to comprehend the term “being lost” and understand how to seek the Lord for salvation. God knows exactly when this time comes for you. The important thing is for you to seek the Lord for salvation when that time comes.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:14

What is the unpardonable sin?

The only unforgivable sin is the sin of unbelief. The Bible describes *unbelief* as “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 12:31). Unbelief is a lost sinner’s rejection of the drawing power of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 12:30-32; Mark 28-29; Hebrews 3:7-4:10 (note especially verses 3:11-12; 3:18-19; 4:6)

The Security of A Believer

Can I lose my salvation after being saved?

No. When the Lord saves, He gives eternal life at that instant. God seals the soul against sin, but the body is not sealed against sin and is still subject to sin. Sins in the flesh do not cause a person to become lost (unsaved) again. The Lord saves the soul (inner person) and not the fleshly body (outer person). When you believe to the saving of your soul, salvation is **given to you and kept within you** by God.

Taught in the Bible: John 5:24, John 10:28-29, Romans 8:35-39, 2 Timothy 1:12, 1 Peter 1:3-5, Hebrews 5:8-9. (Additional Scriptures: John 3:15-18, Ephesians 4:30, Hebrews 6:4-6)

Can I live any way I wish after being saved?

Yes, but not without consequences. You should neither commit intentional sin nor have a desire to do such. There are Scriptural instructions to the contrary. The saved individual has a guiding force within which distinguishes between right and wrong behavior, and the individual must use it. Having been saved by grace and forgiven for the violation of God's Law does not give you a license to willfully violate His Law. God gave His commandments to mankind for our benefit to guide our behavior toward Him and each other.

Taught in the Bible: I Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51:1-12, Romans 3:19-31, I Corinthians 6:12, Ephesians 2:10

What happens if I commit sin after being saved?

You are subject to the chastisement (punishment or discipline) of God. Sin is still sin. You should repent to God immediately, seeking His forgiveness, not for salvation, but for restoration to a right relationship with the Lord and His Will.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 51:1-12, Romans 6:1-2, Galatians 6:8, James 4:1-10, 1 John 1:5-10.

Does salvation and religion mean the same?

No. *Salvation* is a gift from God through His grace and mercy to a repenting, believing soul. *Religion* describes any system of faith and worship, including false gods, idols, nature, material objects, etc. Born-again Christians should practice true religion which demonstrates one's belief, praise and worship of the One True God.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 7:22-23, Galatians 1:14, Acts 10:22.

What is the two-fold nature of man, and how does it relate to sin and salvation?

God created man to have both a natural (physical) nature and a spiritual nature. Thus, a human being exists as body and soul. Think of this two-fold nature as the natural body being the container for the soul. Due to sin, the natural part will die and decay, but the soul will exist for eternity. This eternal existence of the soul takes the form of either eternal life in Heaven for the saved or eternal death (separation from God) in Hell for the unsaved. The soul, or spiritual part of an

individual, is the part God saves (renews) in salvation and seals from sin (Ephesians 4:30). The natural body is still subject to sin after being saved.

Taught in the Bible: 1 Corinthians 2:14, John 3:6, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8-9, Hebrews 12:5-11. (Additional Scriptures: Genesis 2:7, Matthew 10:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

What is the purpose of prayer?

Prayer is the means by which a person communicates with God through Jesus Christ by way of the Holy Spirit. God speaks to people in various ways – His still small voice, spiritual impressions, through His ministers and others, through nature, natural objects, etc. People speak to God through prayer. Prayer is not necessarily words spoken in an audible voice but is the sincere desire of one's heart as it is directed toward God. Therefore, the purpose of prayer (petition, intercession and thanksgiving), is to talk to the Lord, expressing this sincere desire. The lost pray for salvation. The redeemed pray to maintain that established relationship with God, giving thanks, making requests and interceding on behalf of others.

Taught in the Bible: Isaiah 55:6, Romans 10:13, Psalm 62:8, 1 Chronicles 16:8 (Psalm 105:1), Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 26:41, Mark 13:33, Luke 6:28, Luke 18:9-14, Acts 8:22-24, Colossians 4:2, 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:13-18.

Eternal Destination

Do Heaven and Hell really exist?

Yes, Heaven and Hell are most definitely real. Scriptures teach Heaven will be the eternal home of all who have been saved by God's grace. It also teaches all people who fail to repent and believe for salvation will be cast into Hell.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 16:23, 26; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:1-22:5

Since God loves everyone, does He send anyone to Hell?

Since seeking the Lord for salvation is by choice, it is not the Lord Who sends a lost person to Hell but is the action or inaction of the individual to seek Him for salvation. Scripture says Hell was prepared for the Devil and his angels – not for mankind. Isaiah 5:14 says, “...*hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure:*” to receive those who have refused the salvation of God.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 1:5-6; Isaiah 5:15; Matthew 25:41; John 12:48; Romans 2:5; 2 Peter 3:9.

Why does God allow evil in the world?

God's Will is both perfect and permissive. God created man, knowing, in His all-knowing nature, the man would sin. God gave him the ability to choose to obey or disobey His Commandment. Permitting mankind to sin and allotting him the ability to repent toward God for reconciliation in salvation gives more glory to God than making us robots that are forced to serve Him. The saved bring glory and honor to God when we obey the commandments of His perfect Will. However, we bring dishonor to Him and chastisement upon ourselves when we disobey.

Taught in the Bible: Deuteronomy 30:19; Romans 6:11-20; John 14:6

Church Membership

Why should I join a church after being saved?

First and foremost, you should join a local body of the Lord's Church because it is a commandment of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Jesus established the Church on Earth to teach mankind how to be saved, to baptize the saved into the Church body, and to teach them, through the Church, to observe all of His commandments in the Bible, the written Word of God. Therefore, becoming a member of the Lord's Church allows you to continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, obtaining knowledge and help for living a life pleasing to God. Being a member also prepares you to become a better witness for continuing the Gospel of Jesus to others.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:15-21

What requirements must a born-again individual meet to become a member of Mt. Lebanon?

- 1) **By experience and baptism.** The person presenting themselves for membership tell their experience of being saved to the Church body. Upon approval of the church body, the person is baptized, receiving all rights and privileges of church membership.
- 2) **By a letter of recommendation from a church of like faith and order.** If the individual is in possession of a letter of

recommendation, it is read. If approved by the church body, the person's membership is transferred from the other church to Mt. Lebanon. This is no longer a common practice. The most commonly used procedure is for an individual to join on the credit of a letter from the church where they presently hold membership. Upon approval of the church body, Mt. Lebanon's church clerk will write to the other church, stating the person's desire to join Mt. Lebanon and requesting a letter of recommendation. Upon receipt and approval of the letter, the person becomes a member of Mt. Lebanon. An investigation of local body beliefs and practices in either direction is appropriate and recommended if one church is unknown to the other.

- 3) **By a statement.** A creditable statement must be provided by the candidate showing they received Scriptural baptism, but, for some reason, a letter of recommendation cannot be obtained for presentation to Mt. Lebanon. In this case, the person can be received by the provided statement upon approval of the church body. Great care should be exercised in the use of this method of receiving members.
- 4) **By restoration.** If the candidate has been excluded from Mt. Lebanon in the past for some offence, the candidate can make their acknowledgment of the offence and ask forgiveness from the church. Upon approval by the church body, the individual is restored to membership in Mt. Lebanon.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 107:2; Matthew 3:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 10:47; Romans 10:10-11; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11.

If I belong to another denomination but want to become a member of Mt. Lebanon, what should I do?

You should join the church by experience and baptism. Scriptural baptism is essential to membership in the Lord's Church. It is the responsibility of each local body to ensure this ordinance is observed and administered properly.

Taught in the Bible: Psalm 107:2; Matthew 3:8; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Acts 19:1-7; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21

What is the purpose and advantage of becoming a member of the Lord's Church? Can I not worship God just as well outside the church?

Failing to join a local body of the Lord's Church after being saved is instant disobedience of God's command. Blessings are lost through disobedience. Although we can and should worship God outside the church, Jesus left His Church in the world as His institution to protect, promote and spread the Gospel. It is His institution of instruction, learning and service. He desires His people to serve Him through the Church. The love Jesus has for His Church is expressed by Paul who compares Jesus' relationship to the Church to the relationship of the husband to the wife. While the Lord can be served outside His Church, it is His precise desire to be served through and by His Church.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:18-22; Ephesians 5:30-31; Hebrews 10:24-26; Revelation 1:1-11

What are my responsibilities to the church after becoming a member?

Your responsibility is to regularly attend church and to give of yourself for the success of the church in protecting and promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the success of the Church in the worship, service and work of the Lord.

Taught in the Bible: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 9:5-10; Revelation 2:1-3:22

Should I tithe? If so, how much am I obligated to give?

The Bible teaches tithing in both the Old and New Testaments. A tithe is a tenth of anything. The tribes of the Israelites were instructed to give tithes to support the work of the tribe of Levi, the tribe chosen by God to administer the pattern of worship for all of Israel. God commands the giving of tithes and offerings. Offerings are what is given above the tithe. You should give as you are blessed and feel led of the Lord and are Scripturally instructed. Giving is not limited to money or material things but includes giving of you time, talents and yourself in service to God.

Taught in the Bible: Numbers 18:26; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23

Church Ordinances

What are the ordinances observed by Mt. Lebanon?

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances observed by Mt. Lebanon. Baptism is administered to a person who presents themselves to the church for membership, giving a testimony of salvation and requesting to become a member of Mt. Lebanon by experience and baptism. Baptism is the immersion of the candidate in water by a proper administrator under the authority of the church. The Lord's Supper is

observed by the members of Mt. Lebanon in services set aside for that purpose. It consists of fruit of the vine (grape juice) and unleavened bread (bread made with no yeast or rising agent) served to the congregation in remembrance of Jesus' death.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 3:5-6, 13-15; Matthew 26:26-30; Matthew 28:19; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20; John 3:22; John 4:1-2; I Corinthians 11:23-26.

Why should I be baptized and what does baptism mean?

You should be baptized after being saved because Jesus commanded it. Jesus, always our perfect example, submitted to baptism. You must be Scripturally baptized to become a member of a local body of the Lord's Church. Baptism is a sacred ceremony instituted by God. He sent John the Baptist to prepare material with which Jesus would begin to build His Church. As stated above, baptism is a ceremony. The ceremony has nothing to do with the salvation of a person's soul. The ceremony of baptism is not Scriptural unless administered to a saved individual. The ceremony is symbolic of the burial and resurrection of Jesus after His death. Therefore, you, having died to sin, submit to Scriptural baptism to symbolically show you were buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life (see Romans 6:4-5).

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Peter 3:20-22.

Does it matter whether I am baptized in running water (a creek or a stream) or baptistry?

No. The importance of the water is that there be sufficient water for a burial. You must be (symbolically) buried with Christ to be able to be raised to walk in His likeness. The burial and resurrection symbolisms are the important factors in this ordinance. Baptism, meeting all the Scriptural requirements in a baptistery, pond, lake or ocean is the same Scriptural baptism as that performed in a creek or river.

Taught in the Bible: Acts 8:35-39; Acts 10:47-48; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12.

Who has the authority to baptize?

Jesus left the authority to baptize with His Church. The authority still lies with the local body of the Lord's Church. Thus, baptism is to be administered by the pastor of the church unless, in the absence of the pastor, another ordained minister is authorized. The church can also authorize an ordained minister other than the pastor to baptize on occasions when the baptismal candidate requests to be baptized by an ordained family member or if the church is without a pastor. Care should be exercised in this choice to avoid controversy and questions with sister churches.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:18-20.

What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper (Communion)?

The purpose and meaning of the Lord's Supper is to remember the death of Jesus. Like baptism, this ordinance is ceremonial – a sacred ceremony to be Scripturally observed. The elements used in its observance represent two important truths. The unleavened bread represents the broken body of Jesus, and the fruit of the vine represents

the shed blood of Jesus. Jesus' body was broken and His blood shed as atonement for the sins of mankind. This ordinance is observed by His Church to remember His awesome sacrifice for us.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20; I Corinthians 10:16-17; I Corinthians 11:23-26.

Mt. Lebanon limits the taking of Communion to its membership. Why are other Christians not permitted to participate in this service?

Jesus left this ordinance with His Church. He instituted the ordinance with His close disciples after observing the Old Testament Hebrew Passover ordinance with them. Even the good man of the house where they met was not invited to participate. Limiting participation to members only seems to more closely follow the Scriptural examples of the administration of this ordinance. Mt. Lebanon has no disciplinary authority over non-members. This reason provides additional Scriptural basis to limit participation in this ordinance to members only.

Taught in the Bible: Acts 2: 41-42, Matthew 26:26-30, I Corinthians 10:16-17, I Corinthians 11:23

Church Government

Where does Mt. Lebanon get her authority?

Mt. Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church operates under the authority Jesus gave to His Church in the Great Commission,

recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 and Mark 16:14-16. When the Church operates within the doctrines and bounds taught in the Scriptures and follows the leadership of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, she is operating under proper Divine authority. Otherwise, she is operating outside Scriptural authority.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-16; Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:1-4; Acts 1:24

Who is in charge of the church?

Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church, and the Church should be operated in accordance with His commandments, teachings and Will. The church operates by congregational rule of government through regularly scheduled business meetings. The members of the local body (through Scriptural instruction and Spiritual leadership) make the decisions affecting the local body including: receiving church members, electing a pastor, selecting and ordaining deacons, selecting a meeting place, and providing care and maintenance for the meeting place. Business meetings are moderated by a person designated by the church, usually the pastor.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-16; Matthew 18:17; Romans 14:1; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

What purpose is the Church Covenant that hangs in the church building?

The Church Covenant which hangs in the church building is a document written by a person or persons which attempts to describe in five short paragraphs the responsibilities of church membership. The Church Covenant is not Scripture, but it is Scripturally based. All the things written therein concerning

the actions and behavior of church members can be confirmed from the Scriptures. The adoption of this document by this church means we agree in principle with its teaching concerning church membership.

Can I be excluded (dismissed) from the membership of Mt. Lebanon for disobeying the Church Covenant?

Yes. The portions of the Church Covenant, found in Paragraph 4, pertaining to moral conduct unbecoming to a Christian, are subject to the expulsion rule. This document was adopted by Mt. Lebanon, based on her doctrines. The common salvation shared among her members and the Scriptural doctrine concerning church membership from the Covenant bind the church together. You should not be excluded except for violations based on Scriptural grounds.

What does church exclusion mean?

Being excluded from the church means the excluded person has all rights and privileges of church membership withdrawn. Exclusion is based upon specifically stated Scripturally based charge(s) of behavior unbecoming to a church member who has brought reproach upon self and the church. Additionally, the offender demonstrates an unwillingness to acknowledge and repent of the stated charges. Exclusion is decided by a vote of the church membership in a church business meeting. The church action is not a judgment of a person's salvation but a judgment concerning a person's actions or behavior which violates Scriptural teaching.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6

What are the grounds (reasons) for being excluded from the church?

A member should first be charged with openly or publicly violating one of the doctrinal or moral commandments taught by Jesus and the early Church concerning behavior and actions of members. If the member refuses to repent of the offending behavior, the individual is subject to expulsion from church membership.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; James 3:16; Revelation 2:14

Why does Mt. Lebanon fellowship with some churches but not others, and how is this fellowship determined?

First consider a couple of definitions.

Worship: Organizations observe certain elements of worship in common, such as seeking the Lord for heart-felt salvation.

Fellowship: Organizations which hold and practice the same Scriptural doctrines.

Mt. Lebanon fellowships (exchanges letters and maintains pulpit affiliation) with churches of like faith and order that believe, teach, and practice the same Scriptural doctrines. These Scriptural doctrines include the way of salvation, observance of Church ordinances, security of the believer, etc. Although we can worship with other organizations in open assembly, especially those that believe and practice

heart-felt salvation, we cannot fellowship their practices on the ordinances of Baptism, the Lord's Supper and other heretical doctrines.

Taught in the Bible: Acts 15:24; 1 John 2:19; Revelation 2:5, 14

If I join another church or denomination Mt. Lebanon does not fellowship and I later desire to return to Mt. Lebanon, is it possible for me to return and be restored to full fellowship?

Yes. If you join an organization that is not of like faith and order as Mt. Lebanon, the correct action taken is to exclude you for heresy. By becoming a member of an organization, you knowingly or unknowingly accept and endorse all beliefs and practices of that organization, even if you do not agree with all of them. You can return by coming before the church and acknowledging your mistake and asking for forgiveness and restoration to this body. Upon approval of the church members present, you have all rights and privileges of membership in this church restored.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11

If I bring shameful reproach upon myself and the church, how do I make amends?

If you are guilty of a public offence, you can make amends by standing before the assembled church in regular or business service and asking forgiveness for your behavior unbecoming to a Christian.

Taught in the Bible: Matthew 18:21-35

Is it permissible for a woman to speak in business meetings?

A woman, serving as church clerk, church treasurer, or committee chairperson, is allowed to read minutes and reports to the church. If a woman has no male relative church member to speak for her, she, as a church member, has a right to a voice on church matters. With these considerations, a woman can speak in business meetings. The Scriptures teach that a woman is not *“to usurp authority over the man”* (1 Timothy 2:12). It is best for a woman to have her voice expressed through a husband or other male relative who is a member of the church. Therefore, it seems best for a woman not to originate or second a motion in a business meeting unless absolutely necessary.

Taught in the Bible: 1 Timothy 2:12

Are women allowed to preach at Mt. Lebanon?

No. The calling of women to preach is neither taught nor embraced in the Scripture. Only men who are God-called preachers of the Gospel from churches of like faith and order are allowed to preach in Mt. Lebanon’s pulpit.

Taught in the Bible: Old Testament Priests and Prophets; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6

Worship Services

Does Mt. Lebanon have a scheduled program to direct its services?

No. Mt. Lebanon customarily follows a general order of service. However, Mt. Lebanon strives to be a body of people that follows the teachings of the Scriptures and depends on the leadership of the Holy Spirit to guide each service.

Taught in the Bible: John 4:23; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 26

Can I make prayer requests, rejoice and praise God in a Mt. Lebanon church service?

Yes, and should feel at liberty to do so with the leadership of the Spirit of God.

Taught in the Bible: Luke 19:37-40; Romans 5:2; 1 Peter 1:8.