

The Dead Church Movement DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The Scriptures

We believe that the entire Bible is inspired of God and that holy men of God "were moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the sacred writings - historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic - as appeared in the original manuscripts. We believe that the whole Bible (66 books) in the originals is, therefore, without error. We believe that all the Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction. (Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22; 23; 28:23; Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 10:11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

The Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence, and obedience. (Genesis 1:2, 27; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:1,14; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6)

Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels; that Satan, "Lucifer, son of the morning," the highest in rank, sinned through pride; that a great company of the angels followed him in moral fall, some of whom became demons and are active as his agents and associates in carrying out his unholy purposes, while others who fell are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (Ezekiel 28:11-19; 1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6)

We believe that Satan is the originator of sin, and that, under the permission of God, he, through subtlety, led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped; and that he who in the beginning said, "I will be like the most High," in his warfare appears as an angel of light, even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering religious movements and systems of doctrine, which systems in every case are characterized by a denial of the efficacy of the blood of Christ and of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. (Genesis 3:1-19; Romans 5:12-14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 4:1-3)

We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, though not then executed, and that he, a usurper, now rules as the "god of this world;" that, at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years, and after the thousand years he will be loosed for a little season and then "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone," where he "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Colossians 2:15; Revelation 20:1-3,10)

We believe that an even greater number of angels confirmed their holy estate and are before the throne of God, from where they are sent forth as ministering spirits to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Luke 15:10; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 7:11-12)

Mankind, Created and Fallen

We believe that mankind was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, and thereafter fell through sin, consequently losing spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins and subject to the power of the devil. We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted to the entire human race, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no spark of divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably evil apart from divine grace. (Genesis 1:26; 2:17; 6:5; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:53; Romans 3:10-19; 8:6-7; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 5:6; 1 John 3:8)

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. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 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)

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 elders) of Stonebriar Community Church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)

The First Advent

We believe that the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy, and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the virgin, and received a human body and a sinless human nature. (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:18; 3:16; Hebrews 4:15)

We believe that, on the human side, He became and remained a perfect man; however, sinless throughout His life; yet He retained His absolute deity, being at the same time very God and very man, and that His earth-life sometimes functioned within the sphere of that which was human and sometimes within the sphere of that which was divine. (Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2; Philippians 2:5-8)

We believe that in fulfillment of prophecy He came first to Israel as her Messiah-King, and that, being rejected by that nation, He, according to the eternal counsels of God, gave His life as a ransom for all. (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Timothy 2:6)

We believe that, in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely-provided sacrificial Lamb and thereby took away the sin of the world, bearing the holy judgments against sin that the righteousness of God must impose. His death was therefore substitutionary in the most absolute sense the just for the unjust and by His death He became the Savior of the lost. (John 1:29; Romans 3:25-26; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 3:18)

We believe that, according to the Scriptures, He miraculously arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers. (John 20:20; Philippians 3:20-21)

We believe that when He ascended from the earth, He was accepted by His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished. (Hebrews 1:3)

We believe that He became Head over all things to the church, which is His body, and in His current ministry He never ceases to intercede and advocate for the saved. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1)

Salvation Only Through Christ

We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however impressive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven. A new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are children of God. We believe, also, that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our place; and that no feeling, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church can result in salvation. (Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24)

The Extent of Salvation

We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises saving faith in Christ, which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new, being justified freely by grace, accepted before the Father as Christ, His Son, is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessings and to know a fuller measure of divine power through the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ. (John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:1; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 2:10; 1 John 4:17; 5:11-12)

Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart unto God, is threefold. It is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. We believe, however, that he still struggles with habit patterns and vestiges from his former sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life.

There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace," and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe also that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him." (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 7:1; Ephesians 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14, 12:10)

We believe that he is called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that he will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord. (Romans 6:11-13; 8:2, 4, 12-13; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 2:1-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7; 3:5-9)

Eternal Security

We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, those once saved shall be kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the willful disobedience of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son. (John 5:24; 10:28; 14:16-17; 17:11; Romans 8:28-39; Ephesians 1:11-14; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1-2; 5:13; Jude 24)

Assurance

We believe it is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior; and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children love, gratitude, and obedience. (Luke 10:20; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-8; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 10:22-23; 1 John 5:13)

The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a unique manner on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise. We believe He dwells in every believer, and by His baptism unites all to Christ in one body, and that He, as the Indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We believe that He never departs from the universal church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ; seeking to occupy believers with Him and not with themselves nor with their experiences. We believe that His abode in the world in this special sense will cease when

Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the church. (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 2:22; 2 Thessalonians 2:7)

We believe that, in this age, certain well-defined ministries are committed to the Holy Spirit, and that it is the duty of every Christian to understand them and to be adjusted to them in his own life and experience. These ministries are the restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world respecting sin, righteousness, and judgment; the regenerating of all believers; the indwelling and anointing of all who are saved, thereby sealing them unto the day of redemption; the baptizing into the one body of Christ all who are saved; and the continued filling for power, teaching, and service of those among the saved who are yielded to Him and who are subject to His will. (John 3:6; 16:7-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27)

The Church, A Unity of Believers

We believe that all who are united to the risen and ascended Son of God are members of the church, which is the body and bride of Christ, which began at Pentecost and remains completely distinct from Israel. Its members are constituted as such regardless of membership or nonmembership in the organized churches of earth. We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ's, whether Jews or Gentiles, and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all racial prejudices or sectarian differences, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently. (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15)

The Ordinances

We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church and that they are a testimony for the church in this age. (Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; 1 Corinthians 11:26)

The Christian's Service

We believe that divine, enabling gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit, and each is called to his own divinely appointed service as the Spirit sovereignly determines. In the apostolic church there were certain gifted individuals - apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers - who were appointed by God for the perfecting of the saints unto their work of the ministry. We believe also that today some are especially called of God to be evangelists, pastors and teachers, and that it is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Ephesians 4:11-13)

We believe that, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, rewards are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in his service for his Lord, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself. (1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Giving

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, should give to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the principle of giving whereby Christians should give regularly and cheerfully to the support of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the offering once the gift has been made. (Genesis 14:20; Proverbs 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

The Great Commission and Missions

We believe that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved that they are sent forth by Him into all the world even as He was sent forth of His Father into the world. We believe that, after they are saved, they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors and witnesses, and that their primary purpose in life should be to make Christ known to the whole world. 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 available means to go to the foreign nations and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 17:18; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

The Blessed Hope

We believe that, according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air to receive to Himself into heaven both His own who are alive and remain until His coming, and also all who have died in Christ. This event is the blessed hope set before us in the Scripture, and for this we should be constantly looking, since it could occur at any moment. (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14)

The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the period of great tribulation on the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He went, in person on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory to introduce the millennial age, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, to restore Israel to her own land and to give her the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. At that time the whole world will be exposed to the knowledge of God. (Deuteronomy. 30:1-10; Isaiah 11:9; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Matthew 24:15-25, 46; Acts 15:16-17; Romans 8:19-23; 11:25-27; Revelation 20:1-3)

The Eternal State

We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and remain there in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own. At that time those souls and bodies will be reunited and associated with Him forever in glory. The spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body alike shall be reunited and ultimately cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. (Luke 16:19-26; 23:42; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15)