

## **WHAT WE BELIEVE**

### **The Scriptures**

We believe that the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, was given by Divine inspiration, and is the very Word of God. We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration—that every word and the whole Bible was completely inspired by God. We believe that God used holy men of old to portray, out of their own vocabulary, the exact thoughts and words He ordained, and that it was in such a way that it was wholly and completely without error. We believe in the canon of the Scriptures, that God limited it to its present completeness. We believe that it constitutes the only perfect rule and final authority in all matters pertaining to the Christian faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-22; Acts 17:11; Isaiah 8:20; Romans 2:1-3).

### **Dispensationalism**

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24,25,27; Revelation 20:2-6).

### **The Godhead**

We believe that there is only one living and true God, perfect, infinite and eternal (Matthew 5:48; I Kings 8:27; Psalm 90:2), who is unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, love, and truth (Malachi 3:6; I Timothy 1:17; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 19:9; Exodus 34:6; John 3:16), who is the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:2,3; Psalm 103:19; Ephesians 1:11).

We believe He exists in three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are equal in every divine perfection and are in complete harmony as they perform their distinct offices (Matthew 28:19; John 5:17; John 14:16,17; John 15:26; Ephesians 2:18).

### **The Son**

We believe that in the fullness of time, God the Son humbled Himself and assumed man's nature by being born of the virgin Mary, thus uniting organically the divine and human natures in their completeness in the one unique person of Jesus Christ (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; John 1:14; I Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; Philippians 2:6-10).

By becoming man, He was made of near kin to us (Numbers 27:11; Ruth 3:12,13) and having a human nature perfect and free from sin, He could offer Himself as a sacrifice for us (Hebrews 10:9,10). Being God, the sacrifice He made on Calvary was infinite in

value (John 1:29; I John 2:2). Thus we believe in the blood atonement, that is the vicarious, propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins (Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:8,9; Acts 15:11; John 3:16; Isaiah 53:4-7).

We believe in the resurrection of the physical body and the ascension into heaven of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ (Acts 1:9-11; Acts 2:32-36; Luke 24:2-6; Mark 16:6); and His presence at the right hand of God the Father where He intercedes for the believer (Hebrews 7:25).

### **The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity. He proceeded from the Father and the Son (John 15:26).

His principle ministry since His advent at Pentecost is the reprove or convict the world of sin, or righteousness and judgment (John 16:3-11); to restrain the progress of evil until God's purposes are accomplished (II Thessalonians 2:7); to bear witness of the truth preached (Acts 5:3-32); to regenerate those who repent of their sins and exercise faith in Christ (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5); to baptize them into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13); to instruct, comfort and guide God's children (John 14:16-18,26; John 16:13); to sanctify them (II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:1-2); to empower them for life and service (Romans 8:2; Acts 1:8).

### **The Devil or Satan**

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, author of all powers of darkness and sin, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matthew 4:1-11; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10).

### **Creation**

We believe that God created the universe by His spoken Word in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:6,9).

### **Man**

- (1) **HIS CREATION:** We believe in the Genesis account of creation; that man was created by an immediate act of God and not by any process of evolution: that he was created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality (intellect, emotions and will), and in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10), and that the purpose of his creation was to worship and glorify God (Genesis 1:27; Acts 1:24-28).
- (2) **HIS FALL:** We believe man was subject to trial in the Garden of Eden, in order to test his loyalty to his Maker (Genesis 2:15-17); under trial he lost his holy estate, was alienated from God, and became depraved physically, mentally,

morally and spiritually, by voluntarily transgressing God's positive command and yielding to the enticement of Satan. In consequence of this act of disobedience, the entire race became involved in sin so that in every heart there is by nature that evil disposition which eventually leads to responsible acts of sin and to a just condemnation (Genesis 3:1-5; Romans 5:12,18; Ephesians 4:18; I John 1:8-10)

(3) **HIS REDEMPTION:** We believe that God has provided redemption for all men through the mediatory work of Christ who voluntarily offered Himself on Calvary as a perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man; that the blessings of this salvation are given on the grounds of grace to all who believe and confess and that it is the immediate duty of all to accept these offers of grace (Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:11,12; I Peter 3:18; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 2:9; I Timothy 2:5,6; John 1:1-3,14; John 3:1-7; Hebrews 10:4-14)

(4) **HUMAN SEXUALITY:** 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 homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5,13; Genesis 26:8,9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4)

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22,23)

(5) **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS:** We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4,5,12)

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:49; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; Mark 10:6-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

## **Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defect, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

## **Love**

We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34,35; Romans 12:9,10,17-21; 13:8-10; Philippians 2:2-4; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17,18)

## **Lawsuits Between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31,32)

## **Missions**

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all Biblical means to go to our own nation and the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 2:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20)

## **Salvation, Regeneration and Justification**

We believe that:

- (1) **SALVATION** is wholly of grace, but conditioned solely upon repentance toward God and acceptance of Christ by faith, and that no works, however good, make that salvation more secure (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; Acts 4:12; 2 Corinthians 7:10).

- (2) **REGENERATION** means that the sinner has been made a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17) by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Word, the regenerated sinner is given a disposition or new nature to obey God (John 3:3-5; John 1:12,13; I Peter 1:23). This experience is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16).
- (3) **JUSTIFICATION** is the judicial act of God, in view of Christ's shed blood, in which punishment is absolved (having been suffered by Christ and the sinner is restored to Divine favor (Romans 5:1-9; Romans 4:4,5; Acts 13:39).

### **Sanctification of the Believer**

We believe that sanctification is presented in the Scriptures with a threefold aspect:

- (1) **POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION** which is true of every believer (I Corinthians 1:2), the result of the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 10:10), is perfect in its extent and character (Hebrews 10:14), and is through exercise of faith (Acts 26:18).
- (2) **PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION** begins with salvation and continues until it is brought to completion in the glorified body. It is a result of "growth in grace" (2 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1). Every believer is sanctified by the reading of the Word of God, by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (John 17:17; Ephesians 5:25; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- (3) **ULTIMATE SANCTIFICATION** is attained when the spirit, soul and body are freed completely from sin when the believer is brought into the presence of Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29; I John 3:2)... "we shall be like Him" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

### **The Duration of Salvation**

We believe that a person once really born-again is always saved. He can never be lost, for he is born of incorruptible seed (I Peter 1:23). He is given everlasting life (John 5:24; John 10:27-29), is sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30), and his life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3,4). He is given knowledge and assurance of eternal life (I John 5:11-13). He is assured of no condemnation nor separation from God (Romans 8:1; Romans 35:39; Philippians 1:6).

### **Resurrection and Immortality**

We believe that, at the return of the Lord, the righteous dead will be raised and the living believers will be changed so that both will have literal, spiritual, and immortal bodies, like unto Christ's glorious body. We believe that the souls of the righteous dead are now in a state of conscious blessing with the Lord and that they will return with Him for their new bodies at the rapture of the first resurrection (Romans 8:23; I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:16,17; Philippians 3:20,21; Luke 24:36-45; Acts 1:3).

## **The Church**

We believe that the church universal is a New Testament institution, unknown to the Old Testament prophets, established by Jesus Christ who is its sole head, revealed through the holy apostles, empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit--His "body" for service and His "bride" for Glory. It began with the New Testament saints and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the rapture (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:8; Acts 21-13, 1-47; Acts 15:14; I Corinthians 12:12-18; Ephesians 1:22,23; Ephesians 3:21, Ephesians 5:23; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

We believe that the church universal is manifest through the local church which is a congregation of immersed believers associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in it by His Word; that its officers are bishops (or pastors) and elders (or deacons); that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit and is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence the will of the local church is final (Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 1:2; I Corinthians 6:4,5; I Corinthians 7:17; I Timothy 3:1).

We believe, with respect to the "gifts to the church" that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts, and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today, and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles (such as healings, restoration of hearing, sight, etc., and raising from the dead) gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority was established (I Corinthians 13:8-1; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; I Corinthians 14). Note: We do believe in divine healing if it's God's will without a subsequent belief in "divine healers" per se.

## **Ordinances**

We believe that there are two church ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water and is properly called "believer's baptism." It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with the effects of that faith in our lives as it produces death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration of our Lord's death until He comes and our continual fellowship with Him should be preceded by baptism and always by careful self-examination (Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32).

## **Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Civil government has no jurisdiction in spiritual concerns and has no right of dictation to, of

control over, or of interference with matters of spiritual activities. No organic union of church and state should be tolerated, but entire separation maintained; the church should neither ask for nor accept support from civil authority, since to do so would imply the right of civil dictation and control. The support of spiritual services belongs to those who profess it! (Romans 13:17; Acts 4:19,20; Matthew 22:21; I Timothy 2:1-3; I Peter 2:13-17; Luke 20:25).

### **Christ's Second Coming**

We believe in the bodily personal, visible, premillennial and imminent return of Jesus Christ (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10,11; Mark 13:34-37).

This will be accomplished in two stages:

- (1) The Rapture – Christ's second coming for His saints, when Christ will descend into the air to catch away His waiting bride, the church (I Thessalonians 4:14-18; Revelation 3:11).
- (2) The Revelation – Christ's descending with His saints (Jude 14; Romans 8:16-19; Colossians 3:4; Revelation 19:14) to establish the long-promised kingdom and to reign upon earth for a thousand years (Daniel 7:13,14; Luke 1:32,33; Revelation 5:9,10; Revelation 20:4-6).

Between these two stages the great tribulation judgments (7 years) are visited upon the apostate and rebellious world (Matthew 24:21; II Thessalonians 1:3-10; Revelation chapters 6-19).

### **The Judgments**

We believe that the believer's sins were judged in Christ on the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; John 5:24) and that his works will be judged for rewards at the judgment seat of Christ at the time of His coming (I Corinthians 3:8-15; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:8).

We believe that the impenitent wicked will be raised at the second resurrection of the dead to stand in judgment before the great white throne of God. This takes place after the thousand year reign of Christ (Millennium). These will be consigned to the lake of fire (Hell) there to suffer torment forever together with the devil, Antichrist and False Prophet. We believe the souls of the impenitent dead are now in a state of conscious suffering in Hades (Mark 9:43-48; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:9-11; Revelation 20:10-15).

### **The Eternal State**

We believe that after all God's enemies are consigned to their place of punishment, the present order of things will be dissolved and the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness shall be brought in as a final state in which the righteous shall dwell forever (Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22; 2 Peter 3:1-13; Revelation 21:1; Revelation 22:7).