

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND BELIEF

A. The Scriptures

We believe the Bible, composed of the sixty six books of the Old (Hebrew) and New (Greek) Testaments, is God's inspired Word for mankind. It is the complete Word of God and without mistake, in the original manuscripts (2 Peter 1:19-21). It is the final authority on all matters of life, belief, and practice of our faith (2 Peter 1:3-4). Every accurate translation of the Bible is God's Word and is intended for our instruction and correction (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

B. God

We believe in one God (Deut 6:4), who created everything (Gen 1; Eph 3:9), and eternally exists as Father, Son, and Spirit (Matt 28:19); equal in all respects but distinct in the roles in which mankind is rescued from sin (Eph 1:3-14). God is pure, holy (1 Peter 1:15), all powerful (Isa 46:9-11), full of love (Jn 3:16), and the source of truth (Titus 1:1-2). He has always existed, will always exist (Psa. 90:2) and all things exist through Him (Col 1:17).

C. Jesus Christ

We believe Jesus is the Word of God who became the Son of God (John 1:1,14). Jesus is God, in the flesh (John 10:13). We believe that Jesus Christ was born to Mary, who was a virgin, by the power of the Spirit of God (Gal 4:4-5). He is the Son of God, and God, the Son (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-35). We believe in His sinless life and miracles (Acts 2:22). We know that his death on the cross was a payment for mankind's disobedience toward God and selfishness toward others (Romans 3:24-25; 8:34). He died, was buried, physically rose from the dead (Acts 2:18-36), ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-10), sits at the right hand of the Father, is the only mediator between God and mankind (1 Timothy 2:5), and will return to establish his Kingdom on earth someday (1 Thess 3:13-18).

D. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Spirit of God. We know that His role is to reveal Jesus Christ to mankind and to convict us of our sinfulness and need for God (John 16:7-14). He gives spiritual life to those who believe (John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5) and transforms us from the inside out. He gives spiritual gifts to all believers for participation and service in a local Church (1 Cor 12:12-27) and He keeps the believer in relationship with God until the day they are declared innocent by God at the Judgement (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13-14).

E. The Devil, or Satan

We believe that Satan was once holy but through pride fell and drew after him a third of the angels (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17); that he is now the ruler of evil in this world (Ephesians 2:2), and the enemy of God. We know him to be the tempter and the accuser of the followers of Jesus and that he is destined for defeat by Jesus. Hell was created as the punishment for Satan and he will one day be sent there for all of eternity (Revelation 12:7-10; 13:13-14; 19:11,16, 20; 20:13).

F. Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of creation (Gen 1), and that it should be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively (Gen 1:5,8,13,19,23,31); that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness (Gen 1:26-27; 1 Cor 11:7); that man's creation was not a matter of evolutionary changes through indefinite periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly by God and that they have always reproduced only "after their kind."

G. The Fall of Man

We believe mankind was created in the image of God and enjoyed an open relationship with God. That relationship was broken when Man voluntarily chose to live his life without regard to God's will (Gen 3). We know that all of creation was negatively affected by mankind's rebellion against God (Rom 8:22). The sinful nature of Adam is passed down to each generation through their father (Romans 1:18, 20, 28, 32; 3:10-19; 5:12, 19), by choice they continue to sin and are in need of being rescued from sin to be restored into a relationship with God.

H. Salvation

We believe God is the initiator of reconciliation with us and that salvation is a free gift to all who repent of their sin, placing their trust in Jesus' death, burial and resurrection as the only payment for their sin and follow Jesus (John 3:16-17; Rom 6:23, 8:28-30, 9:22-23). God's holiness demands that evil must be punished. All of us have sinned against God and others (Rom 3:10, 23) and, therefore, deserve eternal separation from a Holy and Righteous Creator. Our good deeds are not enough to make us innocent of the sins we've committed (Eph 2:8-9). So it is solely through God that we have the opportunity to be forgiven and made clean (Rom 5:8). Salvation is as instantaneous as physical birth (John 3:3). We know that salvation refers to that moment when those of us who are spiritually dead in sins are made right with God through Jesus and receive eternal life (Colossians 2:13), the free gift of God; that the new creation is not brought about by the will of man, but by the will of God (John 1:13). We believe that Belief and Repentance are two halves of Faith that makes us right with God (Rom 10:9-10, 13).

I. The Church

We believe that the Church, the body of Christ, is made up of all believers of the church age (1 Cor 12:12-13); that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Colossians 1:18) and that local churches are the practical expression of the Church at large. The local Church is a "people who" rather than a "place where". Therefore, the church is the gathering of those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ, have been baptized, associated by a covenant of faith and who meet for the purpose of being a church. Members of a local church voluntarily share their lives and faith with each other in unity and meet together for encouragement, worship, service, prayer, spiritual development (Acts 2:41-42) and to observe the ordinances of the church (Acts 8:36-38) and communion (1 Cor 10:13-16). We know that the local church has the right of self government, free from the interference of any governing organization; that every church determines all issues of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence. We believe the local church is the planned instrument of God to carry out the

mission of God (Matthew 28:19-20). Therefore, we believe every believer should join a local church and fully engage in accomplishing its mission.

J. Baptism and Communion

We believe baptism by immersion (under water) is the biblical model of baptism in the New Testament (Matt 3:16; Acts 8:26-29; Col 2:12). We know that baptism is the way in which we physically identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and that it marks the day we choose to let go of our old ways (Rom 6:2-7). We do not believe baptism is automatic entry into a local church but is a prerequisite to membership in a local church (Acts 2:41). We do not believe any denomination or authorizing body has exclusive rights to baptism. We believe that Communion is a tangible symbol of the blood and body of Jesus which was shed and broken as a payment for the sins of mankind. While we do not monitor who participates in communion, we know that the Bible describes it as a practice reserved for those who have already chosen to become followers of Jesus. Each person taking communion should carefully examine themselves to determine if they have adequately prepared their hearts to participate in communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-28).

K. The Preservation of the Saints

We believe that true followers of Jesus remain devoted to Him throughout their lives (Matt 13:19-23; 1 John 2:19); that their endurance is the distinguishing feature of their faith that separates them from those who have only superficially tried on religion (Mt 13:3-23). We know that the Holy Spirit preserves our attachment to God (Eph 4:30; Heb 1:14; 1 Peter 1:5) and that we are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation (Eph 4:30; Rom 8:35-39).

L. The Righteous and The Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (Ps 1:1-6; Matt 7:13-14); that the wicked become righteous only through faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The righteous are transformed by the Spirit of God in living, loving, giving and serving like Jesus (Rom 8:29; Titus 3:5). Those who remain in their rebellion against God and in their unbelief are seen as wicked in God's eyes and are still under Adam's curse (Gal 3:10).

M. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment (Rom 13:1-7), for the good of society; that political leaders are to be prayed for, respected (Titus 3:1) and followed (1 Peter 2:13-17); except in instructions opposed to the will of God, as written in Scriptures. We believe in the separation of Church and State, that the one is not intended to exert control over the other but not that they are unable to cooperate for mutual good. The State is to preserve Natural Law while the Church is to call mankind to a higher Moral Law.

N. Human Sexuality

We believe that God has instructed that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor 7:1-10; Heb 13:4). The reason our sexuality is

significant to God is because of what it does for us (Gen 2:24; Mk 10:8) and how it represents Him. Each of us, in our intimacy, are a picture of either Jesus or his Bride, the Church. Men represent Jesus and Women represent the Church (Eph 5:31-32). This is why all sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and woman is a BIG DEAL to God (1 Cor 6:9-10). When a man engages in sexual activity with a woman before marriage, it is a picture of Jesus not being pure for his Bride. If a man steps out on his marriage, it is a picture of Jesus not being faithful to his Bride. If a man pursues intimacy with another man, it is a picture of Jesus only loving himself. As to transgender issues: We believe that God is personally involved in your birth (Jer 1:5; Ps 139:13) and formed you with the gender he intended you to have. We don't believe the person who identifies as transgender was born incorrectly. They are created exactly as God intended: male or female.

O. Family Relationships

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God (Gal 3:28; 1 Pet 3:7) but that God has designed distinct and separate spiritual functions for them in the church (Col 3:17-19; 1 Tim 2:8-15) and in the home (Eph 5:21-33). The husband is to be the lead servant of the home and men are to be the spiritual leaders of the church (Eph 5:21-33). Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (1 Tim 2:8-15, 3:1-5). We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society (Mark 10:6-12). The husband is to submit to the needs of his wife and she is to submit to the example of her husband, as described in Ephesians 5. Children are an heritage from the Lord (Ps 127:3-5). Parents, rather than the government or the Church, are responsible for teaching their children to be godly and responsible adults (Deut 6:4-9).

P. The Resurrection and Return of Christ and Related Events

We believe that Christ rose bodily on "the third day according to the Scriptures" (Mark 16:1-19; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7) that He ascended "to the right hand of the throne of God" (Acts 1:9,11); that He alone is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"; "that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," bodily, personally, and visibly; that the "dead in Christ shall rise first" (1Thessalonians 4:15-16); that the living saints "shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"; "that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David"; and that "Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet." (Rev 20)

Q. Missions

We believe that God has commissioned the church to give all people, of every nation a chance to know and follow Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21). As representatives of Jesus, we must use all available means to share the good news of his sacrifice, the forgiveness of sin, and the instruction to follow his teachings to those in our community, our region, our continent and the ends of the earth (2 Corinthians 5:20; Acts 1:8).

R. The Grace of Giving

We believe that every Christian, out of love for God and others, should give regularly and generously (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Ephesians 4:28) through his local church (1 Corinthians 16:2) to help meet the needs of others (Acts 4:34-37; 1 John 3:16-17) and support the mission of God. We believe that God has established the tithe as the starting point for giving (Genesis 14:20; Mt 23:23; Luke 11:42, 18:12) but every Christian should also give other offerings (out of gratitude) to help make sure those who are far from God get at least one chance to find and follow Jesus.

NOTE: Authority of Statement of Faith

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. All printed material, curriculum and lessons taught in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.