

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH: WHAT WE BELIEVE

Section A. About God

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; II Corinthians 13:14; I Peter 1:2

God is the one and only God. God has eternally existed in three persons forever and reveals Himself to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three as the Trinity are co-equal and are one God. They are the same in essence, but different in function. We owe Him our utmost love, reverence, and obedience.

Section B. About God the Father

Genesis 2:7; Exodus 3:14, 6:2-3, 15:11, 20:1; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4, 32:6; I Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3, 15, 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10, 17:13; Matthew 6:9, 7:11, 23:9, 28:19; John 4:24, 5:26, 14:6-13, 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; I Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6, 12:9; I Peter 1:17; I John 5:7

God is the Creator and reigns supreme over His universe. He is all-powerful, all loving and all wise. He is Father to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, and He is fatherly in attitude toward all mankind.

Section C. About God the Son

Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:22-23; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:1-5, 14:10-31; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; I Corinthians 15:3-4; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; I Timothy 6:14-15; Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:25; Titus 2:13-14

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all on the Cross. He arose from the dead after three days. He ascended into Heaven and prays for His people continually. He will return in power and glory for His people and later come to the earth to judge and reign.

Section D. About God the Holy Spirit

John 4:24, 14:15-26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16, 12:4-7, 13; II Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 5:18

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He inspired men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination, He enables mankind to understand truth as mankind pursues a relationship with God in prayer, Scripture study, and worship. He is present in the world to make mankind aware of our need for Jesus Christ. He lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His control daily. He imparts spiritual gifts as He pleases and produces spiritual fruit for both ministry and character. No one individual gift is given as a sign of salvation or as the manifestation of the infilling of the Spirit. He baptizes us all into the body of Christ at salvation, and wants to fill us repeatedly throughout our lives.

Section E. About the Bible

Psalm 12:6, 119:105, 160; II Timothy 1:13, 3:15-16; II Peter 1:20-21

The Bible is God's Word to all mankind. Men under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit wrote it. It is the supreme source and continuous revelation of truth and authority for Christian beliefs and living. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth for its matter. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Section F. About Mankind

Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6, 59:1-2; Romans 3:23; John 3:16

We are all made in the spiritual image of God to be like Him in character. We are the supreme object of God's creation and love, and because He loved, Christ died for mankind; therefore, every man and woman is created equal in God's love and possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. Although mankind has tremendous potential for good, we are marred by self-centeredness and sin. These have separated us from God.

Section G. About Salvation

John 1:12, 3:3, 14:6; Acts 20:21; Romans 1:4, 6:23; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

Because of mankind's sin and separation from God, we need God's gift of salvation. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can we be saved from sin's penalty. We confess our sins, receive Christ by faith, and turn from our sins. We believe that Jesus died on the cross for us and rose from the dead to purchase eternal life. We are then spiritually born again and made into new creations.

Section H. About Eternity

Matthew 25:41; John 3:16; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:15, 21:27

We were all created to exist forever. God has given us a choice. We will either exist eternally separated from God by our sin or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. The place of eternal separation from God and ultimate judgment is called Hell. Heaven is the place of perfect eternal fellowship and eternal life with God. After our current life on earth, we begin an eternity in Heaven or Hell.

Section I. About Eternal Security

John 10:29; II Timothy 1:12; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10-14; I Peter 1:3-5

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in that salvation forever. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. The true child of God will persevere.

Section J. About the Church

Acts 2:41-47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 4:4-6; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3

The church is composed of baptized believers and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ subject to His leadership through the Holy Spirit. It expresses itself both universally and locally. All Christians around the world throughout the history of time compose the church universal. The local church is a contemporary community expression of this larger body of believers associated by a covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. It gathers regularly for worship, instruction, fellowship and service. Its members are equally responsible, and its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

Every believer is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to help the local church act as one body, representing Jesus Christ on earth. Believers are called to be priests, and ministry is at the center of Christian discipleship. The determining qualification for service in a leadership position in this church is the call of God as determined through prayer as a church family. This church will elect leaders as God directs, understanding that God can call anyone whom He determines will fulfill the mission and vision of His Church.

Section K. About Church Ordinances

Matthew 3:13-17, 26:26-30, 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:35-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 10:16, 21, 11:23-29

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a symbolic act of obedience displaying the new believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior. It also pictures the believer's death to the old life and resurrection to a new life in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby followers of Christ, through the partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of Christ, examine themselves spiritually and anticipate His return.

Section L. About Last Things

Isaiah 2:4, 11; Matthew 16:27, 25:31-45; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:10-11, 17:31; I Corinthians 15:35-38; I Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-9; II Thessalonians 2:1-4; Revelation 19:9-21:8

Jesus promised to come again to receive His people to Himself for fellowship in Heaven. God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly to the earth to judge the nations and rule on the earth. Believers, in their glorified and resurrected bodies, will dwell forever with the Lord, while the lost will be punished forever.

Section M. About Evangelism and Missions

Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39 to 12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17

Baptists are an evangelistic people and consider it a duty and privilege to try to make disciples of all nations. The teachings of Christ repeatedly stress the necessity to take the gospel message to lost people everywhere individually and as His church. God loves all people and wants none to be lost. He has directed us to express His love as His missionaries to the world.

Section N. About Stewardship

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18, 12:17; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:10-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19

All that we have and are we owe to God. He is the source of all blessings. We, therefore, are debtors under obligation to serve God with our time, talents, and material possessions. We are taught to tithe and that ten percent of our wealth belongs to God. The Scriptures teach that we are to contribute of our means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of God's work on earth.

Section O. About Religious Liberty

Matthew 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1, 13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19

A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal. This ideal implies the right of free and unhindered access to God by all men and women and the right to form, express, and propagate religious ideas and opinions without interference of the civil power. The state owes protection and full freedom to every church to pursue its spiritual ends, and Christians owe obedience to government in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. Thus, the church and state, though mutually supportive, must be separate.

Section P. About the Christian Life

Psalms 119:9-10; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 6:9-13; Acts 1:8, 2:41-42; Hebrews 10:25; 1 John 3:21-22

A Christian life is one of spiritual growth and an unending pursuit of holiness in obedience and faith under the Lordship of Christ through the power of the Spirit. We serve a living and true God who loves us and wants our love in return. We experience prayer, worship, discipleship training, nurture, and service in a local church to prepare ourselves to reach a needy world. We serve God by living in faith and obedience and by sharing His love with others. We witness for Him by reflecting the character of Christ in our lives, as we live in our community.

