

Identities: Who We Are

Family - We are children of God who live and care for each other as a family.

God has always desired a people-an earthly family-who would live in such a way that the world would know what he is like. Jesus said that those who live in his ways and obey his Father are truly his family. Through Jesus we believe we are children of God and brothers and sisters with each other. As family we see it as our obligation to personally care for the needs of one another – both physically and spiritually. We disciple, nurture and hold each other accountable to this Covenant life together. We do this through regular celebration gatherings and consistent involvement in a LTG group. (Genesis 12:1-3; John 1:12-13; Romans 12:10-16)

Missionaries - We are sent by God to restore all things to himself.

God sent his son, Jesus, to Earth to take on human form and live within the culture. He worked, ate and interacted among the people; living in such a way that those around him could see and experience what God was truly like. Jesus came so that all people, places and things could be restored to a right relationship with God. In the same way, we believe we are missionaries sent into our culture to restore all things to God through Jesus. We live this out as part of a missional community. (John 1:14; 20:21; Colossians 1:19; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

Servants - We are servants of God who serve others as a way of life.

Fully God-fully human, Jesus took on the posture of a servant. He gave his life, even unto death, so that others could experience salvation, peace and restoration. Jesus said, "I am among you as one who serves..." All those who follow Jesus are called to serve in the same humility. For us this means joyful submission to God, leadership and to each other, as we serve whomever God brings into our lives. We do *whatever* needs doing, *whenever* it's needed and *wherever* it leads us (W3). (Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:16)

Learners - We are disciples of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others.

As a young man Jesus grew in both height and wisdom. He learned from local religious teachers, by living in community, and through regular times of listening to God. Jesus called others to follow his ways, to be his disciples and live in obedience to all that God commands. He then sent these followers out to make new disciples. We believe we are also called to be followers of Jesus who take responsibility for our own development and the development of others. This includes both our personal time with God as well as involvement together in training provided by spiritual leadership. (Luke 2:52; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 2:2)

Rhythms – How We Live

Story-formed - We understand, experience and intersect with God's Story and Other's.

God has been unfolding his Story since before time began. We believe we are participants in the Story and need to understand it and see how our lives intersect with it. Therefore, we regularly reacquaint ourselves with the Story by interacting with God's Word. We look for ways and times to tell the Story often. We also take time to listen to others stories and help them find their lives within God's Story. (Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1; Psalm 1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Listen - We set aside regular times to listen to God both backward and forward.

Jesus listened to God in prayer to know his Father's will. We are also called to listen to God. We listen 'backward' by regularly interacting with God's Word-the Story and the Son. We also believe he speaks today through his Spirit in us and through creation. We spend time actively listening 'forward' to hear what God is saying to us today. (Mark 1:35-37; John 16:7-15; Hebrews 1:1-3; Romans 1:20)

Celebrate - We gather together to celebrate God's extravagant blessings.

God calls people to regularly celebrate his goodness and grace. We gather weekly in missional communities and regularly as a larger family, to share stories and celebrate all that God is doing in and amongst us. We invite everyone to these celebrations as a way of displaying God's glory. (Leviticus 23; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25)

Bless - We intentionally bless others through words, gifts or actions.

God desires that all nations—all people—would be blessed through Jesus. And now, as his Body (soma), we believe we live out this mission as we bless others. We intentionally seek God's direction for who he would have us tangibly bless each week. (Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 2:12)

Eat - We regularly eat meals with others to invite them into the community of God.

Meals are a daily reminder of our common need for God and his faithfulness to provide both physically and spiritually. Jesus called us to remember him and his sacrifice for us through a meal. When we eat together, we commune around this truth. We regularly eat meals with those not in our immediate family or circle of close friends, discipling them toward a life of dependence on God. (Leviticus 23; Matthew 6:11; 26:17-30; Acts 2:46-47; Romans 12:13)

ReCreate - We take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect God to others.

After powerfully and joyfully creating the universe, God rested. We were created in his image and therefore were made to joyfully create and rest as well. We regularly take time to rest, play, create and restore beauty in ways that reflect what God is like to our community. (Genesis 1-2:3; Deuteronomy 5:12; Mark 2:23-28; Hebrews 4)

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The Bible

We believe that the Bible is the revelation of God. It is God's written revelation of himself through all sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. This revelation is progressive. What was known about God and his ways was continually built upon without contradiction through a span of over 1500 years (Heb 1:1-2). Since God is revealing himself to us, this revelation is personal in nature (Ex. 3:14, 6:7; Jer. 24:7; John 17:3; Phil. 3:10; 1 John 1:1-4). God reveals himself to people in history for the purpose of restoring a relationship with all of humanity. The ultimate revelation of God is Jesus Christ (John 14:6-11). While it is personal in nature, Biblical truth about God comes to us in the form of propositional truth for the purpose of knowing the relational God. Since the Bible contains propositional truths about God, those truths can be written down and even preserved (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Galatians 1:11-12; Revelation 22:18-19). Revelation includes what is revealed as well as the process of revealing those truths to the Biblical writers. Therefore the Bible is the revelation of God and the word of God.

We believe that the Bible is the very word of God. We believe that the writers of the Bible were supernaturally influenced by the Holy Spirit to write down an accurate record of the revelation of God resulting in the Bible being the words of God. We believe that this inspiration goes beyond just thoughts to the very words chosen while still involving the full participation of the writers which reflects their own personality and literary style (2 Sam. 23:2; Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; Acts 1:16; 3:18, 21; 4:25; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

We believe that the Bible is fully inerrant. While the Bible is not primarily a science or history book, what it affirms about science or history is true. Given its divine inspiration and inerrancy, the Bible is authoritative. God is the ultimate authority and his written word carries that same authority (Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 5:17-19; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 14:17, 37; 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

We believe that the Bible is understandable to every believer. To the world, the revelation of God is foolishness. Their minds are darkened and they cannot understand the Bible because it is spiritually discerned. God has given to every believer his Holy Spirit who illumines the word, guiding us in all truth (John 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 1:20-21; 2:13-14; 3:19; 2

Cor. 3:16-18). Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what we read in the Bible must be interpreted. God's word to us was first of all God's word to real people in history, expressed in the vocabulary and thought patterns of those people, and conditioned by the culture of those times and circumstances. The Bible is also written in a variety of genres. Therefore, we can't possibly know what it means for us until we understood what it meant then and there. So the Bible must be understood through the literal, contextual, grammatical, and historical method of scripture interpretation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Only then can we apply the timeless truths of God's word to our lives.

God

God is Triune

We believe that God is one. There is one God, creator and governor of all things and who alone is the sole object of our worship. (Ex. 20:3-4; Dt. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; James 2:19) Yet this God exists as three persons in loving communion as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Trinity are equal in essence and possess precisely the same divine attributes. In other words, the three persons of the trinity are equally divine. (Mt. 28:19; John 1:18; 5:16-18; 8:54-59; 10:30; 12:37-43; 14:16-17; 20:28-29; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 9:5; 2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:5; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9-10) While the three persons of the trinity are equal in essence, they are different in economy. They demonstrate their equality as divine in different ways. (John 14:16-17, 26, 28; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Eph. 1:1-14; Rev. 11:15) An example of this is Ephesians 1:1-14 where all three persons of the trinity are involved in our salvation yet in different ways. We believe that all of Christian theology must be understood in light of this Trinitarian understanding of God, which in turn should affect the way we live life. Also, since what we know of God has been made known through his personal revelation, our quest to understand God should always lead us into closer relationship with this relational, Triune God.

Immanence and Transcendence

We believe that this Triune God is both immanent and transcendent. These two doctrines about God must be kept in tension. God is immanent because he is present and active within his creation. His presence is everywhere and he is at work through the natural processes of nature. He is always there with us, he is our ever present help. (Jer. 23:24; Is. 6:1-5; Acts 17:27-28) He is also transcendent. He is beyond our comprehension. He is not limited to our understanding nor is scripture a full disclosure but all we need to have relationship with him. (Jer. 23:24; Is. 6:1-5; 55:8-9) Therefore, God is totally other than us yet condescends to us to make himself known and engage us in a reciprocal love relationship.

Attributes

We believe that all three persons of the trinity possess the same divine qualities or attributes. These attributes constitute God's very nature since they are permanent, inherent of his very nature. His attributes can be divided into two categories: God's natural attributes and God's moral attributes.

God's natural attributes:

The first natural attribute is that God is spirit. God is said to be omnipresent, he is not limited to a particular geographical location or space. He is everywhere. While God is suggested to have physical features such as hands and arms, we are to consider these as anthropomorphisms, attempts to express the truth about God through human analogies. There are also times where God appeared in physical form. These are to be understood as Theophanies, which are temporary manifestations of God. (Dt. 4:15-19; Luke 23:24; John 1:18; 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16)

The next natural attribute is that God is living and active. While scripture affirms and assumes that he is a living being, they do not make an argument for it. God has life within himself and all other things derive their life from his. God

does not need anything to continue his existence, therefore his relation to and care for us is an act of his love rather than out of need. (Gen. 1:1; Jer. 10:10-11; John 5:26; Acts 17:25; Col. 1:16-17; 1 Thess. 1:9)

God is also personal as a communion of persons. He is capable of feeling, choosing, and having a reciprocal love relationship with humanity. God has a personal name. From the time of creation God has sought to have relationship with people. Gen. 3, while probably anthropomorphic, illustrates that he does relate to us as personal beings. (Gen. 3; 4:26; Ex. 3:14; 20:7; Ps. 20:9)

The last of the natural attributes of God is that he is infinite. In thinking of his infiniteness, there are several ways to think about it. God is omnipresent. He is not confined to the limits of space as finite objects are. (Jer. 23:23-24; Ps. 139:7-12; Mt. 28: 19-20; Acts 17:24-25) Neither is God bound by time. He is aware of past, present and future simultaneously. He has no beginning and no end. (Ps. 90:1-2; Is. 44:6; Eph. 3:21; Jude 25; Rev. 1:18; 21:6; 22:13) God is also omniscient. He knows all things including all genuine possibilities in accordance with man's free will. (Ps. 104:24; 147:5; Mt. 10:29-30; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 4:13) God is omnipotent. He is able to do all things in accord with his nature of holiness and love. He has complete control over creation and history. He has the power to save and turn hearts, transforming people. (Jer. 32:15-17; Ez. 36:25-27; Mt. 8:27; Acts 17:26; Heb. 6:18) Finally, God is constant. God is not the "unmoved mover", he is active and dynamic, but in a way that is stable. He can be trusted and is faithful. (Ps 102:26-27; Lam. 3:22-23; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; 1 John 1:9)

God's Moral Attributes:

God is a good God who can be trusted and loved. His natural attributes are always exercised within and consistent with his moral goodness. The first of these attributes is moral purity. God is holy. He is totally other and perfect. In his holiness, God does not promote or participate in the evil of this world. In view of God's holiness, we are utterly sinful. (Ex. 15:11; Lev. 11:44-45; Is. 6:1-5; Hab. 1:13; Luke 5:8; James 1:13) God is also righteous and just. God's law found in the scriptures is his holiness applied to his relationship with his people. God expects people to conform to his righteous law, which is his justice. God does not show favoritism or partiality in his judgment. (Gen 2:17; 18:25; 1 Sam. 8:3; Ps. 19:7-9; Amos 5:12; Rom. 6:23) The second moral attribute of God is his integrity. God is the true God, what he speaks is true and he always proves to be true. (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Jer. 10:5, 10; John 17:3; 1 Thess. 1:9; 5:24; Titus 1:2; Rev. 3:7) Lastly, God is love. God has always existed in a loving communion of persons. God's love is self-sacrificing. He gave himself for our salvation. God, in his love, gives us grace, his unmerited favor, and mercy, where we don't get what we deserve. God's love and justice are not opposed. Because God is love, he does not leave us to ourselves, he is actively involved, as a parent with their child. If God did not love us then he would disregard evil and sin completely. His justice is an act of his love. (Ex. 34:6-7; Proverbs 3:11-12; John 3:16; Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:4-9; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 John 4:8, 16)

Jesus Christ

The Deity of Christ

We believe that Jesus is the Second Person of the Triune God. As such, He is to be worshipped. (John 9:35-38; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:9-14) He exists eternally. (John 1:1; Col. 1:17) He was before all things; all things were created by Him and for Him. (John 1:3; Col. 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:3) Being fully God, He is of the same substance, essence as the Father (Homoousios) (John 5:15-18; 8:54-59; 10:30; 12:45; 14:7-11). As the incarnate Christ, He is the most complete picture of God we can know. (John 1:18; Col. 1:15, 19; Heb. 1:3) Through his life, ministry, death and resurrection we get a glimpse of the relationality and love between the members of the Trinity (John 10 and 17) as well as the Triune God's love for mankind (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16). We love Him and love others because He first loved us. (1 John 4:7-21)

The Humanity of Christ

We believe that God became flesh and dwelt among us, the Incarnate One, Jesus Christ. (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Heb. 2:6-7, 14-18; 1 John 4:2-3) He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary who was pledged to be married to Joseph. (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:35) He is a descendant of David and, therefore, heir to the Davidic throne. (2 Sam. 7; Ps. 110; Isa. 9.7; Matt. 1:1-17; Acts 2:25-36; Heb. 1:5) He grew in knowledge and stature, ate and drank, was moved by emotion, was handled and touched and died. (Luke 2:52; Matt. 4:2; John 19:28; John 11:35; 1 John 4:8, 16, John 20:27; 1 John 1:1; John 19:28-37) Jesus is the perfect human, being more human than we in our fallen state, the ultimate Imago Dei (Image of God). Jesus was sinless as a human, yet tempted in every way. (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 9:14; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5)

Fully God and Fully Man

There has been much debate through the centuries as to the nature of Jesus. Some have attacked his divinity saying that Jesus gave up being God to become a man or that Jesus is a created being. Others have attacked his humanity saying that Jesus only appeared to be human since God cannot become material substance, which is regarded as evil or Jesus was God with only an outward flesh but not psychologically human. As stated above, we believe that Jesus is fully God and fully human. This is not only Biblical, but also necessary for him to be the savior of all mankind. If he were not fully God, then Jesus' death would not have atoned for humanity. It is God, who was sinned against, who died to satisfy what no mere mortal man could do. His death paid the penalty for our sins. If Jesus were not fully human then he would not be able to bear the sins of mankind. (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:45-47) It was only in becoming one of us that Jesus could bear our sin.

After the divinity and humanity of Jesus was settled through the councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381), another debate arose over the nature of Jesus. How could he be fully God and fully Human at the same time? What is the relationship between the two in Jesus? Several attempts were made to answer this question, but it was not until the council of Chalcedon (451) that the orthodox view was settled. It stated that both natures are preserved and concur in the one Person of Jesus. Still, how can this be? We believe that Jesus is equal in essence with the Father, yet distinct in economy (Hypostasis). His self emptying (Kenosis) is not of the divine essence but a limiting of the use of those divine attributes. Jesus limited the exercise of his divine power when he took on a human body. For instance, Jesus still had the power to be everywhere (omnipresence), but limited himself by taking on flesh and blood. We should not think that because Jesus has two natures, divine and human, that he has two wills. His two natures did not function independently. Jesus did not exercise his humanity at times and his deity at times. His actions were always those of the divine-human.

The Work of Christ

Prophet

The first office of Jesus that we will look at is the office of Prophet. (Matt. 13:57; 21:11; Acts 3:22) As a prophet, not unlike OT prophets, Jesus declared doom and judgment as well as proclaimed good news and salvation (Matt. 13; 23). As a prophet, Jesus was sent from God. Yet, being God, He uniquely revealed the Father to us (John 1:18; Col. 1:15, 19; Heb. 1:3). In seeing Jesus as the perfect picture of God, we also get to see God at work in the world through the person of Jesus. So as Christians, we not only believe the teachings about Jesus, our lives must model his in the working out of our faith in the world. (1 Peter 2:21) Jesus is not only the revealer of truth, he is the truth. (John 1:9; 14:6) Jesus is the One that is greater than Moses, the Judge who undergoes judgment in our place.

Priest

Jesus is our high priest. He is the One who is greater than Aaron, the priest who offers himself as the sacrifice for the whole world. (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7, 8, and 9, especially vss. 11-15) One part of Jesus' priestly role is that of intercessor. A ministry that began during his ministry (John 17) continues during his heavenly presence with the Father (Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24). The other more fundamental aspect of the priestly role is the atonement. Through his death and resurrection, Jesus redeemed us by making atonement for our sins and won the victory over all other powers, thus freeing us to be called his children and live a victorious life. (Rom. Chapters 5-8 and 12; 1 Cor. 15:55-58; Eph. 5:1-2; Col

2:13-15; Heb. 9:11-15; 10:10-27) While there are many theories of the atonement, we believe the foundational understanding to be penal substitution while recognizing that there is truth in some of the other theories such as Christus Victor.

King

The last office of Jesus is that of King. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. As the heir to David's throne, Jesus will rule forever (2 Sam. 7; Ps. 110; Isa. 9:7; Matt. 1:1-17; Acts 2:25-36; Heb. 1:5). This rule is not just a future rule when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Phil. 2:9-11, Rev. 19-22), it is a rule that here and now also, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Matt. 4:17; John 1:3; Col. 1:16-18). This reality of the already/not yet kingdom has huge implications for how we live. He is our King and we live within his kingdom now. Therefore, we must live now in light of the reality of the coming completion of his rule as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is with us now through the Holy Spirit and will certainly physically return as King. (Matt. 28:20; John 14: 15-17; Acts 1:7-11; Rev. 1:7-8; 19:11-21)

The Holy Spirit

The Person of the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit to be the third Person of the Triune God. While not overtly stated through scripture, scripture does attest to the Holy Spirit's divine nature. There are various references where the Holy Spirit is interchangeable with God. (Acts 5:3-5; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19) The Holy Spirit is attributed with the attributes of God such as omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10-11; John 16:13), omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Rom. 15:19; John 3:5-8; 16:8-11; Titus 3:5; Rom. 8:11), eternality (Heb. 1:10-12; 9:14), creator (Ps. 104:30), and divine revelation (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit is also positioned in equal association with the Father and Son (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).

The Holy Spirit is also a Person not an impersonal active force. There are several evidences for this including the use of masculine pronouns in conjunction with the neuter noun *pneuma* (John 16:13-14), where the work ascribed to the Holy Spirit is the work of someone who is clearly a person (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1), work which Jesus and the Holy Spirit perform such as glorifying another member of the Trinity (John 16:14; John 17:4), through the possession of certain characteristics such as intelligence, will, and emotions (John 14:26; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:30), and being lied to and resisted (Acts 5:3-4; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19; Acts 7:51; Matt. 12:31).

The Work of the Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is often referred to as the "Spirit of God". There are some cases where the New Testament makes it clear that an Old Testament reference to the "Spirit of God" is a reference to the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-28). There are several areas of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament such as His work in Creation (Gen. 1:2; 26:13), the giving of prophecy and scripture (Ezek. 2:2; 8:3; 11:1, 24), conveying certain necessary skills for various tasks (Gen. 41:38; Ex. 31:3-5; Judg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13), and producing the moral and spiritual qualities of holiness and goodness (Neh. 9:20; Ps. 51:11). In the Old Testament era, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit does not seem to be permanent but temporary and related to a particular activity or ministry. (Judges)

In the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit's work is powerful and pervasive. From the Incarnation (Luke 1:35) to his baptism (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32) to his continued presence (Luke 4:1), direction (Mark 1:12), and empowerment in Jesus' earthly ministry (Luke 4:14; Matt. 12:25-32; Luke 10:17, 21).

In the life of the believer, the Holy Spirit is the particular Person of the Trinity through whom the entire Triune Godhead works in us. He convicts of sin (John 16:8), seals us for our future inheritance in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:13-14), is involved in our regeneration (Ezek. 36:24; John 3:1-8), empowers us (Luke 1:34; 4:18; John 14:12; Acts 1:4-8), indwells and fills us (Rom. 8:1-11; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 5:18), teaches us the things of God (1 Cor. 2:10; John 14:26), intercedes for

us (Rom. 8:26-27), sanctifies us (Rom. 8:1-17), produces fruit in us (Gal. 5:22-23), and bestows spiritual gifts (Heb. 2:4; Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11). The Holy Spirit also mediates God's love to us (Rom. 5:5) and through us (1 John 4:7-21). One last work of the Holy Spirit that is often overlooked is that of uniting believers to one another (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4).

Humanity and Sin

Beginnings of Humanity

We believe that God directly created humans in their entirety (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). Humans did not evolve into what they are today. Humanity bears the image of God and is thus special and unique above all other creation. God's image in man is both purposive and relational (Gen. 1:27). God is love and created mankind out of an overflow of that love. Thus, God's purpose for this creation is relationship. This relational nature of humanity means that we have no independent existence. We were created for relationship with God and one another, creating both male and female who bear his image (Gen. 1:27). God's image in man is also purposive meaning that man has a mind, heart, and will to respond to God and by extension one another, in relationship. One consequence of the image is that humanity was given the charge to have dominion over the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:26). The implication of this should be to be responsible for the care of God's creation. Because man bears God's image, all people, regardless of race, class, or gender have intrinsic value and should lead to common care and empathy for all people (James 3:9; Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 25:35-36). We also believe that abortion is wrong. Life happens at the moment of conception (Ps. 139:13-15; Luke 1:41-44; Heb. 7:9-10).

We believe that man is comprised of a soul/spirit and a body (Ecc. 12:7; Matt. 10:28). While many may hold to a trichotomist view, we hold that man is dichotomous. The terms soul and spirit are often used interchangeably and should not be seen as distinct (Luke 1:46-47; Gen. 35:18; Ps. 31:5; Gen. 41:8; Ps. 42:6). Having said this, we should not think of man as being a mixture of spiritual and physical qualities but a unitary compound. Thus, a person's spiritual condition cannot be dealt with independently of physical or physiological conditions. A holistic gospel is not concerned with just a person's spiritual state but is concerned for every aspect of their life, as God is (James 2:15-17; Matt. 25:35-36).

Humanity's initial state and fall

We believe that Adam and Eve first lived in the Garden of Eden in a state of innocence (Gen. 2:25). They were given a free will to choose right from wrong and were given an instruction by God not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen. 2:16-17). Our free will allows us to freely choose to respond to God's invitation to love him and obey him. Eventually Adam and Eve sinned against God by eating of the fruit of that tree (Gen. 3:1-6). Because of their sin, they died spiritually and would eventually die physically. Through Adam, our federal head, sin was imputed to us and is passed on as our inheritance (Traducianism). We are all spiritually dead to God and are subject to physical death and born into a sinful state (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12-21, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3). Therefore, all people are totally depraved. Man's nature is corrupted and man is not able not to sin (Rom. 3:10-18, 23; Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8).

The Nature of Sin

Sin is multi-faceted. Left to itself, the human mind is incapable of adequately defining what is right or directing our conduct toward what is right. Since the fall of mankind, God's image in us has become distorted and twisted and we became futile in our thinking (Romans 1). Thus, our very ability to do what is right has been taken away. Sin is described as rebelliousness and disobedience to God's truth. It is failure to live up to God's special revelation, his law (Ex. 20; Dt. 5, 9:7; Joshua 1:18; Ps. 119:160). This includes Gentiles, who do not have God's special revelation, but do have the law of God written on their hearts (Rom. 2:14-15). Sin is worship of anything in place of God (Ex. 20:3; Mark 12:30) Sin is a matter of the heart. It is not dependent on mere actions but our thoughts and intentions of our heart (Matt. 5-7). Sin is

ultimately relational. We turn in on ourselves, reject God and by extension a right relationship with others, when we turn away from God's love given through his son, Jesus Christ.

The Source of Sin and Effects

God did not create sin; however, we believe that sin was made possible when God gave Adam and Eve the free choice to obey or not (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:1-6). The image of God in us is the ability to respond to God in relationship. Sin ended that relationship and all people are born spiritually dead to God. In fact humanity is now enemies of God because of our sinful state (Eph. 2:1-3). The penalty for our sin is spiritual, physical, and everlasting death (Rom. 1:32, 5:12-21, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Rev. 2:11, 20:6, 21:8). This break in our relationship with God also negatively affects our relationships with other people. Not only was mankind subject to death and decay but the entire creation is in bondage to decay (Rom. 8:20-21). Sin takes on collective dimensions: the whole structure of society inflicts hardships and wrongs upon individuals and minority groups.

Salvation

Salvation is the work of Christ applied to the individual. Since we were created for relationship with God, which was broken by our sin, God brings us back into fellowship with him by saving us.

Conversion

Conversion is the act of turning from one's sin in repentance and turning to Christ in faith. Conversion is not always an event that happens in one moment of time but can also be a process depending upon personality type, background, and immediate circumstances (John 3, 19:39; Acts 16:14, 30). Repentance is the negative aspect of conversion where one turns from sin (Matt. 3:2, 4:17; Acts 2:38, 17:30; Luke 9:23). Faith is the positive where one turns to Jesus. There are two basic ideas found in the term faith. First, faith is the belief that something is true (Matt. 8:13, 9:28; Mark 5:36; Heb. 11:6). Second, faith is believing in and trusting in the person of Christ (Matt. 18:6; Mark 1:15; John 1:12; 2:11, 23; 3:18; Acts 10:43; Gal. 2:16; 1 John 5:10). Salvation is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). Faith is our response to the message, the word of God, which brings salvation (Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25). Salvation is by faith, not by works (Eph. 2:8-9). However, true faith will produce works in the believer's life (Eph. 2:10; James 2:14-26).

Regeneration

While conversion refers to our response to God, regeneration is what God does. God transforms individual believers. Since people are in a fallen state, there is need for God to transform them on the inside (Ezek. 11:19-20; Titus 3:5). While regeneration is instantaneously complete (John 1:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:1, 5-6; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3), it is the beginning of a process of growth called sanctification.

Union with Christ and Justification

Upon conversion and regeneration, the Holy Spirit binds us in union with Christ (Rom. 8:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:13). Through the Holy Spirit, we participate in the Divine life of the Triune God. In the New Testament, Christ is said to be in us (Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; John 15:4-5). Jesus is said to be present with the believer (Matt. 28:20; John 14:23). There are many experiences that believers share with Christ such as suffering (Rom. 8:17), crucifixion (Gal. 2:20), death (Col. 2:20), burial (Rom. 6:4), resurrection (Col. 3:1), and glorification (Rom. 8:17). In addition we are said to be found in Christ (1 Cor. 1:4-5; 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3-4; 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:16). One aspect of this union with Christ is that it is judicial. When God evaluates or judges us, he sees Jesus' righteousness. Because of our union with Christ, his righteousness has been imputed to us. The righteous requirements of God have been fully met in us by Christ (Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 5:1-2, 9; 8:33-34).

Adoption

Through our union with Christ and subsequent justification, we are adopted into his family (John 1:12; Gal. 4:4-6). The relationship that we were created for in the beginning has been restored and we now have fellowship with God our Father (John 15:14-15; Rom. 8:15). Consequently, Jesus is our brother (Matt. 12:50; Heb. 2:11, 17) as well as all

other believers are now brothers and sisters in God's family (Matt. 12:49). This family takes precedent over all other allegiances (Matt. 12:46-50; 19:29).

Sanctification

The work of God which was begun by regeneration is continued through his work of sanctification. It is the process by which the believer is made holy or conformed to the likeness of Jesus (Rom. 8:29; 15:15-16; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13). This sanctification is wholly the work of God in the believer's life (Eph. 5:26; Phil. 1:6; 2:13; 1 Thess. 5:23; Titus 2:14; Heb. 13:20-21). This sanctifying work is done by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5; Rom. 8). While sanctification is wholly a work of God, yet, believers are willing participants. We have the responsibility to turn from sin continually and develop disciplines through which God transforms us. (Rom. 8:13; 12:1-2, 9, 16-17; Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Tim. 4:7).

Glorification

The final stage of salvation is glorification. Glorification refers to the full and final vindication of believers (Rom. 5:9-10; 8:29-39). It also involves moral and spiritual perfecting of the believer (Col. 1:22, Eph. 1:4; Phil. 1:9-11; Jude 24; Rev. 20:7-10), fullness of knowledge (1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2), glorification of our bodies (Phil. 3:20-21; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; 15:38-50). This body will be incorruptible, glorious, spiritual, and powerful (1 Cor. 15:51-52). Salvation will ultimately extend to all of creation which was subjected to frustration when humanity sinned in Adam (Rom. 8:18-25; Rev. 21:1-2, 5).

Assurance

Finally, we believe that our salvation is sure and cannot be lost. We can live with confidence that God will never let us go. Our inheritance is sure. God will bring us to completion. (John 10:27-30; Rom. 8:31-39; 14:4; Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 6:11; 10:22; 2 Peter 1:10; 1 John 5:13)

The Church

Definition and Unity

We believe that conversion leads individuals into a life of fellowship with other believers. This fellowship or community is what is called the church. On one hand, the word church refers to all believers in Christ at all times in all places. This is what is called the universal church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23). On the other hand, the word church refers to a group of believers in a specific location. This is what is called the local church (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1). Of most dire importance is the unity of the church, whether one is talking about the local church or universal (Eph. 4:1-16; Acts 4:32; Phil. 2:2). This ideal of unity is emphasized in Jesus' high priestly prayer and our witness of Jesus to this world is dependent upon this unity (John 17:20-23). We believe that all Christians should pursue a unity that is built on mutual recognition and fellowship. There should be observable expressions of this unity for the world to see and experience.

Biblical images

Paul describes the church in a variety of ways. Three of the main ones also show an explicit trinitarianism. This is important because through these descriptors, we find the identity of the church. Our identity must precede any purpose or activity. The first such description is as the people of God. We saw in the doctrine of Salvation that God has adopted us into his family, therefore, he is our father and the church is his family (John 1:12; Rom. 9:24-26; Gal. 4:4-6). Consequently, Jesus is our brother (Matt. 12:50; Heb. 2:11, 17) as well as all other believers are now brothers and sisters in God's family (Matt. 12:49). This family takes precedent over all other allegiances (Matt. 12:46-50; 19:29).

The body of Christ is the second descriptor of the church. It is the most extended image of the church. This emphasizes that the church is now the focal point of Jesus' earthly ministry. The work of Christ, if it is done at all, will be done by his body, the church (Matt. 28:18-20; John 14:12). This body image is used both of the church universal (Eph. 1:22-23) and of the local church (1 Cor. 12:27). This connection with Christ as his body is because of our union with

Christ (Rom. 8:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:13). In the New Testament, Christ is said to be in us (Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; John 15:4-5) as well as we are said to be found in Christ (1 Cor. 1:4-5; 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3-4; 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:16). Christ is the head of his body, the church (Col. 1:18). There is no such thing as isolated or individual Christians. We belong to one another and make up the whole, the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3-5; 1 Cor. 12; Eph 4:11-16). We are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2) and restore those who are found to be in sin (Gal. 6:1). In some cases, dealing with sinful members may involve gentle restoration. At other times it may involve excluding people from the fellowship who are defiling it (Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:12-13). The church is relational and communal. It derives this identity from the triune God who is relational and communal.

The third descriptor of the church is as the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit brought the church into being (Acts 1:8 ff.) and indwells it both collectively and individually (1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22). The work of the Spirit in the church produces the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). It is the Spirit who equips the body for works of service by distributing gifts (1 Cor. 12:11).

The Role of the Church

The role of the church flows from its relational, communal identity. We were created for a relationship with God and one another (Gen. 1:26-27; Ex. 20; Dt. 5). Therefore, we believe that there are three main purposes for the church. The first and most important is worship which focuses on our relationship with God in Christ through the Spirit. We are to love God and worship him as a community of believers above all else (Ex. 20:3-8; Dt. 6:4-5; Mark 12:30). This is a total way of life not just what happens on a Sunday morning "worship" service.

The second purpose of the church is community life. Our love for God will be evident by and resultant in our love for one another (Ex. 20:12-17; Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31). The Spirit gives gifts to the individual members of the body for mutual edification (1 Cor. 12; 14:4-5, 12). As we use our gifts to serve one another, we experience God's grace in its various forms, such as love, forgiveness, grace, encouragement, and exhortation (1 Peter 4:10).

The last purpose of the church is mission. Out of the overflow of His love, God sent His Son to give life to sinners (John 3:16-17). As God's people, Christ's body, and the Holy Spirit's temple, we participate with God in this mission to reconcile sinners to Himself (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; John 20:21; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Our job is not just to make sure people get to heaven but to care for the whole person (Matt. 4:23-24; James 3:9; Luke 10:25-37; Matt. 25:35-36) and to disciple them in every area of life so that they can experience His life now as well as enjoy eternity in His presence (Matt. 28:19-20; John 10:10).

Ordinances

We believe that there are two ordinances that are to be practiced by the church. The first is baptism. We believe that baptism is by immersion, for believers as an act of faith and a powerful testimony to our union with Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 8:12; 18:8; 19:1-7; 1 Peter 3:21). Baptism is a physical expression of spiritual realities (1 Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:3-5). Baptism also symbolizes our entrance into the community. As we are united with Christ through the spiritual reality of baptism, so, we are united with one another through that same baptism (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 2:11-12; Eph. 4:5).

The Lord's Supper or Communion is the other ordinance to be practiced by the church. Like baptism, communion is a physical expression of spiritual realities. Christ gave his body and his blood for all. The church is to celebrate this self-sacrifice by together taking the bread and cup (Matt. 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-33). Communion is a rehearsal of God's story of redemption that must be relived and passed on (Luke 22:19). Communion also symbolizes the unity and equity of the body of Christ, believers (1 Cor. 10:17; 11:17-33). As we partake together we are to look forward to the day when we will eat it with him in heaven (Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:16).

End Times

While there are many views on the nature and timing of certain aspects of eschatology, we believe that we can easily become sidetracked on these issues. The important thing to remember is that Jesus wins. For the believer, the book of Revelation and other apocalyptic literature in the Bible was written to comfort and assure us that God will have the last say. He will vindicate his Son and all those who belong to him. Below are the aspects of eschatology that are pertinent to understanding our blessed hope of the life to come.

Death

We believe in the inevitability of death for every person. While Jesus has defeated death, there is every indication that death is still a reality for every person (Heb. 9:27; 1 Cor. 15; 2Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:19-26). However, there are different kinds of death. There is a physical death as well as a spiritual death. Both are a result of the fall (Gen. 3:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:21). In the original state, humanity was meant to live eternally, yet that eternity was always extrinsic. Thus Adam and Eve had access to the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:22-23). Physical death is the separation of body from spirit/soul. Death is not non-existence but a different mode of existence. It is a cessation of life in its familiar bodily existence (Matt. 10:28; John 13:37-38; Ecc. 12:7; James 2:26). Spiritual death is the separation of a person from God (Eph. 2:1-2). This is true of every person before salvation. If a person dies in this state of spiritual death, they will most certainly experience the second death which is the finalizing of that state of separation from God. This death is an endless period of punishment and of separation from the presence of God (Rev. 20:6; 21:8).

Intermediate State

While a position cannot be taken dogmatically, we believe that the unrighteous dead go to Hades, which receives the unrighteous for the period between death and resurrection. We believe that it is a disembodied state. There are indications that the righteous dead do not go to Hades (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:31; Ps. 16:10). Instead the righteous are received into paradise which is to be present with the Lord (Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 1:19-26).

Second Coming

We believe in the second coming of Christ. It is inevitable, yet we do not know when it will occur (Matt. 25:1-13; 2 Peter 3:3-4). This coming will be bodily in the same way that he ascended (Acts 1:11). His coming will be in triumph and power as he brings to finality the victory won on the cross (Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). He will sit on his throne in glory and judge the nations. (Matt. 25:31-46). One result of his coming will be that the dead are resurrected. Both the righteous and the unrighteous will be raised, the righteous to eternal life, the unrighteous to eternal punishment in hell (John 5:25, 28-29; 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24-25; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4:13-16; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Rom. 8:11; Rev. 1:5).

Final Judgment

We believe that a final judgment will ensue after Christ returns. For the righteous, this great, final judgment will be a vindication. This judgment will occur in the future (Matt. 11:24; John 5:27-29; Heb. 9:27; Matt. 16:27; 13:37-43; 24:29-35). Jesus Christ will be the judge (John 5:22, 27; 2 Cor. 5:10). All humanity will be judged according to the good or bad they have done according to the will of God (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27; John 5:29; Matt. 7:21-23).

Before Christ comes there will be a time of tribulation (Matt. 25:4-30). While believers will be spared God's wrath, they may have to go through the tribulation (Matt. 25:4-30; Rev. 7:14).

Final State

When Jesus ascended into heaven, he went to prepare an eternal dwelling for believers (John 14:2-3). Heaven is the eternal state for the righteous. In heaven, we will be in the presence of God and will rest in him, worship him, and serve him. In heaven we will be united with a "resurrected body" fit for eternal life in God's presence. (1 Cor. 15:40-57; 1 Cor. 13:9-12; 1 John 3:2; Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 19:1-8; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30; Rev. 22:3). Hell will be the final state for

the unrighteous (Rev. 20:11-15). It is also a place prepared by God. Yet it is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). As with Heaven, the unrighteous will be reunited with a body fit for eternal punishment and it will be a place of eternal punishment and separation from God (Mark 9:43-48; Matt. 10:28; 25:41, 46; Rev. 14:10; 2 Thess. 1:9).

POSITION PAPERS

ELDER/OVERSEER

The terms “elders” and “overseers” are interchangeable and designate the primary spiritual leaders of the church (Titus 1:5, 7; Acts 20: 17, 28). The term “elder” emphasizes maturity and “overseer” emphasizes the leadership responsibility. Ideally the local church has a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). Although elders act jointly as a council and share equal authority and responsibility for the leadership of the church, all are not equal in their giftedness, biblical knowledge, leadership ability, experience, or dedication. Therefore, those among the elders who are particularly gifted leaders and/or teachers will naturally stand out among the other elders as leaders and teachers within the leadership body as first among equals. (1 Timothy 5:17; Luke 8:51; 9:28; Acts 1:15) Their authority is to be expressed in loving leadership and not lording over the flock (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:17). God has designated men as elder/overseers (see “Women in Ministry” document).

Elders have final responsibility before God for prayer ministry (James 5:14), ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4) including teaching and guarding the church’s doctrine (Acts 20:27-31; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9), the administration of the church (1 Timothy 3:5), and shepherding the flock (1 Peter 5:2).

Elders are responsible for the whole flock, but they are not the only ones who shepherd. The gift of pastor (Ephesians 4:11) involves shepherding, but is different from the office of elder/overseer. We use the term “pastor” for some of our leaders who direct ministries. They shepherd part of the flock under the elders’ authority. Elders are “pastors” (1 Peter 5:1-2), but we distinguish their office by the term “elder” or “overseer”. We use the term “deacon” for the office held by men and women who serve under the elders to meet practical needs in the church.

Elders must be blameless in character (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), able to teach Scripture (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17), and answer those who contradict it (Titus 1:9). An elder must be the “husband of one wife” (1 Timothy 3:2; 3:12). We understand that this qualification does not exclude an unmarried person, someone remarried after the death of a spouse, nor necessarily one who has divorced and remarried. The phrase describes a reputation as a “faithful” husband or a “one-wife kind of man” (see Divorce and Remarriage document).

Elders are public leaders, and so valid accusation of blame should only be accepted by two or three witnesses and result in public rebuke (1 Timothy 5:19-20).

In Scripture elders were selected by the original church planter (Acts 14:23) or by other elders (Titus 1:5), with recognition from the congregation for its leaders (Acts 6:3; 15:22-23). See Kaleo Church bylaws (Article II, section 1) for the selection process

DEACONS

The important role/office of deacons is highly honored by God (1 Timothy 3:13). Deacons are under the leadership of the elders. Deacons serve and build the church by carrying out essential practical ministry designated by the elders. They free up church leaders to be devoted to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4). They serve by meeting practical needs so the Word can spread unhindered (Acts 6:7). They conduct ministry that does not emphasize teaching or shepherding.

The word deacon is a general term. The Bible uses diakeno (serve), diakonia (service) and diakonos (servant) to describe the ministry of all believers (Ephesians 4:12). The term “deacon” also has a specialized meaning as a recognized position

or office in church ministry (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Deacons may have originated with the seven who were chosen by the apostles and the church to care for the widows (Acts 6:1-6). The name implies that they do specially designated service necessary for the church's effectiveness, though Scripture gives no job description.

The spiritual and character qualifications for deacons are almost identical with elders. The requirements of teaching ability (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9) and "not a new convert" (1 Timothy 3:6) are not included for deacons. They must be first tested in ministry and show themselves faithful and effective (1 Timothy 3:10). Like the elders, deacons must be the "husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2; 3:12). We understand that this qualification does not exclude an unmarried person, those remarried after the death of a spouse, nor necessarily those who have divorced and remarried. The phrase describes someone with a reputation as a "faithful" spouse or a "one-wife kind of man."

1 Timothy 3:11 mentions "women/wives". The term may refer to the wives of deacons, but the adjective "their" (wives) is missing. There was no Greek word for deaconess and so a term like "woman" or the masculine "deacon" (Romans 16:1) had to be used. It seems unlikely that there were qualifications for the wife of a deacon when there were none for an elder's wife. The service nature of the position does not require the authoritative teaching of the church or the leading of the whole church, which are restricted to elder/overseers. Thus, deacons may be either women or men who meet the Scriptural qualifications.

Each generation of the church may have a different emphasis on the specific ministries of deacons. The elders of each church must decide where they are most needed. The position of Kaleo Church is to commission deacons to areas of service. If needed, the deacons can develop and lead teams of serving believers whose function is not primarily teaching, e.g. leading a team to distribute money to the poor (benevolence), leading area set-up and teardown teams, leading a parking team, leading a hospitality team, leading an usher team, leading an emergency response team, and leading a building team.

STATEMENT OF MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or members, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

Kaleo Church will only preform marriage ceremonies for members of Kaleo Church.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Kaleo Church seeks God's help to build strong marriages and families. Marriage is God's gift for believers and unbelievers (Genesis 2:24) but, in a broken world, marriages will fail and we must be ready to respond with grace and truth.

Marriage is a God-ordained, public covenant between a man and a woman that results in a "one flesh" relationship (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 2:16-17; Ezekiel 16:8; Malachi 2:14). God's design is that every marriage be faithfully permanent. God loves covenant keeping, and His strength is sufficient to enable husband and wife to be faithful. His redeeming grace gives us hope that even the most broken marriage can be restored.

Our position allows divorce and remarriage for either of two valid causes: sexual immorality (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9) or desertion by an unbelieving spouse (I Corinthians 7:15). This has been called the Erasmian view, the traditional Protestant view, and is the most common view among evangelicals.

Note: In this position statement "sexual immorality" and "sexual unfaithfulness" are translations of the Greek word, *porneia* (Matt 5:32; 19:9). In a marriage context it refers to the sins of adultery, homosexual behavior, incest and bestiality.

The Mosaic Law brought the death penalty for certain sexual sins, including adultery, incest, homosexual behavior and bestiality. Capital punishment showed the seriousness of sexual sin and allowed the innocent surviving spouse to remarry. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), but He allowed it because of the hardness of people's hearts (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:8).

Jesus said, "whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9; see also 5:32). The exception clause ("except for sexual immorality") refers to adultery and probably covers all the cases of sexual sin that deserved capital punishment in the Old Testament. Matthew records Christ's most detailed teaching on divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-12). Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18 do not include the exception clause because they are a summary of Christ's teaching.

The New Testament allows, but does not require, divorce for sexual unfaithfulness. God's grace encourages us to forgive and have hope that God's transforming power can redeem even the most broken marriage. However, when there has been sexual unfaithfulness, divorce and remarriage are allowed, and do not constitute adultery. The marriage bond includes a covenant and then uniting sexually in "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Biblically, a marriage is viewed as ending when one spouse dies (Romans 7:2). It also ends when two things occur: (1) the one flesh has been violated (sexual unfaithfulness) and (2) the legal covenant has been revoked (divorce); if only one of these two things has occurred, the marriage continues to exist.

WOMEN IN MINISTRY

We are thankful that Kaleo Church has not allowed the role of women in the church to be a contentious issue. Our culture is fighting around us for power, rights and prominence. Unfortunately, the evangelical community is also fighting over the gender issue. Sometimes both sides seem to be angry and power hungry to win the argument.

Two main views have emerged among evangelicals. Egalitarians believe that women can qualify for any position in the church. Complementarians (formerly hierarchialists or traditionalists) believe that men and women are equal in worth, but that God has created role differences that limit women from some ministry positions. Neutrality is impossible, since every practice reflects one or the other of the two views.

While this issue is significant, it is not one of the essentials of the faith, like the deity of Jesus, and should not become a divisive issue. We are committed to respectful discussions that edify and oppose angry arguments that divide. We recommend the book *Two Views: Women in Ministry* for an irenic and balanced interaction. In addition, two evangelical

organizations have formed: Christians for Biblical Equality and The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood; their websites are filled with excellent biblically based literature.

Our Position

We believe that both men and women are equally made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and equal partners in Christ (Galatians 3:28). As in the Trinity, there is equality of persons, but diversity in function. There is a relationship between the equal persons of the Trinity that includes leadership and submission. God the Father sends the Son and the Spirit (Isaiah 48:16; John 5:23-36; 14:26; 15:26). The Son and the Spirit submit to the Father, but each is equally God. All believers must joyfully submit to the triune God. History has clearly shown that men often use their leadership to oppress. Many Christian men have not sacrificially loved their wives. Great harm has been done to women in the name of church leadership. Our example is Christ, who used His authority to lead with love and empower the Church.

In each age God has designated men to fulfill the primary role of spiritual leadership: Old Testament priests, the twelve apostles and elders/overseers in the church. 1 Timothy 2:12 can be understood as combining the two ideas of teaching and authority. The role of elder or senior pastor is limited to men. . Paul's appeal to creation (1 Timothy 2:12-15; 1 Corinthians 11:2-4) and God's pattern of choosing men (priest, apostle, and elder), point to male leadership as trans-cultural. The position of deacon is for qualified men or women (1 Timothy 3:11; Romans 16:1-2).

Christ's leadership of the Church models and prescribes the role of loving leadership for the husband. Wives are to submit voluntarily to their own husbands (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6). Because of the fall, the husband's loving leadership has often been perverted into domination and the wife's willing submission into improper servitude or a power struggle. Women in general are not required to submit to men in general (1 Corinthians 11:2-4).

MEMBER RESTORATION

Definition

Restoration is the process of leading a believer back from sinning to repentance, forgiveness, fellowship and ministry. Scripture gives broad guidelines for church restoration rather than detailed instructions on every particular situation. Our elders and leaders seek to follow these biblical guidelines under the guidance of the Spirit. The goal of confronting sin is always restoration rather than punishment. Since God's grace covers every possible sin, restoration is only impossible when we refuse to repent.

God leads our process of growth by disciplining all of His true children (Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Corinthians 11:32). Discipline is part of discipleship and is a sign of true relationship with our heavenly Father (Hebrews 12:8).

Restoration within Community

Kaleo Church has a core value of community. We commit to the spiritual welfare of each other through a Membership Covenant. We are bound by love to encourage each other in righteousness and warn each other when we wander into sin. We are Christ-followers in community who "speak the truth in love" to each other as a means of growing up in Christ (Ephesians 4:15, 25).

As a Christ-following community, we are to confess our sins to one other (James 5:16), forgive each other (Ephesians 4:32), stimulate each other to good works (Hebrews 10:25), turn each other back when we stray (James 5:19-21), rebuke (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; 2:15), correct (2 Timothy 3:16), exhort each other with the Word (1 Timothy 4:2), and urge harmony between believers in conflict (Philippians 4:2). Restoration ministry includes helping believers in dispute rather than using the secular courts (1 Corinthians 6:1-11).

In the World, but not of the World

God has placed Christ-followers in the midst of a broken world in relationship rather than isolation (1 Corinthians 5:10). However, those who profess to be Christ-followers and are living in unrepentant sin should be confronted and every effort made to have them restored if at all possible (1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

The Process

Matthew 18:15-17 outlines the process of restoring a sinning believer:

“If your brother sins [against you], go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that „every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.“ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

While in the process of confronting a sinning believer, we do not treat the person as an enemy, though normal fellowship is not possible. Rather, we are with them in order to admonish to repentance (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). When excommunication is necessary, the church no longer recognizes the sinning person as a part of the believing community (Matthew 18:17).