

7. THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over humanity who willfully acknowledge Him as King. The Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which people enter by a trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christ-followers ought to pray and labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth.

7A. THE CHRISTIAN AND SOCIETY

As citizens of the Kingdom of God, all Christ-followers are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among all people can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of Jesus, Christ-followers should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should contend for the sanctity of all human life. In order to promote these ends, Christ-followers should be ready to work with all people of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

7B. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of people related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

7B. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE FAMILY (cont.)

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to exist graciously in mutual submission to the servant leadership of her husband as they both exist, like the Church, in willing submission to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

From the moment of conception, children are a blessing from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

8. THE LAST THINGS

We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body and the final judgment. We believe Christ-followers will dwell with God forever and those who choose to live separate from God will experience the fullness of their decision.



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WHAT WE BELIEVE



This Statement of Faith includes our foundational beliefs. We recognize the validity of various viewpoints on non-essential issues, but request others refrain from advocating doctrines not contained in this Statement in a way that causes disunity.

1. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by humans, who were divinely inspired, and is God's revelation of Himself to humanity. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. God is the guiding force behind its authorship, and salvation is its ultimate purpose. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union. It is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

2. GOD

There is one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. He is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. All-powerful and all-knowing, His perfect knowledge extends to all things past, present and future, including the future decisions of all people to whom He has granted free will. With distinct personal attributes, God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, without division of nature, essence, or being, and without beginning or end. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

2A. GOD THE FATHER

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His human creations, and all human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in every way. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude, mercy, and salvation toward all humanity without preference or distinction.

2B. GOD THE SON

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind, yet without sin. He honored the divine

2b. GOD THE SON (cont.)

law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of all humanity from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person has effected the reconciliation between God and all humanity. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.

2c. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired human authors of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables people to understand truth. He exalts Christ, and convicts humans of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls all people to Jesus Christ, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts Christ-followers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through the church. He seals every Christ-follower until the day of final redemption. His presence indwells every Christ-follower and is the guarantee that God will bring them to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. He enlightens and empowers the Christ-follower and the church in worship, evangelism and service.

3. HUMANITY

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning, humanity was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By their free choice, men and women sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, humanity transgressed the command of God, and fell from their original innocence whereby their posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, all people become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring humans into His holy

3. HUMANITY (cont.)

fellowship and enable them to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created all humans in His own image, and in that Christ died for all humanity; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

4. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for every Christ-follower. In its broadest sense, salvation includes:

Regeneration: new birth

Justification: God's gracious and full acquittal

Sanctification: being set apart for God's purposes

Glorification: the final state of every Christ-follower

There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus.

5. THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all Christ-followers belong. We believe in the local autonomous church, consisting of a group of Christ-followers, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. We believe that the participants of the local church should observe the two ordinances of Christ, be governed by His laws, exercise their gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth in both word and action.

5a. CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

We believe that Christ-followers should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be an example to the world; that they should be faithful stewards of the possessions God has entrusted to them; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the fullness of maturity in Christ.

5b. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. The Church recognizes Jesus Christ alone as the ultimate source of all provision and its chief end. The church has the right to unhindered access to God on the part of all people, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference.

5c. CHURCH COOPERATION

We believe that the local church can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with other Christ-followers, churches and denominations, whether affiliated or otherwise. Christian unity in the New Testament is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation toward common goals by various groups of God's people. Cooperation is desirable between all Christ-followers when the goal is justifiable, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and the teaching of the Scriptures.

5d. STEWARDSHIP

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and all that we are we owe to Him. Christ-followers have a spiritual obligation to the whole world, a holy partnership in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in the possessions God has entrusted to them. They are, therefore, under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents and material possessions, and should recognize all these are entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to Scripture, Christ-followers should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the cause of Jesus Christ.

5e. MISSIONAL LIVING

It is the natural overflow of the work and presence of God in the life of every Christ-follower and every church to live and desire to see the transformational power of the Kingdom achieve its full ends in all places. The new birth of a person's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love of others. Missional effort and action on the part of all requires a regenerated life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Jesus. Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations, both here and abroad. It is the duty of every Christ-follower to constantly seek to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness, by Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

5f. THE SABBATH

God labored for six days in the creation of the world, and on the seventh He rested from the work and sameness of the past days. As Christ-followers, it is vital to our physical and spiritual health to break from our work by participating in glad and good activities that are so captivating they remind us that we are cherished by God and released from our duty for awhile. Activities on this day can include worship and are limited only by the Christ-follower's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

6. THE ORDINANCES

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church that are to be observed and administered until His return: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a Christ-follower in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the Christ-follower's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior as well as the Christ-follower's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in the new life of Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to faith in the final resurrection of the dead. We believe the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience where Christ-followers, through taking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember and identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and anticipate His return.