

ARTICLE III
DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

I. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (I Cor. 2:7-14; II Pet. 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (I Thess. 2:13; I Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (II Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed.

We teach the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We teach that the Bible is to be the true center of Christian fellowship and the Divine standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried (Matt. 5:18, 24:35; Jn. 10:35, 16:12-13, 17:17; I Cor. 2:13; II Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; II Pet. 1:19-21; I Thess. 2:13).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (II Pet. 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; II Tim. 3:16).

II. GOD

We teach that there is one and only one true and living God, an infinite Spirit who is the Maker and Supreme Ruler of the universe. We teach the Scriptures reveal Him to be holy, sovereign, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal, unchangeable and full of love, justice, goodness, mercy and truth. Although there is only one God, we teach that in the unity of the Godhead there are three eternal and co-equal Persons; The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. We teach these members of the Trinity are the same in substance, having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfections, but are distinct in subsistence, executing different but harmonious functions (Isa. 44:6; Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19; Mk. 12:29; Jn. 4:24, II Cor. 13:14). God the Father is the first person of the Trinity and orders all things according to His own purpose and grace. He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). He upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events. He is the Father of all mankind, of Israel, of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all who believe (Gen. 1:10-13; Ex. 4:23; I Chron. 29:11; Ps. 2:7, 145:8-9; I Cor. 8:6; Gal. 3:26; Eph. 1:11, 3:9, 3:15). God the Son is the second Person of the Trinity and

is equal with The Father and Holy Spirit (Jn. 10:30, 14:9). He was the primary instrument of creation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2). In the incarnation, He accepted all the characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9). He was virgin born (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25), lived a sinless life, and accomplished our redemption through His voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory death on the cross (Jn. 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25, 5:8; I Pet. 2:24). His literal, physical resurrection (I Cor. 15:20-23; Matt. 28:6) secured the justification and eternal life of all who place their faith in Him (Jn. 5:26-29, 14:19). It also confirmed His claims of Deity and Redeemer. As the head of the church He presently intercedes for believers (Heb. 7:25), leads the church (Eph. 1:22), and is preparing a place for His own (Jn. 14:2). He will return to receive the church at the Rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18), and establish His kingdom at the end of the Tribulation (Rev. 19:11-16). He is the final judge of all mankind (Rev. 20:11-15; Matt. 25:31-46). God the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is equal with The Father and The Son. He is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity (Matt. 28:19; Jn. 16:13; Acts 5:3-4, 28:25-26; Rom. 15:13; I Cor. 2:10-13, 12:4-6, 11; II Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 9:14; Ps. 139:7-10; Isa. 40:13-14; Jer. 31:31-34). He was active in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the writing of Scripture (II Pet. 1:20-21) and the work of salvation (Jn. 3:5-7). He was sent by the Father and Son at Pentecost (Jn. 14:16-17, 15:26) to begin the church age (Acts 2:1-47; I Cor. 12:13). His ministry includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (Jn. 16:7-9), glorifying The Son (Jn. 15:26, 16:14), and transforming believers into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29; II Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22). He baptizes and regenerates all believers into Christ's Body (Jn. 3:4-8; I Cor. 12:13). He also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers for service and seals all Christians (Rom. 8:9; II Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13). He is the Divine author of all Scripture (II Pet. 1:19-21) and fills (controls) obedient believers (Eph. 5:18). The Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church for edification and evangelization. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (Jn. 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11; II Cor. 3:18). We teach that the gifts of the Spirit can be divided into two broad categories-sign gifts and edifying gifts. Sign gifts are given to authenticate the message and messenger of the Gospel during times and in places where it has not been preached. Edifying gifts are given to the Church for the purpose of strengthening the Body. We teach that the gift offices of apostle and prophet (as foretelling) are

foundational and revelatory in nature and are not for this day because the inspired canon is complete. The other non-revelatory gifts may still be exercised in times and places appropriate to them and within the guidelines for their exercise as defined in Scripture.

However, since the modern tongues movement in America has been the source of great confusion, debate and divisiveness within the Church, it is the position of this local Body not to condone nor promote the speaking of tongues within our services.

III. MAN

We teach mankind was created by God in His image. He was created without sin, with a free will and morally responsible to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; James 3:9). Man was to join all creation in bringing glory to God (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11). Mankind sinned in Adam, lost his innocence, and incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death. He became hopelessly lost and incapable of being reunited to the Creator. Only God's grace makes salvation possible (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; I Tim. 2:13-14; I Jn. 1:8). All men are sinners by nature, by choice and by God's declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:1-8, 23, 5:10-12).

IV. SALVATION

We teach salvation is wholly a work of God's grace. Human merit or work is not involved (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:4-7, 2:8-10; I Pet. 1:18-19).

Regeneration is the act of God by which He effects or brings about the New Birth in a believer. The Holy Spirit is the personal agent in this process (Jn. 1:13, 3:3-13, 5:21; Tit. 3:5). The end result of regeneration is a miraculous, developing change in attitude and conduct (I Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10; II Cor. 3:18).

Election is the eternal act of God, by which, in His sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, He chooses certain ones out of a number of sinful men to be recipients of the special grace of His Spirit, and to be made voluntary partakers of Christ's salvation (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; II Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 2:10; I Pet. 1:1-2). God draws the elect to Himself and they come to Him (Jn. 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8), but they are also responsible to repent and believe (Eze. 18:23, 32, 33:11; Jn. 3:18-19, 36, 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; II Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 22:17).

Justification is the act of God by which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith. He declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law, but to be restored to His favor (Rom. 3:20, 26, 8:33; 1:17; Gal. 3:11, 12; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 11:4, 7).

Sanctification is that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened.

A believer is positionally sanctified (made holy) at salvation (Acts 20:32; I Cor. 1:2, 30, 6:11; II Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11, 3:1, 10:10, 14, 13:12; I Pet. 1:2), but is progressively brought into Christ-like maturity to God (I Thess. 5:23; Phil. 1:6, 3:15; Jn. 14:17, 18; II Cor. 3:18).

Security is the doctrine that those who are regenerated are kept by God's power and are those secure in Christ forever. They cannot lose their salvation (Jn. 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:1, 31-39; I Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25, 13:5; I Pet. 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments. Out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. (Rom. 12:1-2; I Cor. 5:9-13; II Cor. 6:15-7:1; II Tim. 3:1-5).

Believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thess. 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2) and be in continual pursuit of Holiness (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Tit. 2:11-14; I Jn. 3:1-10).

V. THE CHURCH

We teach that the church is composed of individuals who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and at the moment of their acceptance of Him, are placed by the Holy Spirit into one united Body (I Cor. 12:12-13) which is the bride of Christ (II Cor. 12:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8). Jesus Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18). The church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-18). The church is not Israel (I Cor. 10:32) but is a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6, 5:32). Within the universal church there are local bodies (Acts 14:23, 27, 20:17, 28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; I Thess. 1:1; II Thess. 1:1) which organize and practice the doctrines of New Testament Christianity (I Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25).

The Biblically designated officers of the church, serving under Christ, are the elders (also called bishops, pastors, or pastor-teachers, Acts 20: 28; Eph. 4:11), and deacons. These must meet Biblical qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-5). They are to lead by serving and directing the church (Heb. 13:7, 17; I Tim. 5:17; I Pet. 1:1-5). There may also be an office of deaconess (I Tim. 3:11; Rom. 16:1).

The local church is autonomous, free from external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit. 1:5). The local church may cooperate with other churches or organizations as it feels directed (Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; I Cor. 5:4-7, 13; I Pet. 5:1-4).

All Christians are called to serve in the ministry of the church family (I Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 22:12). God has given spiritual gifts to the church for equipping and doing the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12). Each believer has a unique gift(s) for fulfilling this purpose (Rom. 12:5-8; I Cor. 12:4-31; I Pet. 4:10-11).

The ultimate purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (II Tim. 2:2, 15, 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; I Jn. 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Lk. 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8, 2:42).

We teach that no individual (self-proclaimed faith healer) possesses the gift of healing today but God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Lk. 18:1-6; Jn. 5:7-9; II Cor. 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; I Jn. 5:14-15).

Two ordinances have been committed to the local church-Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Acts 2:38-40). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (I Cor. 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ Who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (I Cor. 10:16).

VI. ANGELS

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Angels are created to serve God and to worship Him (Lk. 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14, 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14, 19:10, 22:9).

Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isa. 14:12-17; Eze. 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom.

16:20) and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isa. 14:12-17; Eze. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

VII. LAST THINGS

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Phil. 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (I Thess. 4:13-17) which initiates the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:8).

There is a bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Jn. 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; II Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).

The souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Lk. 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrected body will be united (Jn. 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell and the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; II Thess. 1:7-9).

The Rapture is the bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven year tribulation (I Thess. 4:16; Tit. 2:13) to translate His church from this earth (Jn. 14:1-3; I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess. 4:15-5:11) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10). Although the pre-tribulation rapture is the majority position of this Body, we also acknowledge there are other views which are embraced by God's elect; and may be held by members of this Body.

Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth (Jn. 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1, II Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16). This is the Tribulation Period. These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27:31, 25:31-46; II Thess. 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6). The period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31, 25:31-46).

After the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11, 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7).

This is the Second Coming. At this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Eze. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).

The Millennial Reign itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isa. 65:17-25; Eze. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29). This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Eze. 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7).

Following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev. 20:9). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10) whereupon Christ, Who is the judge of all men (Jn. 5:22) will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

This resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Rom. 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

After the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (II Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:7-15), the saved will enter the Eternal State of Glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (II Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Jn. 17:3; Rev. 21, 22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (I Cor. 15:24-28) and in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (I Cor. 15:28).