

# APPENDIX

## OUR DENOMINATION -

We are apart of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Those first two words carry much baggage, so we'd like to put them in context here.

'Evangelical' has become more of a political than a religious word in today's society – that meaning does not describe us, and in fact we repudiate any marriage of the church with mere partisan politics. We use the word in its historic sense, in which it has always meant (in Latin) 'about the good news' of Jesus. We think the best news in the world is that God has come to humanity through Jesus of Nazareth, and God is making all things new through him. In that sense, we are 'Evangelical' in our focus.

We consider ourselves 'Presbyterian' with a small 'p.' That faith tradition is much less important to us than the common faith we share with those who believe and follow Jesus in every Christian denomination (Baptist, Charismatic, Episcopal, Catholic, Orthodox, etc.). But we believe it is healthy and biblical for every person and every church to live in submission to authority in their life – no church or pastor should be an authority unto themselves (see the early churches' mutual submission to one another for faith and practice throughout the book of Acts). There is no perfect denomination, just as there is no perfect church. We have chosen to practice our submission to authority in this Presbyterian denomination, and we therefore submit to and believe in the system of church governance and doctrine therein. Our Book of Government defines how we 'do church' together structurally. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the historic Christian document that most closely systematizes the truth found in the Bible.

## WHO WE ARE - DISTINCTIVES OF THE EPC

More about the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

1. Distinctive: Perhaps the finest distinctive of all in the EPC is the spirit of love that characterizes our denomination. Our motto is "In Essentials, Unity; In Non-Essentials, Liberty; In all Things, Charity." While Reformed and Presbyterian, we believe these Distinctives set us apart as true both to our Biblical Christian faith and to our heritage. The EPC was formed out of a desire to be a Biblical denomination, not to be diverted by doctrinal arguments or socio-political issues. Our primary task remains to lift up the cross of Jesus to a lost and dying world.
2. Distinctive: The EPC has set forth the basic content of the Christian faith which is essential to our beliefs in a statement called "The Essentials" which follows this document. With "The Essentials" as our reference point, the EPC permits latitude and differences of opinion on those matters not considered essential to be a Christian.
3. Distinctive: The EPC spells out specifically the first duty of the Church. Our Book of Government reads, "The first duty of the Church is to evangelize by extending the Gospel both at home and abroad, leading others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." It makes clear that "good works" are not the Gospel, but the fruit of the Gospel. The statement concludes, "...the Church must never confuse its primary task of evangelism (the gospel) with the fruit of faith (good works)." This affirmation settles for us a dispute that has caused much division in our day.
4. Distinctive: The Westminster Confession of Faith (in its modern language version) along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms contains the system of doctrine to which EPC pastors and elders adhere. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the system of doctrine that Presbyterian and Reformed churches have followed throughout history.

5. Distinctive: The EPC is fully Trinitarian - which is to say that we believe strongly in all three persons in the Godhead. As a consequence, there is a balanced emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. While affirming the priority of the fruit of the Spirit over the gifts of the Spirit in the Christian life, we also affirm that the gifts of God's Spirit are Biblically valid for today. While not Pentecostal, neither do we believe that the work of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, should be ignored as some do or forbidden as others do.
6. Distinctive: The understanding of the role of women in the life of the church differs widely among the member churches of the EPC. Clearly, equally sincere Christians differ on their understanding of this issue. In the EPC, the decision to elect women as Ruling Elders or Deacons is left to the discretion of the local congregation. We believe that under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, God's people should be free to follow His leading on this important issue.
7. Distinctive: Part of the genius of Presbyterianism has been the role of the Ruling Elder, the lay person, in the government of the church. When a denomination becomes "clergy dominated" it tends to lose touch with the grassroots of the church. To maintain that important balance, the EPC provides for each congregation to send two Ruling Elders for each minister to Presbytery and General Assembly.
8. Distinctive: In our Book of Government, the EPC spells out rights reserved to a particular church in addition to those mentioned in limitations in perpetuity. The rights include the right of a particular church to own property as well as to withdraw from the EPC with its property if it so decides. It outlines other rights, such as the right to call its own pastor. This means no pastor can ever be placed over a congregation without its consent.
9. Distinctive: The EPC has no "per capita tax." We do not believe that one court of the Church has the right to put a "tax" with obligation on another lower court. The Presbytery or General Assembly may have a per Ministry Partner asking which is a voluntary contribution of the particular congregation to support the administrative and benevolence work of the Church. Gifts may always be designated.
10. Distinctive: The EPC occasionally speaks to issues facing our society through position papers which are initially set forth as "preliminary" and then submitted to the entire denomination for input and response. After further study, a final recommendation is made by a study committee to the General Assembly for approval. Currently, position papers exist on the subjects of the Holy Spirit, homosexuality, capital punishment, abortion, and the value of and respect for human life.
11. Distinctive: The EPC recognizes that many things change over time. However, there are certain features of Presbyterianism that are unique and distinctive and should never change. To insure that such features are not the victims of time or circumstance, there is written into our Book of Government a section called "Limitations in perpetuity." Here are identified certain rights held in perpetuity by Christians, both individually and in congregations. These rights must always be guaranteed by the Church. These rights include the right of a local church to own property, elect their officers, etc...

For more information, go to [www.epc.org](http://www.epc.org).

## WHO WE ARE - ESSENTIALS OF OUR FAITH

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily-to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)
7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10)

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

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**CHURCH GOVERNMENTS...**

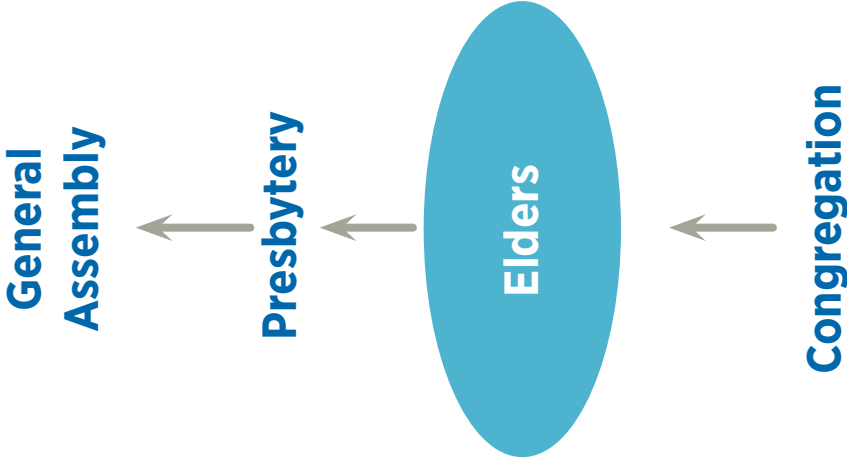
**Congregationalism**

Baptists, Congregationalists, most Lutherans  
Key Word: Autonomous, Democratic



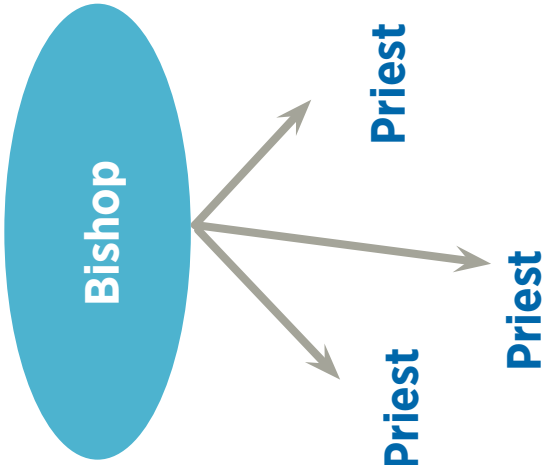
**Presbyterianism**

Key Word: Representative Democracy



**Episcopacy**

Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists  
Key Word: Hierarchy



## WHAT WE BELIEVE

### **Discipleship is the journey of being apprenticed to Christ.**

A disciple of Christ is one that is committed to putting on the beliefs, practices and virtues of Christ.

Ephesians 4:22-24 “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

### **Beliefs: “be made new in the attitude of your minds”**

**The Bible** The Bible is God’s completely true Story about who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. It was given by God to human writers and so reflects their backgrounds, styles, and use of language. The Bible is the final and infallible authority on all matters to which it speaks.

**God** There is one God, who exists as three persons living in perfect community - Father, Son, and Spirit. God created everything and sustains everything by His life. He is holy, all-powerful, all-knowing, unchanging, and full of mercy and grace.

**Jesus Christ** Jesus Christ, God’s Son, became fully human when He was born to the Virgin Mary. He was fully human and fully God. He lived a perfect life in place of our imperfect lives; died, as our substitute, the death we deserved to die because of our selfishness; and physically rose from the dead. He offers us full life by the promise of His own resurrection. He then ascended into heaven and today is our representative, intercessor, and advocate with God the Father. In His own time and in His own way, God will bring the world, as we know it, to an end. According to His promise, Christ will return personally and visibly to judge the living and the dead and to begin the new era of God’s universally visible reign, which will last forever.

**The Holy Spirit** We experience the full life and presence of God in our relationship with God the Spirit, who convicts us of sin, points us to Christ, and applies Christ’s work to our lives. He gives gifts and power to the church and He is the one who creates biblical community in the church. He reveals truth and guides our lives, individually and together.

**Humanity** Being separated from God by our sinfulness, we are connected to God in only one way - by choosing to accept the offer of forgiveness and reconciliation He offers to us by Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. If we ask him to, God treats us as if we were Christ, because he treated Christ as if he were us. God’s gift of grace makes us His adopted sons and daughters. There is nothing we can do to deserve this life - it is all a gift of God, and our job is simply to receive it. When we do, God begins the process of changing our hearts and minds from the inside out and making our characters more and more like Jesus’. As we have been reconciled to God, we also have hope for being more fully reconciled to other people.

**The Church** If we are in relationship with Christ, we are part of the Church. The Church is universal, but is always expressed locally. The Church is the visible and local demonstration of the new community Christ came to create. The Spirit leads our community life. The Church celebrates the Sacraments (Baptism and Communion), which are gifts given by Christ and are experiences of his promise and his presence with us. The Church is made up of imperfect people who are responding day by day in all their relationships to God’s stunning grace.

The main responsibility of the church is to offer connection to people outside of relationship with Christ by offering Christ’s full life and helping people who have responded to Christ with their whole life. Simply put, more and better disciples.

## **Practices: “put on the new self”**

**Worship** In worship, we should not look for a single method or system but cultivate an “attitude”. This attitude is centered on turning our faces rather than our backs toward God with all things that happen in our lives; be good or bad. We worship God simply because he is worthy of our worship. That attitude of worship should be experienced both privately in all our lives and corporately as a body of believers.

**Prayer** In all relationships, good communication is key to developing health and deeper intimacy. Learning to communicate with God through talking and listening (prayer) is vital to growing the relationship we have with Him.

**Bible Study** Along with listening in prayer, Bible study is one of the greatest ways to hear what God is saying to us. Like worship, we should not look for a single method or system to studying the Bible, but we must learn healthy ways of observing this love letter from God, interpreting it properly, and applying it’s principles to our life.

**Sabbath** Without Sabbath (rest and solitude), it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Sabbath begins with a place for God, and him alone. If we really believe not only that God exists but also that he is actively present in our lives, we need to set aside a time and a space to give him our undivided attention. Sabbath is changing the daily routine of our weeks to focus our thoughts and actions on noticing the work that God has done.

**Community** We were each created for relationship and we live this out by involving ourselves in community with other believers. The bible teaches that we are to be in relationship with one another as Christians. The author of Hebrews explains why: “Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshipping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.” We were each created for relationship and we live this out by involving ourselves in community with other believers.

**Church Commitment** With the church being the primary expression of the new community that Christ came to establish, it is important as a disciple to be committed to a local church and involved in seeing it’s mission established. It is more than a membership to a community club but a partnership with other believers to accomplish the mission of Christ.

**Stewardship** “Everything belongs to God, everything comes from God. I am not an owner. I am a steward of God’s resources.” As a steward, all my resources (time, talent, treasure) belong to God and I am called to use it in a manner to further his kingdom. To be good stewards in these areas is choosing to not live in fear of whether God has our future in his hands.

**Sharing Faith** A natural expression of realizing the depth of love God has poured out on us is to pass this good news onto those that are on our front porch. To share the hope that Christ gives with those that don’t know this hope is to be caught up into the purpose of Christ coming: “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world”.

**Giving Grace** The grace that we have and continue to receive from God is not just for our benefit but it is also to be given to others through us. This includes those we are in relationship with but it also extends to the poor, homeless, hurting, and hopeless. Practicing practical giving of ourselves to those that are in great need is living out the same act of God giving himself to us.

## **Virtues: “created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness”**

### **Fruits of the Spirit\***

**Joy:** I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances. John 15:11

**Peace:** I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, others, and myself. Philippians 4:6-7

**Faithfulness:** I am faithful to fulfill God’s will for my life. Proverbs 3:3-4

**Self-Control:** I have the power, through Christ, to control myself. 1 Thessalonians 5:6

**Humility:** I choose to esteem others above myself. Philippians 2:3-4

**Love:** I unconditionally love others. 1 John 4:10-12

**Patience:** I am patient with others. Proverbs 14:29

**Kindness/Goodness:** I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others. 1 Thes 5:15

**Gentleness:** I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others. Philippians 4:5

**Hope:** I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:17-20

\*descriptions were taken from Pantego Bible Church, Spiritual Profile.

## HOW TO PLAN A DAILY QUIET TIME

One of the most encouraging results of the New Members' Orientation is the spiritual encouragement which comes from focusing our lives on spiritual matters. This is a great time to make a renewed commitment to God and yourself to begin to spend time with Him daily.

This "Quiet Time" can be a daily means of growth and maturity in your Christian walk.

Are you willing to start with 10 minutes a day? You might say to God, "Lord, I want to make an appointment with you, starting tomorrow morning. When the alarm goes off I will roll out of bed and give you the first 10 minutes of my day. I'll call it my appointment with you!"

How to start? Find a quiet place and there with your Bible enjoy a few minutes of solitude with God.

**1 Minute:** Invest the first minute preparing your heart. Thank him for a night's rest and the opportunities of a new day. "Lord, open my heart to the Scriptures. Make me alert, awaken my soul, and make me responsive to Your Word. Send your Holy Spirit to surround me with your presence."

**5 Minutes:** Now take five minutes to read the Bible. One of the Gospels is a good place to start. John's Gospel is a good book for getting to know the person of Christ. Read consecutively - verse after verse, chapter after chapter. Don't race, but avoid stopping to do a Bible study on some word, thought, or theological problem which presents itself. Read with a curious mind. Try a chapter or so at a time.

**4 Minutes:** After you have given God a chance to speak to you through His Word, you speak to him...through prayer. You have about four minutes left in which to talk to God. Remember, prayer is simply talking to God - nothing more - nothing less.

### Use the following prayer guideline:

**"A" doration** - This is the purest kind of prayer. It is acknowledging who God is...His attributes...His characteristics... His mercy, love, goodness, power, and sovereignty. What is it about God you are learning?

**"C" onfession** - What is happening in your life which you need to confess to God? Have things happened recently to cause you to deny Christ? Are there relationships which need healing? Are there faults or weaknesses that need to be confessed? Talk to God about these things.

**"T" hanksiving** - This is a time to express your gratitude to God. Think of specific things in your life for which to thank God: your family, your work in the marketplace, your church and your ministry responsibilities, even thank him for the hard experiences which are causing you to grow.

**"S" upplication** - Now is the time to "humbly make your petitions known to God." Think of the needs of others around you and talk to God on their behalf. Include friends, people with less, friends in distant places, needs of the Faith Family. Think too, of your own needs and ask for God's guidance in your life.

Your time is up! But before you know it, ten minutes will turn to twenty minutes and then to thirty. Remember; don't become devoted to the habit...become devoted to the Savior. Covenant with God to make this "quiet time" a regular part of your life and experience the abundant life of which Christ speaks! Start today!

# TEN COMMON OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

## 1. How do you know God exists?

Scientific research points to the order in the universe, and that it is precisely suited for human life. One of many examples of this is that even the slightest variation in the tilt of the earth's axis would result in our either freezing or burning up. This implies that a creative being (God) purposefully designed it.

Written history – both inside and outside the Bible (including Jewish, Roman, Greek and other sources) – support the miraculous events surrounding the life of Jesus. Examples include His fulfilling prophecies recorded hundreds of years earlier, performing miracles in broad daylight in front of both followers and detractors, and his ultimate miracle, rising from the dead three days after He was brutally pit to death on a cross.

People's personal experiences with Christ also are evidence that God exists. Millions of people through the centuries have claimed that Jesus Christ has changed their lives. It is hard to account for these personal experiences in any other way than by pointing to Him.

## 2. Don't all the religions basically teach the same things, but just use different names for God?

When we look beneath the surface, you'll find out that there are major differences between the religions – even including contradictions about who God is. For example, some forms of Buddhism don't even teach that there is a god; Hinduism teaches that God exists, but that He is separate from all He has created. These are mutually exclusive definitions that cannot possibly be descriptive of the same God. In light of these contradictory views of God, not all religions can be true.

## 3. As long as each person is genuinely sincere, what difference does it make what they believe?

The problem is that sincerely believing something doesn't make it true. You can be sincere, but sincerely wrong. For example, people who get on an airplane that later crashes may have been sincere in their belief that they would have a safe flight, but their sincerity didn't prevent the plane from crashing. Our beliefs – no matter how deeply held – have no effect on reality.

## 4. Isn't it narrow-minded for Christians to think that they're right and everyone else is wrong?

It's not narrow-minded if you've looked into it and found that Christianity proves itself trustworthy in ways that other religions and viewpoints do not. It is true that Christianity is exclusive, but when you think about it, all truth is exclusive. However, Christianity is also very inclusive. Anyone who desires to become a Christian by entrusting their life to Jesus is able to do so. Christianity is exclusive because it is true. Christianity is inclusive because God accepts all who are willing to follow Christ.

Jesus did claim to be the exclusive way to heaven. Jesus boldly said in John 14:6, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The question we are now faced with answering is; "Does Jesus have the credentials to support this claim?"

## **5. What credentials back up the claims of Christ and Christianity? Is there any good evidence to support it?**

There are detailed prophecies written about Jesus hundreds of years before He was born. No ordinary person could fulfill these, but He fulfilled every one of them.

There is other evidence, like His miracles, which have been documented...and His teachings. Jesus not only taught the highest moral standards, but He also lived them. And He predicted that He would come back to life after He died on the cross...and He did it! (1Corinthians 15:3-6)

## **6. Is the Bible relevant today? Can it speak to my life?**

Read the Bible and see for yourself! God might even speak to you through it. It is true that the Bible was written by over 40 different people, in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek), over a time span of 4,000 years. But upon examination, you will see a consistency in its message from Genesis through the book of Revelation, from beginning to end. This in of itself points to its divine origin. The reliability of the Bible is strongly supported by history, geography, archaeology and science.

It is also true that there are some apparent discrepancies in testimony among the different eyewitnesses. But this is because they wrote from their own perspective and purpose. The lack of "exact" agreement is not an indication of error, but rather of differing viewpoints and emphasis. For example, if two people witness a car accident from different positions, their testimony should reflect their different perspectives in order to be credible. Also, upon comparing translations of the Bible, one would see that though words are used, the essential meaning is consistent. If one were to compare the different translations to the oldest manuscripts (copies) of the Bible available, he would see that the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible has been preserved through the centuries.

Finally, Jesus Himself endorsed the Bible as the "Word of God" (Matthew 15:6).

## **7. If a loving and powerful God really exists, why doesn't He do something about all the evil in the world?**

This is a difficult question that most people struggle with at times. It is important to realize though that not all evil is out there. There is evil in me and in you too. If God decided to get rid of all the evil, He'd have to destroy us as well. The existence of evil should lead us toward belief in God, not away from it. If there were no God, then there would be no standard of right and wrong. Those people, who actually believe that this is the case, are unable to consistently live it out. For as soon as they protest that someone has "wronged" them or that something is "unfair", they betray their belief in no moral standards.

The Bible does say that God will one day judge all evil. But right now, He is patiently giving us an opportunity to turn to Him and receive the forgiveness and life that He offers.

## **8. What about innocent people who suffer, like little children? Why doesn't God do something to help them?**

This is a very important question to answer. We don't understand all the "whys" of what happens in the world, but we do affirm that God is in control and that He is there to help comfort us in our pain. The Bible is realistic about the condition of the world we live in. It is filled with suffering, hardship, evil, injustice, disease, etc. The Bible, however, doesn't just describe the problems of the world - it gives us a solution to these problems.

Jesus Christ Himself endured much suffering at the hands of evil men. He endured much suffering and even death on the cross unjustly because He knew very well the evil (sinful) condition of mankind. The very reason Jesus Christ came to earth and died upon the cross was to overcome evil and the suffering which results from it. The Bible does say that God will one day do away with all suffering. But for now He allows it and promises to be there to help us endure it.

Some people can even attest to the fact that God can and does use suffering to draw people into a closer relationship with Himself. This is not to say God causes suffering or is the source of evil, but that He can use it for good purposes. Perhaps instead of blaming God for suffering and evil, people should take a closer look at themselves to see who really is responsible for the evil and suffering in the world, namely us.

## **9. What about those who have never heard about Jesus Christ? What will happen to them?**

It is quite legitimate to ask how God will judge those who have never heard of Christ. Frankly, we do not know how God will deal with those who have never heard the Gospel. But we do know five things that help us understand the issue.

First, God is just. He will judge each person uniquely and fairly.

Second, nobody is going to hell (a place of separation from God) because they haven't heard about Christ. Nobody will be eternally separated from God because of lack of knowledge or a low IQ. The only reason people are going to hell is because all life long they have told God that they can live just fine without Him. G.K. Chesterton put it this way: "Hell is God's great compliment to the reality of human freedom and the dignity of human choice."

Third, there will be many people in heaven who have lived before Jesus who never heard His name. They did, however, realize their need, trust the Lord and seek to be obedient to His will.

Next, the only reason anyone will be in heaven is because Jesus bled and died on the cross to pay the penalty for human disobedience, and rose from the dead.

Finally, those who have heard about Christ will be held accountable for how they responded to Him. To reject Christ is to reject God's offer of forgiveness and eternal life. To choose not to decide about Christ is to reject Him. God invites You to come to Him, and receive His gift of forgiveness and eternal life in heaven through trusting in Jesus Christ.

## **10. Can God be completely just and completely loving?**

God is loving and merciful, and cares deeply about people. But He is also just, holy and morally perfect. We all stand guilty before God because we fall short of His perfection. God has mercifully provided a way to escape the condemnation we deserve. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us.

The following illustration might help -

The story is told of a young woman who was caught speeding. She was brought before the judge who questioned her. "Did you break the law?" Yes, she replied. The judge then slammed down his gavel and said, "Guilty as charged. The sentence is \$300 or 30 days in jail." The young lady began to cry because she was unable to pay the fine and did not want to go to jail.

The judge then did something amazing. He stood, took off his judicial robe, came down from his bench, walked past the young woman, took out his wallet and paid the bailiff the \$300 fine, which the woman owed. He then returned to his bench, put his judicial robe back on, picked up the gavel and slammed it down and proclaimed, "Paid in full. You are free to go."

What would motivate the judge to do such a thing for a lawbreaker? This may seem amazing until we understand that the judge was the young woman's father. As a just judge, he was obligated to enforce the law. He would not have been just to let the crime go unpunished. Yet, as a loving father, he was free to pay the fine for his daughter and this he did.

God in very much the same way must punish the violation of His law to uphold His justice. If He were to let a crime go unpunished He would not be just. Yet as a loving heavenly Father, He was willing to pay the penalty we deserved.