

PART ONE

THE BASIC BELIEFS OF THE IGLESIA NI CRISTO¹

I. Jesus Christ and the Church He Founded

1. What does the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) teach about God?

There is only one God. He alone is God (Ps. 86:10) *“For I am God, and there is no other”* (Is. 45:21-22, Is 46:9-10, Dt. 32:39, RSV). The INC interprets these as proofs against the Trinity of Persons in one God

God is unchangeable, immutable: *“For I the Lord do not change”* (Mal. 3:6, RSV), He did not and will not, become man or anything. Therefore, Jesus Christ is not God that became flesh. Christ is man, not God. And God is not man. *“For I am God,”* He emphasized, *“and not man”* (Hos. 11-9).

2. What does the Iglesia ni Cristo teach about Jesus Christ?

Despite His uniqueness when compared to all other men, Christ remains man in His state of being. Christ is never the true God.

He is a true man. *“But now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God.”* (Jn. 8:40) When Apostle Matthew gave his account of the birth of Christ, he said that in the womb of Mary was a child (Mt. 1:18), not a god.

Christ, since birth, was subjected to the experiences and circumstances of human life, inherent in all men (sin, of course, excluded). The true God has no beginning nor is He a son of man (Ps. 90:2; Num. 23:19). He is Spirit (Jn. 4:24); He does not grow weary (Is. 40:28), does not sleep (Ps. 121:4). The true God is immortal (1 Tim. 1:17).

3. Is Jesus Christ the Savior?

Because of sin, man was separated from God thereby losing his right to serve and deify (*sic*) God (Is. 59:2) It was God Himself who provided the means by which man could return to Him: the precious Blood of Jesus Christ which served as atonement for man’s sin (Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:20-21).

The members of the Church of Christ (i.e. The Iglesia ni Cristo) which our Lord Jesus Christ purchased with His own Blood (Acts 20:28) are the only ones benefited by His death To them alone, the right to serve and deify (*sic*) God is restored.

¹ The answers to the questions in this part are lifted from the INC publication This is the Iglesia ni Cristo (“The Church of Christ”)

Christ died on the Cross for His Church. And His death signifies the redemption only of the members of His Church, and not of anybody else (Eph. 5:25).

4. Is membership In the Church of Christ (i.e., the Iglesia ni Cristo) necessary for salvation?

Any man can enter Christ ("*I am the door...*" –Jn. 10:9) by becoming a member of Christ's Body which is the Church that He built, or the Church of Christ (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:18; Acts 20:28, Lamsa Version). So the Church is necessary.

But not just any Church; only the Church which is the Body of Christ wherein God's will is fulfilled that all men be gathered in Christ as members and consequently attain salvation and eternal life. This is God's plan of salvation.

5. In order to be saved, is it enough to have faith that Jesus Christ is the Savior?

It does not suffice therefore to accept Christ alone and disregard the Church to attain salvation. The faith-alone-in-Christ- and never-mind-the-Church concept is a false doctrine and a dangerous one at that. Therefore, to reject the Church (i.e., the Iglesia ni Cristo) is to reject our Lord Jesus Christ because to reject the Body is to reject its Head.

Faith is made perfect if it is accompanied by works (James 2:22). A man may wholeheartedly believe in God and in Christ but so long as he is outside the Church of Christ – meaning he has not complied with the command of Christ and therefore his faith is without works – he remains condemned to the lake of fire.

6. In short, is the Iglesia ni Cristo the only path to salvation?

Evidently, the place of reconciliation is the Church of Christ (i.e., Iglesia ni Cristo). To be reconciled to God and he saved, one must become a member thereof. Unless he becomes a part of the Church of Christ or Body of Christ he is not embraced by the redemptive death of Christ, he is imperiled by the impending penalty for sinners (Jn. 8:24). He is, in short, doomed.

7. Why is the name Iglesia ni Cristo important for salvation?

Our Lord Jesus Christ called the Church that He built, "*My Church*" (Mt. 16:18) Any Church not built by Christ would not be called by Him "*My Church*." The true Church built by Christ is called by name. It is the mark set by Christ Himself to identify the sheep (Jn. 10:3). What's in a name? So far as the true Church is concerned, salvation is in the name (Acts 4:10,12). To adhere to any religion not bearing the name of Christ does not belong to Him.

The Apostles aptly called the one and only true Church that Christ built, Church of Christ (Acts 20:28, Lamsa Version) or Iglesia ni Cristo, in Pilipino. This is the only true Church, the one upon which the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ is called (Acts 15:17-18).

8. Who form part of the new chosen people of God?

Man cannot be saved by his own works, much less by his faith alone. Rather, God elects the people on whom He shall bestow the gift of salvation. He sets them apart to be godly before His sight and hears them when they call upon Him (Ps. 4:3).

After the fall of Israel, a new and chosen generation was elected by God to a royal priesthood, bestowed with the right to offer praises and homage to Him. They were called to the Kingdom of His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 3:9, Col 1 13).

These chosen people are the members of the Church of Christ (the Iglesia ni Cristo). They, being in Christ, are –Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise|| (Gal. 3:29)

9. Who will merit the resurrection?

To redeem the members of His Church (i.e., the parts of the Body of the one new man He created) Christ, being their Head, died for them. He died on the Cross, was buried, was resurrected by God on the third day, and after forty days He was gloriously taken up into heaven. Those who will resurrect into life everlasting are those who died as members of the Church of Christ, and since they are Christ’s they will experience the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6) for *“the dead in Christ shall rise first”* (1 Tim. 4:16) Then shall come to pass that which written, *“I will build my Church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it”* (Mt. 16:18,RSV).

II. The Unfaithfulness (“apostasy”) of the early Church

1. What does the Iglesia ni Cristo say about the Church of the first century?

The Church established by Christ in Jerusalem in the first century did not continue to exist. It was apostatized. But it does not mean that those who were responsible for the apostasy established another Church; that same Church strayed away from the pristine Christian faith

2. In what way was the apostasy committed?

Apostle Paul foretold (*sic*) the Christians then that there will be a departure from the faith because some will give heed to *“deceitful spirits or doctrines of demons”* (1 Tim. 4:1). According to him, after his death, men will arise who will speak perverse things to draw away the disciples of Christ after them (Acts 20:30) The perverse things which they will speak are the doctrines of demons, two of which are *“Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats”* (1 Tim. 4:3).

Another distinguishing mark of the apostates is the one described by Apostle Paul: *“the man of sin... showing himself that he is God”* (2 Thess. 2:3-4). Apostle Peter called them false prophets who will bring in destructive heresies denying the Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, by rejecting Him as Head of the Church, as the stone foundation, and by rejecting His name (2 Pt. 2:1; Acts 2:36; 4:10-12; Eph. 2:20)

3. According to the Iglesia ni Cristo, what is the name of the Church that committed apostasy?

One does not need to go too far to learn that the Catholic Church upholds and teaches the two above mentioned doctrines of demons. The Catholic Church denied the Lord Christ's Headship by putting Peter and the Popes in His stead. It denied the Lord's position as the stone foundation, again by putting Peter in His stead. It rejected His name, Christ, by sporting such an unscriptural name as Roman Catholic Church. And the Pope's usurpation of the Fatherhood of God (God being the Father of Souls) fits well to Apostle Paul's description of the man of sin. So now the Catholic Church cannot evade the accusing finger of this biblical revelation. The Catholic Church is the apostate Church. This also proves beyond doubt apostasy was a fact.

III. The Restoration of the Church by Felix Manalo

1. What are the prophecies fulfilled in the person of Felix Manalo?

Felix Manalo was the messenger of God instrumental in the reestablishment of the Church of Christ after it was apostatized.

(a) Isaiah 46:11 articulates one of the prophecies on the Last Messenger of God: *“Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed and I will do it”* (RSV). In this prophecy, the bird is from the east and the man, who is also the bird, is from a far country. So this bird of prey who is a man of God's counsel or who does the counsel or word of God (Ps. 107:11) is from the Far East or the Philippines. (Note: In INC doctrine, the Philippines is the Far East; it is not merely in the Far East.) He is called bird of prey because the Sons and daughters of God from the Far East or the Philippines are being hindered by the north and the south (representing Protestantism and Catholicism) and the messenger of God has to bring them out of these two religions (Is. 43:6).

(b) Felix Manalo also fulfills the prophecy in Revelation 7:2-3 *“Then I saw another angel rising where the sun rises, carrying the seal of the living God...”*

2. What prophecy was fulfilled regarding the Philippines?

The sheep of Christ with promise belong to three groups The first and second groups – the Jews and the Gentiles – were already called and already in the fold during the time of Christ and the

apostles The third group was still “**far off**” and they are not yet called then; they are yet to be called by God (Acts 2:39) to become one flock or one Church of Christ (Acts 20:28, Lamsa Version). So when the Iglesia ni Cristo appeared in the Philippines in 1914, a prophecy was fulfilled, a prophecy which God Himself told “*From the Far East will I bring your offspring*” (Is. 43:5, Moffatt Version).

These children of God from the Far East (Apostle Peter said they are the ones who are “*afar off*” belong to the third group of Christ’s sheep They are called by the name created by God for His glory: the name Christ. This name is called upon the children of God in the Far East They are called Church of Christ because they are the one flock (Church) of Christ (Is. 43:7; Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:9; Rom. 16:16).

3. What is the significance of the foundation date of the Iglesia ni Cristo?

They (the Filipinos) are the other sheep of Christ who will be called “*from the ends of the earth*” The ends of the earth signifies the time before the end of the world or the second coming of Christ which is signaled manifestly by “*wars and rumors of wars*” (Mt. 24:6). This war occurred in 1914 and was better known as the First World War. It was during that time that the children of God in the Far East or in the Philippines were called. Indeed at the outbreak of the war on July 27, 1914, the Iglesia ni Cristo was concurrently officially registered in the Philippine government.

4. What is the summary of Felix Manalo’s life until he founded the Iglesia ni Cristo?

He was born on May 10, 1886 in Taguig, Rizal province. After the death of his mother (Bonifacia Manalo) he decided to use her surname instead of his father’s (Mariano Ysagun). With the introduction of Protestantism at the turn of the 20th century, he first joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was trained in the Methodist Theological Seminary and became an evangelist. In 1907 he moved to the Presbyterians, and became a pastor after attending the Union Theological Seminary. In 1910, he joined another group called –Christian Mission|| because he preferred their way of baptizing by immersion. The following year he joined the Seventh-Day Adventists, eventually becoming a pastor. But soon after, he left the group.

Unsatisfied with the various Christian groups, he set out to examine the different teachings he was exposed to. In 1913 he isolated himself in his room for two days and three nights and compared all those teachings with what is found in the Bible. He emerged from that isolation convinced that he had found the truth, and that he felt obliged by God to proclaim it.

He died on April 12, 1963.

IV. The sources of the teachings of the Iglesia ni Cristo

1. How does the Iglesia ni Cristo consider the Holy Bible?

The Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) believes that the words of God are written in the Bible; that when the Bible speaks, God Himself speaks. So, when the Bible is silent, the Iglesia ni Cristo is silent, too, for it recognizes no other basis and authority in serving God except the Bible.

PART TWO

THE CATHOLIC FAITH

I. The Teachings of the Catholic Church on Revelation and the Holy Bible

1. What does the Catholic Church say about the sources of divine Revelation?

Apostolic Tradition is the transmission of the message of Christ, brought about from the very beginnings of Christianity by means of preaching, bearing witness, institutions, worship, and inspired writings. The apostles transmitted all they received from Christ and learned from the Holy Spirit to their successors, the bishops, and through them to all generations until the end of the world.

Apostolic Tradition occurs in two ways: through the living transmission of the word of God (also simply called Tradition) and through Sacred Scripture which is the same proclamation of salvation in written form. (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 12 & 13).

2. What is the relationship between Tradition and the Holy Bible?

Tradition and Sacred Scripture are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ. They flow out of the same divine well-spring and together make up one sacred deposit of faith from which the Church derives her certainty about revelation (Compendium of the CCC no. 14).

3. Why is it not correct to say that only the written word of God is the source and basis of the Christian Faith?

Jesus Christ did not write books. His teachings were all given by preaching. When He sent out the apostles to spread the Gospel, He did not ask them to write, but He instructed them to preach. Not all of the apostles produced writings, but all of them preached, convinced that the teachings of Christ would be preserved and spread through the oral teaching authority they and their successors received from Him.

The first books of the New Testament (St. Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians) were written around AD 51-52, and the gospel according to St. Mark around AD 60. Surely it would not be logical to think that before these New Testament books were written, everything that the early Christians believed was false and useless.

Furthermore, even with his abundant writings, St. Paul reminds his disciple, Timothy: *“Pass on to reliable people what you have heard from me through many witnesses so that they in turn will be able to teach others.”* (2 Tim. 2:2).

St. John concluded his account of the events of Jesus’ Resurrection this way: *“There were many other signs that Jesus worked in the sight of his disciples, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.”* (Jn. 20:30)

4. What authority decided which writings were genuine and fruit of God’s inspiration, and thus deserved to be counted as part of the New Testament?

The Teaching Authority (Magisterium) of the Church. It was in the Synod of Hippo (North Africa) in AD 393 – that St. Augustine participated in – that the Canon of 27 New Testament books as we know it now was formally accepted. The Council of Carthage (AD 400) did the same.

Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium are so closely united with each other that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls. (Compendium of the CCC, no 17).

5. Why is it necessary to have the Magisterium’s help when it comes to Interpreting the Holy Bible?

St. Peter wrote: *“At the same time, we must recognize that the interpretation of scriptural prophecy is never a matter for the individual. For no prophecy ever came from human initiative. When people spoke for God it was the Holy Spirit that moved them.”* (2 Pt 1:20-21).

For example, like all “exclusivist” doctrines, the INC appropriates as its own Revelation 7:3-8 – the “sealed ones,” the 144,000 members of the twelve tribes of Israel, who are the only ones to receive salvation. In contrast, the Catholic teaching is this: yes, every person has the obligation to seek the truth about God, and once known, to embrace it; however, *“those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and moved by grace, try in their actions to do His will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – these too may achieve eternal salvation.”* (Vatican II, Lumen gentium, 16; CCC 846-848).

In the past centuries, every “new prophet” who claimed to be a messenger of God –and in order to strengthen his credibility –would say the same thing: the Church committed apostasy in the early centuries.

Thus, they consider themselves founders of a “Restorationist church.” If each “new prophet” interprets the Holy Bible according to his own mind, then the cycle would be endless, and the biggest loser would be God Himself (non-believers would scorn the Bible even more).

6. What are the Lamsa and Moffat versions of the Bible that the Iglesia ni Cristo frequently refers to?

a) George Lamsa (1892-1975), the author of “The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts” based his translation of the New Testament on Aramaic, not Greek. Even Protestant Bible Scholars question Lamsa’s orthodoxy. Lamsa’s Bible is accepted by the INC, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christadelphians.

Based on his other writings (he wrote 21 books), his beliefs on the Holy Trinity, on Jesus Christ as a divine Person with a true divine nature and a true human nature are not in accord with the Christian faith. He is considered a follower of Nestorianism (declared erroneous in AD 431 in the Council of Ephesus). For him the Holy Spirit is not a Divine Person but “influence” “effectiveness,” “hidden power”. The INC follows this teaching on the Holy Spirit.

b) James Moffatt (1870-1944), A Scottish scholar, later on a professor of Church History at the Union Theological Seminary, New York, he published his Bible translation in 1926, known as the –Moffatt, New Translation|. In his desire to make the Bible readable, he freely translated and paraphrased many passages, and even changed the established order of the Chapters. Thus, Moffatt renders Isaiah 43:5, that Felix Manalo used as source of the identity of God’s last messenger (Felix Manalo) as –from the Far East will I bring your offspring|. The Revised Standard Version (RSV) says: –I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you|.

7. What characterizes the INC’s use of the Holy Bible?

While professing reverence towards the Bible, the INC interprets it to suit its doctrines, no matter how arbitrarily it is done (the “proof text approach” abused). It selects a version of the Bible as long as the name “Church of Christ” comes out. For instance: Acts 20:28 (for this, the Lamsa version is used; the majority of Bible translations say “Church of God” – Be on your guard for yourselves and for the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the guardians, to feed the Church of God which he bought with the blood of his own Son (The New Jerusalem Bible version).

8. What is problematic with the Iglesia ni Cristo’s claim that the Church of the first century apostatized?

The Church has been faithful at all times to the Revelation given by the Lord Jesus Christ: threatened by all sorts of erroneous teachings and open persecutions, the Church did not compromise the Truth received. A reading of the early history of the Church (for example,

Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius of Caesarea., 4th C.) or the accounts of the martyrdom of the Christians of the first three centuries would offer enough evidence of this historical fact.

Moreover, if the Church did commit apostasy in the first centuries, then why does the Iglesia ni Cristo use the Holy Bible that was ratified by the same Church in the 4th century?

9. Is It wrong to call “catholic” the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Iglesia ni Cristo’s claim that the Catholic Church apostatized because it changed its original name (“Church of Christ”) ignores that part of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”. It is obvious in this sentence that the word “catholic” is an adjective (from the Greek *katholikos*: universal), expressing an essential characteristic of the Church founded by Jesus Christ. The use of the name did not begin in the 4th century “Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church” (St. Ignatius of Antioch, bishop and martyr, a disciple of St. John, apostle; died at the end of the 1st century).

II. The Teachings of the Catholic Church on the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ

1. What is the place of the mystery of the Trinity In the Catholic Faith?

The central mystery of Christian faith and life is the mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity. Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Compendium of the CCC, no. 44). God has left some traces of his Trinitarian being in creation and in the Old Testament but his inmost being as the Holy Trinity is a mystery which is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s faith before the Incarnation of the Son of God and the sending of the Holy Spirit. This mystery was revealed by Jesus Christ and it is the source of all the other mysteries (Ibid., no. 45).

2. How does the Church express her Trinitarian faith?

The Church expresses her Trinitarian faith by professing a belief in the oneness of God in whom there are three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three divine Persons are only one God because each of them equally possesses the fullness of the one and indivisible divine nature. They are really distinct from each other by reason of the relations which place them in correspondence to each other. The Father generates the Son, the Son is generated by the Father, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (Ibid., no 48).

3. What sample verses of the New Testament attest to the truth that there are three distinct Persons in one divine nature?

a) Before the Ascension, Jesus commanded the apostles: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* (Mt. 28:18-19)

b) At the last supper, Jesus said: *“However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth ... He will glorify me, since all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all he reveals to you will be taken from what is mine.”* (Jn. 16:13-15). When the Paraclete (i.e., the “Consoler”: the Holy Spirit) comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness|| (Jn. 15:26).

c) St Paul’s second Letter to the Corinthians ends with this prayer: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communication of the Holy Spirit be with you all:” (2 Cor. 13:13).

4. If the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) teaches that in God there is no trinity of Persons, can the baptism in the Iglesia|| rites be considered a Christian baptism?

The revelation about the Holy Trinity is at the heart and source of the entire Christian Faith. The “Creed” that was formed as a result of the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381) stresses the divinity of the Second Person (“The Word”) and of the Third Person (–The Holy Spirit||) of the Holy Trinity. When the INC denies that there are three distinct Persons in one God it closes its mind to the obvious statements of the Lord Jesus Christ about this mystery, as mentioned above.

Consequently the baptism in the INC is not equivalent to a Christian baptism.

5. In what sense is Jesus Christ the Only Begotten Son of God?

Jesus is the Son of God in a unique and perfect way. At the time of his Baptism and his transfiguration the voice of the Father designated Jesus as his “beloved Son.” In presenting himself as the Son who “knows the Father” (Mat. 11:27), Jesus affirmed his singular and eternal relationship with God his Father. He is “The Only Begotten Son of God” (1 Jn. 4:9), the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the central figure of apostolic preaching. The apostles saw his glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Jn. 1:14) (Compendium of the CCC, no. 83).

6. If Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity who took on our human nature (and the Word was made flesh), is he equal to God the Father?

Yes, Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He is not merely a holy man who was –divinized|| by God He is co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. While the INC frequently says –Our Lord Jesus Christ|| in its official publications, it denies His divinity. But in the Greek Old Testament, –Lord|| stands for the divine name Yahweh. From the early beginnings of the Church the name –Lord|| (Kyrios in Greek) has been used as an, expression of faith in Jesus Christ’s divinity –So then, as you received Jesus as Lord, and Christ, now live your lives in Him|| (Col. 2:6) – ... and every tongue should acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father|| (Phil. 2:11). The name Lord Jesus is used in many verses in chapter 1 of St. Peter’s

second Letter. When Jesus our Lord cured the paralytic in Capernaum He provoked the Pharisees' anger when He told the paralytic "My friend, your sins are forgiven you," He was accused of blasphemy as they said "Who but God alone can forgive sins?"

Jesus replied: "But to prove to you that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," He said to the paralyzed man – I order you: get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home" (Cf. Lk. 5:17-26). Even the name "Son of man" Jesus used to refer to Himself is a veiled reference to His divinity, since that title is from the vision of Daniel about the universal and eternal kingship of the Messiah (Dn. 7:13-14).

7. What sample verses of the New Testament attest to Jesus' equality with God the Father?

a) *"Now, Father, glorify me with that glory I had with you before ever the world existed"* (Jn. 17:5)

b) "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father, so how can you say, Show us the Father?" (Jn. 14:9)

c) "In all truth I tell you, before Abraham ever was, I am" (Jn. 8:57) –this is an expression of his being co eternal with God the Father, as well as a reference to the divine name –I am who am|| (Ex. 3:14)

d) "The Father and I are one" (Jn. 10:30) For saying this, Jesus was stoned by the Jews, who told him: "We are stoning you, not for doing a good work, but for blasphemy though you are only a man, you claim to be God." Jesus, instead of trying to pacify them by telling them that they had misunderstood what he had said, he stressed even more his claim: "at least believe in the work I do, then you will know for certain that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn. 10:38).

e) St. John records Jesus' reply to the objection of the Jewish leaders to his cure of the blind man on a Sabbath ("My Father still goes on working, and I am at work, too"), and added the comment: "But that only made the Jews even more intent in killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal" (Jn. 5:17-18).

f) St Paul: "He (Christ) is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth ..." (Col. 1:15-16) "...so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you and you in him, by the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Th. 1:12) "...waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus" (Titus 2:13).

g) St. John "Who is the liar, if not one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ? This is the Antichrist, who denies both the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son cannot have the

Father either; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father too” (1 Jn. 2:22-23). – –Anyone who acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God|| (1 Jn. 4:15).

8. Do the human limitations that Jesus experienced (his being born of a woman, his life of hard work, hunger and thirst, fear, the pains of his Passion, and His death) disprove His divinity?

No. What they prove is that Jesus Christ is true man: the human nature that the second Person of the Trinity took was a real one, not apparent. What makes Jesus Christ unique is this: His Person is divine, but this one Person retains its divine nature even after it took on a human nature. In order to express this mystery St. John put it in clear terms: “The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14).

How does INC interpret John 1:? “In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. For the INC, “Word” refers to God’s “purpose” that Christ would be created, and this was fulfilled at his birth in Bethlehem. Using Moffatt’s translation (“and the Word was divine”), the INC says that the “Word” had a divine quality, but it is not God.

From the beginning of her history, the Church has always defended the mystery of Jesus Christ’s being “true God and true man;” the Church never wavered from asserting Jesus true and complete human nature (with a human body and a human soul) as much as it has defended His being a divine Person (“consubstantial with the Father” as we say in the Creed).

9. Are the teachings of the Iglesia ni Cristo on the Trinity and Jesus Christ new?

The INC’s teachings on Jesus Christ are a mere repetition of the heresies of the early centuries of Christianity, in particular “Monarchianism” (from the Greek monarchia ≈ only principle/source) of the second century. Monarchianism taught that God is only God the Father; thus it denied the Trinity, the eternity of the Logos (“The Word,” the second Person), and reduced the Holy Spirit to a mere “force” of God the Father.

Consequently, Jesus Christ is not God, but a mere man who was accepted by God the Father as his Son at his baptism in the Jordan or after his resurrection, on the merits of his work (thus, the heresy was also known as “Adoptionism”). This is the same belief held by the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Unitarians.

10. What is the most basic attitude that we have to adopt when we want to know who God is and His plan for us, as He has revealed Himself in the Holy Bible, Sacred Tradition and in the Teaching Authority (Magisterium) of the Church?

Humility of heart, above all: “At that time Jesus exclaimed, I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do.

“Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Mt. 11:25-27). Faith is a spiritual gift that God gives to those who are aware of this fact: that due to its natural limitations, the human mind is incapable of comprehending the nature of God.

We would not honor God if we were to “simplify” Revelation, by disregarding its elements that do not fit into our human mode of knowing – the supernatural mysteries (e.g., the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ as true God and true man, His Death and Resurrection).