

Statement of Faith

Table of Contents

1.0 THE NATURE OF GOD	1
2.0 THE DEITY OF JESUS.....	2
4.0 THE SCRIPTURES.....	3
5.0 THE NATURE AND FALL OF MAN	3
6.0 THE ELECTION AND REDEMPTION OF MAN.....	4
7.0 THE NEW BIRTH	4
9.0 THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	5
10.0 SANCTIFICATION	6
11.0 DIVINE HEALING.....	6
12.0 THE SACRED INSTITUTIONS OF GOD.....	7
1. THE INSTITUTION OF WORK.....	7
2. THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY.....	8
3. THE INSTITUTION OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT	8
4. THE INSTITUTION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.....	8
13.0 SACRAMENTS AND ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.....	9
A. SACRAMENTS.....	9
1. <i>THE WORD OF GOD</i>	9
2. <i>PRAYER</i>	9
B. ORDINANCES.....	10
1. <i>BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS</i>	10
2. <i>THE LORD'S TABLE</i>	10
3. <i>THE LAYING ON OF HANDS</i>	11
14.0 SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH	11
15.0 THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM	11
16.0 THE ABUNDANT LIFE	12
17.0 CHARITABLE WORKS.....	12
18.0 RESURRECTION AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT	12

1.0 The Nature of God

God is one. Besides Him there is no other god in heaven or earth. Christians believe in one all-powerful God who is expressed in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy

Spirit. We call this community of persons the *Holy Trinity* and refer to them collectively as the *Godhead*. This is perhaps the most wonderful mystery that God reveals about Himself in scripture. God is one being comprised of three persons. These three persons are distinct individuals who are inseparably connected to each other as one complete being. The right understanding of this revelation is absolutely essential to the Christian life. It is important to remember that although we may know, address, and worship each person of the Godhead distinctly, we are never to think that we worship three different “gods.” The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share equally every divine quality and work in perfect union with one another. We serve one God who within Himself is a community of three persons. This must be accepted by faith. (John 14:9-16, Matt. 28:19, Acts 2:33, 1 John 5:6-8, 24, Rom. 1:20, Col. 2:9).

2.0 The Deity of Jesus

Jesus Christ is God. He is the second Person of the Godhead, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The second Person of the Trinity is the central figure of the Christian faith and the Lord of all creation. His name is Jesus. He is without beginning and is known in eternity past as the Living Word. The Bible teaches that through Him, the Father made the universe and all that is in it. He is the one who accomplishes and executes what the Father has planned. He was chosen to take a human nature, born of the virgin Mary, and redeem us from the curse of sin. He carries out the work of salvation that the Father has planned. (John 1:1, 1 John 1:1-2, Hebrews 1:2-3).

3.0 The Person of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a person and He is also God. The third person of God reveals and manifests what the Father has planned, and the Son has accomplished and purchased on our behalf. He is the member of the Trinity who is active upon the earth today, having been sent by the Father and the Son after Jesus’ resurrection. He convicts and draws sinners to Jesus through the preaching of the gospel, and changes the hearts of those who believe in Jesus. He gives new life to believers and secures them in Christ. Then empowers, guides, and connects believers together through the local church. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts and power to each member of the body of Christ so

they might serve God through the work of the church. (John 15:26, Titus 3:5, 1 Corinthians 12:4-9, Hebrews 2:4).

4.0 The Scriptures

When God decided to reveal Himself to the human race, He chose a book to communicate to us. The Bible says that men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. While it is true that God used people to record His words, God was working in a special way in their hearts and minds to record His thoughts without error. This means the words in the Bible contain the complete message spoken by God written down through the people He had chosen. Together, the writings of these holy people became the Bible: the greatest book on earth. Since the Bible is a book that addresses all the basic questions and challenges of life on earth, Christians consider its teachings to be the only authoritative source of faith, and the primary guide to daily living. Because the source of the scriptures is God Himself, the Bible speaks with divine authority that is binding upon the hearts of all true followers of Jesus to mature and grow. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21).

5.0 The Nature and Fall of Man

Human beings were made in God's image as rulers and caretakers over everything He created. Man is a three part being consisting of a spirit, a soul and a physical body. He connects with God through his spirit, having an intellect and emotion through his soul, and living in a physical body. When a person dies, his physical body returns to the earth from which it came. The soul and spirit return to God. At death, those who received Christ as savior are comforted in Heaven and those who did not will face eternal judgment. At the resurrection, the spirit, soul and body will be reunited for eternal punishment or reward (Gen. 1:26, Gen. 3:19, 1 Thess. 5:23, Eccl. 12:7).

We believe that humans were born completely fallen and incapable of restoring himself to favor with his God. We are incapable of pleasing God in our fallen state, therefore mankind deserves nothing but God's everlasting wrath. The fallen nature is present in

all men and separates them from God—spirit, soul and body. Fallen man, if left to himself without God’s gracious intervention, would neither seek nor find God on his own, die in his sins, and perish eternally (Rom. 3:9-12, Eph. 2:1-3).

6.0 The Election and Redemption of Man

The most wonderful and significant characteristic of the human race is that we are the only beings in the universe specifically designed to have an intelligent, intimate, personal relationship with God. He designed us for relationship with Himself. God, who is rich in mercy, has chosen to restore fallen man to Himself by electing to save all those who would believe in His Son from eternal wrath. This offer of salvation is made to all. However, because man is fallen, he is unable to respond on his own. God helps him to do so by His own grace. No man can take credit in any way for his own salvation. It is truly the gift of God (Eph. 2:4-10, 1 Tim. 4:10, Rom. 1:12, John 6:37-40).

We believe that Jesus Christ is the only source of salvation for man and that faith in His finished work is the only way to receive God’s free gift of eternal life. Christ’s redemptive work includes His humanity, sinless life, death upon the cross, descent into Hades (hell), physical resurrection, and triumphant return to heaven. Faith in these events is the only hope for man’s salvation from God’s wrath.

7.0 The New Birth

The Bible teaches that when a person is saved, they actually undergo a complete and total transformation of their human spirit. The core nature of the believer is powerfully, pervasively, and permanently changed. The Christian faith, then, is built not upon a behavioral code, but upon an actual miracle that occurs in the human heart. The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Becoming born again is not a gradual process that takes place over time. It occurs the moment we believe the gospel and confess Jesus as our Lord. God instantly transfers the believer out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of His dear Son. You do not develop gradually into a Christian. There may be a long process prior to the new

birth, in which God works with your life and draws your heart and mind towards Christ. There is a lifelong process after the new birth in which the believer learns to walk in their new nature. You do not develop gradually into a Christian.

8.0 The Believer's Security and Apostasy

The new birth is a radical, powerful, and permanent change in the human spirit. It cannot be reversed because God Himself has determined to keep His own children and finish the work He has begun in (Philippians 1:6). This concept of being permanently a child of God is possible because once the Holy Spirit changes our heart, He seals it. After creating a new spirit within us and dwelling permanently inside our new hearts, He also seals His presence and salvation inside of us, thus guaranteeing our final redemption. This seal is the precious work of God that marks us as God's children for all time and eternity. The evidence of salvation is that your life demonstrates real change. Consistent unrepentant sinful behavior may be a sign that one has not experienced the new birth.

While we acknowledge that the Bible warns the mature believer to guard against abandoning their belief, which is called apostasy (Heb. 6:9), we believe that God has provided "things that accompany salvation" in order to prevent such from occurring in nearly all circumstances. God will correct the fallen believer by allowing them to experience the consequences of their actions. The total abandoning of a person's faith in Christ would result in total separation from God.

9.0 The Gift of the Holy Spirit

In the new birth, the Holy Spirit creates a new spirit inside the believer and comes to dwell permanently inside of them. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a second gift that God offers to all His children – one that gives the believer power to be a witness to others. This special gift is not the same thing as being born again. It is a distinct experience in which the Lord Jesus immerses the born-again believer in the power and life of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has

come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift that infuses spiritual power into the life of the believer, enabling them to become effective witnesses.

This power is a special anointing that produces a heightened sensitivity to the Spirit’s presence, a greater operation of spiritual gifts through the believer, and a deeper hunger for spiritual things and insight into the Word of God. It also introduces the believer to a new dimension of worship and prayer. While there are many signs that may accompany the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit, the initial physical manifestation that God gives to each one is the ability to speak in other tongues (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, 19:6).

10.0 Sanctification

We believe that all God’s children are called to a lifelong process of transformation called sanctification by renewing their minds and yielding their bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God. When believers are born again, they are instantly made new. However, the mind and the body are left largely unchanged by the salvation experience. The mind must be renewed and the body must be subdued. This process is accompanied by regularly feeding the human heart with the anointed teaching and preaching of God’s Word, by individual Bible study and meditation; by personal fellowship with the Lord in worship and prayer; and by consciously making daily decisions to discipline the body. The process continues through the believer’s entire life and is brought to completion upon the Lord’s return (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 1:13, 1 Peter 2:2).

11.0 Divine Healing

We believe that Christ’s death on the cross provides supernatural healing for our physical bodies. (Matt. 8:17). Healing may be experienced through various methods:

- a) The exercise of faith in Bible promises (Mark 11:24)
- b) The laying on of hands (Mark 16:15)

- c) The anointing of oil and prayer of faith by church elders (James 5:14)
- d) The gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:1-12)
- e) The transfer of healing anointing (Acts 19:11-12)

Faith in God's supernatural healing power does not mean we cannot use natural and medicinal remedies. We acknowledge that there are mysteries surrounding the reception of healing by the believer and the administration of it through the Church. The Church is still learning how to walk fully in all that the Bible promises. Failure to receive healing in this lifetime is not necessarily as a result of unbelief or personal sin. However, it is the right and obligation of every believer to resist sickness as an enemy and to actively trust God for life and health. (Matt. 15:21-28, Matt 8:17)

12.0 The Sacred Institutions of God

God has set the following institutions in the earth for the blessing of man and the orderly operation of human society. The bible exhorts us to express special honor and esteem toward certain institutions. A believer may not live a successful life before God without maintaining a proper relationship with each of these institutions.

1. The Institution of Work

We believe that God has set the pattern for the institution of work and man is blessed through the work of his hands. (Gen. 1:26, 2:15, Deut. 28:1-10). This institution of work was given to Adam before the Fall as the primary method of obtaining prosperity and is not the result of the curse of sin. Under normal circumstances, each person is responsible to provide for their own need, their own home, and their own families. The institution of work is to be joyfully received as a gift from the Father, and each person should engage in their work with a spirit of excellence.

Failure to do so places an undue burden upon society and the church. God has given to every person special gifts and abilities that we are to develop in order to find success in life. We further believe that every believer has a responsibility to give and offer to God

tithes of their labors in faithful giving to their local church (1 Thess. 4:11, 2 Thess. 3:10-12, Mal. 3:10-12).

2. The Institution of Marriage and Family

Biblical marriage is a union of one man and one woman through vows of love and commitment made before the families and believers of the local church. The Bible calls marriage such a holy gift from God that everyone is to hold in high respect (Hebrews 13:4). The apostle Paul said that marriage was so sacred that it was the closest thing on earth to the special relationship that Jesus has with His people, the church.

Marriage is the place that God designed for us to express and enjoy our sexual passions. God's church is the place where believers can enter into marriage and learn to enjoy this sacred gift from God. We also acknowledge that while God will bless and enable single parents to raise their children, it is the highest will of God for children to be brought up by a father and mother who are joined by the church in covenant marriage (Gen. 2, 5:1-5; Eph. 5:21-6:4).

3. The Institution of Civil Government

We believe that God has provided the institution of civil government for the general benefit of human society. Government was established by God for the organization of mankind under the rule of law. At the core of this institution is a relationship between man and his community, striking a balance between individual liberty and the general welfare of the society in which he lives. God commands the believer to submit to the governing authority of civil government.

4. The Institution of the Local Church

The church is a community of people who have been born again by faith in Jesus and called together into relationship. We believe that God has commanded His children to join themselves to a local church and the covering of spiritual leadership. Those ministering and leading should make every effort to see that their teaching (doctrinal content) agrees with Scripture, and that their character and conduct reflects the nature of Christ. We understand that those in positions of leadership are human and the word

that is preached must be judged in the light of the written Word of God (Acts 17:11). Active participation in the body life of the local church is essential to fulfilling the will of God for each individual. Commitment to Christ is essential for salvation, but commitment to the local church is essential for maturity. Christians are commanded to support the local church by faithful attendance, regular fellowship, consistent giving, and active service in ministry and outreaches (Matt. 16:18, Heb. 13:7, 17, 10:25, Mal. 3:10).

13.0 Sacraments and Ordinances of the Church

We believe that God has set in the church the following as sacraments and ordinances.

A. Sacraments

The word sacrament comes from a Latin word that means a “sacred or holy practice.” While we ardently teach that salvation is by grace through faith alone, we acknowledge that God, in His infinite wisdom, has established a means whereby special grace for personal maturity may be obtained by the believer. Sacraments are:

1. The Word of God

The Word is spiritual food. Just as our natural bodies require food to live and grow, so our spiritual being requires that Word of God to grow and reach its potential. Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone (natural food), but by receiving every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4). The only way to grow into maturity is by feeding on the Word of God daily and acting upon it in your life. The sacrament of God’s Word may be received through personal study of the Bible and by the hearing of anointed teaching and preaching through ministers of the local church. (Rom. 10:17).

2. Prayer

We believe there is no clearer commandment of God in scripture than that “men ought always to pray and not faint” (Luke 18:1). Prayer may be seen as both a sacrament and an ordinance in the New Testament. As the primary source of fellowship with the Father, Jesus commanded His disciples that His Father’s house should be a house of prayer (Matt. 21:13). The ministers of the early Church knew their primary

responsibilities were to the ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4). Believers are encouraged to continue steadfastly in prayer (Col. 4:2) and to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17).

B. Ordinances

Ordinances are practices commanded by God to be administered by the local church as signs of personal faith and sources of special gifts and blessings.

1. Baptism of Believers

Water baptism is a sacred rite of initiation into the body of Christ. While the event in itself does not save us, The Lord never intended for us to be saved without experiencing it. Baptism is designed to accompany our faith as an outward expression of our love for Jesus Christ. Throughout the book of Acts, whenever anyone believed in Jesus Christ they were immediately baptized in water by immersion. Baptism is the doorway into participation in the local church community. We believe that there is a mighty anointing or power of God present in water baptism to bring about deliverance from sinful habits and personal bondages (Acts 2:38, 8:38, Mark 16:16, Acts 22:16, Rom. 6:3).

2. The Lord's Table

Communion is a sacred event that demonstrates our ongoing fellowship and intimate connection with the Body of Christ. It is a celebration of our relationship with Jesus and His family – the church. While there is nothing in scripture that forbids believers from receiving the Lord's Supper in private devotion, the biblical purpose of communion is to commune with Christ and His assembled family. The word commune means to share intimately with one another. It is the basis of the word community. Therefore, holy Communion is a sacred event that should be experienced with the full community of believers in the local church. We view the elements of bread and wine as representative symbols of His shed Blood and broken Body. The covenant bread and wine are not to be icons of worship or adoration but are taken in memory and celebration of redemption through identification with the Savior's sacrifice on the cross (Matt. 26:26, 1 Cor. 11:24).

3. The Laying On Of Hands

One of the foundational teachings of the church is called the “laying on of hands” (Hebrews 6:2). This truth is often neglected, but it is an essential part of the ministry of the local church. Because it involves physical contact between at least two individuals, we can know with certainty that this special ordinance is designed for the visible local church. We believe this is an ordinance for which special dedications, gifts, ministries and offices are extended and bestowed upon individual believers by the ministers of the church. Hebrews 6:2 calls the laying on of hands a fundamental teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ. This ordinance may be practiced by believers apart from the local church, but is particularly given to the Church for the following biblical purposes:

- a) Dedication of Infants and Children (Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:16)
- b) Healing of the Sick and Oppressed (Mark 5:23, 6:1-5, 8:23, Luke 4:40, 13:13, Mark 16:18, Acts 5:12, 28:8, James 4:14)
- c) Appointing church leaders (Acts 6:6, 13:1-5, 1 Tim. 4:14, 1 Tim. 5:22)
- d) Impartation of Spiritual Gifts and Blessings (Acts 8:17-19, 9:17, 19:6-11, 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6)

14.0 Support of the Church

We believe that each believer is to give of their time, talent and treasury in support of the local church and its witness to the world. We recognize the giving of tithes, offerings, and alms as a commandment to be regularly practiced by every believer. The Church has been given special authority to collect offerings for the purposes of preaching the Gospel, supporting ministers, funding ministries, building houses of worship and service, and charitable works on behalf of the poor and needy (Heb. 7:5-9, Matt. 23:23, 2 Cor. 8, 9, Matt. 5:42, Luke 6:38, Acts 4:32-36).

15.0 The Church and the Kingdom

We believe that the Kingdom of God has both a present and future manifestation. The Body of Christ operating through the organized local church is the present physical manifestation of the Kingdom in the earth today. Every believer is a member of the

Kingdom and carries it within them wherever they go. This Kingdom is visible through the active ministry of God's people through the local church, the establishing of strong families, and by living lives of personal excellence as productive members of society (Luke 17:21, Mark 4:26-32, Acts 1:8).

16.0 The Abundant Life

We believe the promise of the abundant life for all believers who live disciplined, focused and spiritually passionate lives. This promise includes the blessing of material prosperity which God has made available to all those who place the Kingdom of God as their highest priority in life. This can be achieved when a believer embraces the sacred institution of work, makes a commitment to personal excellence and faithfully gives tithes offerings and alms as directed by the New Testament scriptures. We further believe that every believer is called to achieve their highest potential in body, mind and spirit. The primary purpose of material prosperity is to enable the believer to enjoy the goodness of the Lord while generously giving to the work of the Gospel throughout the world.

17.0 Charitable Works

We believe that God has commanded the Church to extend His grace in the world by performing charitable works on behalf of the poor and most needy members of society. The Gospel of Jesus offers hope of eternal life while meeting the needs of this life. We desire to be a visible witness of Christ by seeking the neediest members of our communities and developing creative solutions to relieve their suffering. "Let your light so shine among men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5, James 1:27).

18.0 Resurrection and Eternal Judgment

God's Word teaches that every human being will one day be judged for their sins. God will hold every human accountable for their lives and will require payment for the sins they have committed. This fact is a frightening and inescapable reality that faces every man and woman who is born in this world. The way God deals with us will be according

to what we do with the work of His Son. Someday we who have believed in Jesus are going to stand before Him and receive rewards we have earned in this life. One by one, each of us will hear the names and see the awards given out to every believer for the work they did for Jesus.

We will also be evaluated for our carnal deeds. Even the most diligent believers will realize on that day how much more they could have lived to honor Christ. The unbeliever will appear before God Himself. On this day God will hold the unbeliever accountable for their own sins and sentence them to be condemned for the rejection of His Son. This judgement will result in condemnation of the unbeliever and their removal from the presence of God. The scripture refers to this as the day of the Lord's wrath. It is the approaching and horrible future for the human race outside of Jesus Christ.

We believe that after these things, the elements shall be burned with a fervent heat, thus passing away. Then God shall create a new heaven and a new earth where there shall be no more tears, no more pain, and nothing that will hurt or destroy. Then the dwelling place of God shall be with men, and we who have received God's free gift of salvation shall enjoy eternity in the presence of our triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2 Peter 3:10; Dan. 12:3; Rev. 21-22).

In light of these sacred truths, we invite men everywhere to repent of their sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved into the Abundant Life that God has promised to all who receive Him as Lord and Savior.



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