

# Statement of Faith

## I. The Holy Trinity

¶1. We believe in the one<sup>1</sup> triune<sup>2</sup> God, self-existent<sup>3</sup> and everlasting,<sup>4</sup> both holy<sup>5</sup> and loving<sup>6</sup> in nature, of infinite power,<sup>7</sup> wisdom,<sup>8</sup> and goodness;<sup>9</sup> the Creator,<sup>10</sup> Sustainer,<sup>11</sup> and Ruler<sup>12</sup> of all things. God exists in three persons—the Father, the Son,<sup>13</sup> and the Holy Spirit<sup>14</sup>—each eternal in being, equal in power and glory, and identical in essence.

## II. God The Father

¶2. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth—from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things.<sup>15</sup> He intentionally seeks to relate to all people as Father,<sup>16</sup> thereby forever declaring His goodwill toward them. In love, He both seeks and receives sinners, adopting<sup>17</sup> as His children all who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> **Deuteronomy 6:4** “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD”; cf. 2 Sam. 7:22; Isa. 45:21-22; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:5-6.

<sup>2</sup> **Matthew 28:19-20** “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen”; cf. Matt. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:6-27; 15:26; Eph. 2:13-18; 1 Pet. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:4-6.

<sup>3</sup> **John 5:26** “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself”; cf. Ps. 90:1-4.

<sup>4</sup> **Exodus 3:14-15** “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

<sup>5</sup> **Leviticus 19:2** “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy”; cf. Ps. 99:9.

<sup>6</sup> **1 John 4:8** “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

<sup>7</sup> **Psalms 147:5** “Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite.”

<sup>8</sup> **1 Timothy 1:17** “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen”; cf. Ps. 104:24.

<sup>9</sup> **Psalms 119:68** “Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes”; cf. Ps. 25:8.

<sup>10</sup> **Genesis 1:1** “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”; cf. Ps. 90:2; John 1:3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3.

<sup>11</sup> **Colossians 1:17** “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist”; cf. Heb. 1:3.

<sup>12</sup> **Psalms 115:3** “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased”; cf. Ps. 24:8; 1 Chron. 29:11-12.

<sup>13</sup> **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”; cf. John 10:30; 20:28; Phil. 2:6; 1 Tim. 3:16.

<sup>14</sup> **Hebrews 9:14** “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”; cf. 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Pet. 1:21.

<sup>15</sup> **Romans 11:36** “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen”; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6.

<sup>16</sup> **Isaiah 64:8** “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand”; cf. Ps. 68:5; Matt. 6:9, 7:11, 23:9.

<sup>17</sup> **Romans 8:14-15** “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

### III. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

¶3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal<sup>18</sup> and only begotten Son of God,<sup>19</sup> became man without ever ceasing to be God;<sup>20</sup> He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,<sup>21</sup> and lived a sinless life.<sup>22</sup> He died on the cross to be the one sufficient sacrifice for sin<sup>23</sup> and to reconcile all mankind to God.<sup>24</sup> Then He rose bodily the third day from the grave<sup>25</sup> and ascended into Heaven,<sup>26</sup> where He is enthroned at God's right hand as our intercessor.<sup>27</sup> He will return to judge all humanity at the last day.<sup>28</sup>

### IV. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

¶4. We believe the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, truly and eternally God. As the third Person of the Trinity,<sup>29</sup> he continually glorifies Jesus Christ,<sup>30</sup> convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come,<sup>31</sup> regenerates all who repent and trust in Christ for salvation,<sup>32</sup> sanctifies and indwells believers,<sup>33</sup> and guides into all truth.<sup>34</sup> He is ever present, assuring, preserving, guiding, and

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<sup>18</sup> **Hebrews 13:8** "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"; cf. Rev. 1:8.

<sup>19</sup> **1 John 4:9** "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him"; cf. Matt. 3:16-17; John 1:14, 3:16-17.

<sup>20</sup> **Mark 10:45** "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"; cf. John 1:1, 14; Eph. 2:6-8.

<sup>21</sup> Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:27-35.

<sup>22</sup> **1 Peter 2:22** "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"; cf. Heb. 7:26; 1 John 3:5.

<sup>23</sup> **1 Corinthians 15:3** "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures"; cf. 1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 5:15-19.

<sup>24</sup> **Romans 5:10** "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life"; cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:5.

<sup>25</sup> **Mark 16:6** "And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him"; cf. Matt. 28:5-9; Mark 16:12; Luke 24:39; John 20:26-29; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4.

<sup>26</sup> **Acts 1:9** "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

<sup>27</sup> **Romans 8:34** "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"; cf. Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:3; 10:12.

<sup>28</sup> **Acts 1:11** "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

<sup>29</sup> **John 14:26** "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"; cf. Matt. 28:19.

<sup>30</sup> **John 16:13-15** "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you."

<sup>31</sup> **John 16:7-8** "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

<sup>32</sup> **Titus 3:5** "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost"; cf. John 3:5; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6.

<sup>33</sup> **John 14:17** "*Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you"; cf. 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

<sup>34</sup> **John 16:13** "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come"; cf. 1 John 2:20, 27; 1 Cor. 2:10-12.

empowering the believer for godly living and service.<sup>35</sup>

## V. The Holy Scriptures

¶5. We believe that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments constitute the Holy Scriptures and are the written Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit<sup>36</sup> and therefore inerrant in the original writings,<sup>37</sup> and have been transmitted to the present without corruption of any essential doctrine. They contain all that is necessary for our salvation<sup>38</sup> and are the supreme authority for faith and practice.<sup>39</sup> The Old Testament is not contrary to the New;<sup>40</sup> for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind<sup>41</sup> by grace through faith in Christ,<sup>42</sup> who is the only Mediator between God and man.<sup>43</sup> The Holy Scriptures have been given for our comfort in order that we may have hope,<sup>44</sup> and for our correction and instruction in order that we may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.<sup>45</sup>

## VI. Sin and Free Will

¶6. We believe man is fallen from righteousness<sup>46</sup> and, apart from the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is destitute of holiness and inclined to evil.<sup>47</sup> Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.<sup>48</sup> In his own strength, without divine grace, man cannot do good works pleasing

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<sup>35</sup> **2 Corinthians 3:17-18** “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”; cf. Gal. 5:22-25; John 14:16-17.

<sup>36</sup> **2 Peter 1:20-21** “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16.

<sup>37</sup> **1 Peter 1:25** “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you”; cf. John 10:35; Tit. 1:2.

<sup>38</sup> **2 Timothy 3:15** “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”; cf. 2 Tim. 3:17; James 1:21.

<sup>39</sup> **1 Thessalonians 2:13** “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe”; cf. Isa. 8:20; 2 Pet. 3:2.

<sup>40</sup> **Galatians 3:21** “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”; cf. Rom. 3:31; 7:12; 1 Tim. 1:8.

<sup>41</sup> **1 John 5:13** “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God”; cf. Gen. 15:6; Psalms 32:1; Rom. 4:1-9.

<sup>42</sup> **John 5:39** “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”; cf. Rom. 4:1-11; Eph. 2:8; Acts 10:43.

<sup>43</sup> **1 Timothy 2:5** “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

<sup>44</sup> **Romans 15:4** “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”; cf. 1 Cor. 10:11.

<sup>45</sup> **2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work.”

<sup>46</sup> **Romans 5:12** “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

<sup>47</sup> **1 Corinthians 15:22** “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”; cf. Gen. 8:21; Psalms 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-12.

<sup>48</sup> **John 3:3** “Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

and acceptable to God.<sup>49</sup>

¶7. We believe, however, man influenced and empowered by the Holy Spirit is responsible in freedom to exercise his will for good.<sup>50</sup> Through Jesus Christ the prevenient grace of God makes possible what human effort cannot do.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, individuals who reach and retain moral awareness<sup>52</sup> are responsible for their choices and actions. Prevenient grace is bestowed freely upon all mankind, enabling all who will to be saved.<sup>53</sup> Only as a result of the enabling grace of God working in us are we able to perform works that are pleasing and acceptable to God.<sup>54</sup>

¶8. We believe that acts of sin are committed by morally responsible persons choosing to do what they know is wrong<sup>55</sup> or choosing not to do what they know is required.<sup>56</sup> These acts of sin are therefore not to be confused with shortcomings, infirmities, faults, mistakes, failures, or other such deviations from a standard of perfect conduct which are the residual effects of the Fall.<sup>57</sup>

## VIII. Salvation

¶9. We believe that salvation is the gift of God<sup>58</sup> brought to man by grace<sup>59</sup> and freely received through faith<sup>60</sup> and not by our own works.<sup>61</sup> God graciously justifies,<sup>62</sup> regenerates all who repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior,<sup>63</sup> and seals them as His own with the Holy

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<sup>49</sup> **Romans 5:18-21** “Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift* came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord”; cf. Eph. 2:8.

<sup>50</sup> **Romans 6:6-7** “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin”; cf. Rom. 7:1-5; 1 Cor. 10:13.

<sup>51</sup> **1 Corinthians 4:7** “For who maketh thee to differ *from another?* and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it?*”; cf. Tit. 2:11-12; 1 Cor. 15:10; Acts 16:14.

<sup>52</sup> **Isaiah 7:16** “For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings”; cf. Rom. 2:5-6.

<sup>53</sup> **Titus 2:11** “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men”; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:9; Rom. 1:20-21.

<sup>54</sup> **Philippians 2:13** “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure”; cf. 1 Cor. 15:10; Heb. 13:21.

<sup>55</sup> **1 John 3:4** “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law”; cf. John 8:34-36; Rom. 3:23; 6:15-23; 14:23; 1 John 1:9-10; 3:4-10; 5:17.

<sup>56</sup> **James 4:17** “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.”

<sup>57</sup> **Romans 8:26** “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”; cf. Rom. 15:1; Gal. 4:13.

<sup>58</sup> **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

<sup>59</sup> **Acts 15:11** “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.”

<sup>60</sup> **Romans 5:1-2** “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”; cf. Heb. 11:6.

<sup>61</sup> **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast”; cf. Rom. 4:2-5.

<sup>62</sup> **Romans 3:28** “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law”; cf. Rom. 5:9; 8:33; Phil. 3:9.

<sup>63</sup> **Titus 3:5** “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”; cf. Acts 13:38-39; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

Spirit.<sup>64</sup> As the children of God<sup>65</sup> they are restored to fellowship with Him,<sup>66</sup> delivered from the penalty of sin<sup>67</sup> as well as from its willful practice,<sup>68</sup> are initially sanctified,<sup>69</sup> and given assurance of salvation by the Holy Spirit who dwells in them.<sup>70</sup>

## IX. Sanctification

¶10. We believe sanctification is the work of God's grace through the Word and the Spirit, by which those who have been born again are cleansed from sin in their thoughts, words and acts, and are enabled to live in accordance with God's will, and to strive for holiness without which no one will see the Lord.<sup>71</sup>

¶11. Entire sanctification is a state of perfect love, righteousness and true holiness which every regenerate believer may obtain by being delivered from the power of sin, by loving God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and by loving one's neighbor as oneself.<sup>72</sup> Through faith in Jesus Christ this gracious gift may be received in this life both gradually and instantaneously, and should be sought earnestly by every child of God.<sup>73</sup>

¶12. We believe this experience does not deliver us from the infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes common to man, nor from the possibilities of further sin. The Christian must continue on guard against spiritual pride and seek to gain victory over every temptation to sin.<sup>74</sup> He must respond wholly to the will of God so that sin will lose its power over him; and the world, the flesh, and the devil are put under his feet.<sup>75</sup> Thus he rules over these enemies with watchfulness through the power

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<sup>64</sup> **Ephesians 1:13-14** "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

<sup>65</sup> **Galatians 3:26** "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"; cf. John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:5-7.

<sup>66</sup> **1 John 1:7** "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"; cf. 2 Cor. 5:18.

<sup>67</sup> **Romans 5:9** "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

<sup>68</sup> **1 John 3:9**, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God"; cf. 1 Cor. 15:34; Rom. 6:20-22.

<sup>69</sup> **1 Corinthians 6:11** "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:2.

<sup>70</sup> **Romans 8:16** "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"; cf. 1 John 3:24; 4:13.

<sup>71</sup> **1 Thessalonians 5:23-24** "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

<sup>72</sup> **James 4:8** "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded"; cf. Psa. 86:11.

<sup>73</sup> **Romans 12:1-2** "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God"; cf. Rom. 1:8; 6:11-13; Eph. 2:1-3; 3:16-17.

<sup>74</sup> **2 Corinthians 3:18** "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

<sup>75</sup> **2 Corinthians 7:1** "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; cf. 2 Pet. 3:18.

of the Holy Spirit<sup>76</sup> and the instruction of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>77</sup>

## X. Sin after Salvation

¶13. We believe that after we have experienced salvation, it is possible to commit sin and depart from saving faith,<sup>78</sup> for in this life there is no such height of holiness from which it is impossible to fall.<sup>79</sup> But by the grace of God, one who has fallen into sin may by repentance and faith find forgiveness and restoration.<sup>80</sup>

## XI. Good Works

¶14. We believe good works are the necessary fruit of faith<sup>81</sup> and follow salvation<sup>82</sup> but cannot save us from our sins or prevent divine judgment.<sup>83</sup> They are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ,<sup>84</sup> adorn the doctrine of God,<sup>85</sup> and by them a living faith may be evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.<sup>86</sup>

## XII. The Church

¶15. We believe there is One Divine Church in which God calls and places the Members in His church universal, which composes the entire body of believers in Jesus Christ,<sup>87</sup> who is its founder and only Head,<sup>88</sup> in whom it is being built into a holy dwelling place of God by the Spirit.<sup>89</sup> The

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<sup>76</sup> **Titus 2:12** “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

<sup>77</sup> **John 6:63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life”

<sup>78</sup> Rom. 11:17-24; Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:18-22; Gal. 5:4.

<sup>79</sup> **1 Timothy 4:1** “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils”; cf. Ezek. 18:24; John 15:4-6, 1 Tim. 1:18-19; 4:16; Heb. 10:26-29; Rev. 2:5.

<sup>80</sup> **1 John 2:1** “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”; cf. 1 John 1:9; 2:12; Matt. 18:21-22.

<sup>81</sup> Jam. 2:20-26.

<sup>82</sup> **Ephesians 2:10** “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”; cf. Tit. 2:14.

<sup>83</sup> **Galatians 2:16** “knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified”; cf. Gal. 5:6; Rom. 3:20.

<sup>84</sup> **Matthew 5:16** “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”; cf. John 15:8, 1 Pet. 2:12; Tit. 3:8, 14.

<sup>85</sup> **1 Timothy 2:10** “But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works”; cf. Tit. 2:10.

<sup>86</sup> **Colossians 1:10** “that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”; cf. Matt. 7:16-20, Phil. 1:11; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 10:24.

<sup>87</sup> **Romans 12:5** “So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one Members one of another”; cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1.

<sup>88</sup> **Ephesians 1:22-23** “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”; cf. Matt 16:18; Eph. 5:23-24; Heb. 12:2.

<sup>89</sup> **Ephesians 2:19-22** “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”

mission of the Church is to make Christlike<sup>90</sup> disciples of all nations<sup>91</sup> through the proclamation of the Word of God,<sup>92</sup> the administration of the sacraments,<sup>93</sup> the exercise of the Spirit's gifts,<sup>94</sup> and obedience to all that Christ commands.<sup>95</sup>

¶16. A local church is a body of believers who agree to be governed by Scripture and to meet together regularly<sup>96</sup> for the purposes of worship,<sup>97</sup> mutual edification,<sup>98</sup> discipleship,<sup>99</sup> fellowship,<sup>100</sup> evangelism,<sup>101</sup> and good works.<sup>102</sup>

¶17. We believe that the church is the family of God on earth and in heaven.<sup>103</sup>

### XIII. The Sacraments

¶18. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ<sup>104</sup> and ordained as a means of grace when received through faith. They are signs of our profession of faith and of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, He works within us, refreshing, strengthening, and confirming our faith in Him.

¶19. *Baptism.* We believe that water baptism serves as a symbol of regeneration or the new birth.<sup>105</sup> It

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<sup>90</sup> **Ephesians 4:11-13** "And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"; cf. 1 Cor 14:26; Titus 2:14.

<sup>91</sup> **Matthew 28:18-20** "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.' Amen."

<sup>92</sup> **2 Timothy 4:2** "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."; cf. 1 Tim 4:16.

<sup>93</sup> Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:20-34.

<sup>94</sup> **1 Corinthians 12:7** "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*"; cf. Eph. 4:13-16.

<sup>95</sup> **Matthew 28:20** "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.' Amen."

<sup>96</sup> **Hebrews 10:25** "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*; and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."

<sup>97</sup> **Acts 13:2** "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

<sup>98</sup> **Hebrews 10:24** "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works?"; cf. 1 Cor. 14:23-26.

<sup>99</sup> Acts 15:35; Eph. 5:21; Matt. 18:15-17.

<sup>100</sup> Acts 2:41-47.

<sup>101</sup> **1 Corinthians 14:24-25** "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

<sup>102</sup> **Galatians 6:10** "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."

<sup>103</sup> **Ephesians 3:14-15** "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,"

<sup>104</sup> **Matthew 28:19** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; cf. 1 Cor. 11:25.

<sup>105</sup> **Romans 6:3-5** "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

signifies acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ,<sup>106</sup> rejection of one's former life of sin,<sup>107</sup> and identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.<sup>108</sup> By means of this sacrament, believers declare their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.<sup>109</sup> Baptism is for those who have consciously renounced their sins, accepted Christ as Savior, and are committed to following Him.

¶20. *The Lord's Supper.* We believe that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption through Christ's death<sup>110</sup> and of our hope in His victorious return,<sup>111</sup> as well as a sign of the love that Christians have for each other.<sup>112</sup> To such as receive it in a worthy manner, with humility and faith,<sup>113</sup> the Lord's Supper becomes a means through which God communicates grace to the heart.

¶21. We regard the practice of washing one another's feet as modeled and taught by Jesus to be a demonstration of love, humility, and service to one another, pointing beyond itself to a way of life. In the life of the church, the foot washing service is an occasion for reconciliation, affirmation of one another, and testimony of God's grace.<sup>114</sup>

## XIV. Divine Healing

¶22. We believe in the Bible doctrine of divine healing<sup>115</sup> and urge our people to offer the prayer of faith for the healing of the sick.<sup>116</sup> We also believe God heals through the means of medical

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<sup>106</sup> **Acts 2:38** "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

<sup>107</sup> **Colossians 2:11-12** "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

<sup>108</sup> Rom. 6:3-5.

<sup>109</sup> **Acts 2:41** "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls"; cf. Acts 8:12; 18:8.

<sup>110</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me"; cf. Matt. 26:26-29.

<sup>111</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:26** "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

<sup>112</sup> **1 Corinthians 10:16-17** "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."

<sup>113</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:27-29** "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

<sup>114</sup> **John 13:14-17** "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

<sup>115</sup> **Matthew 4:23-24** "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them."; cf. 2 Kings 5:1-19, Psa. 103:1-5; Matt. 9:18-35; John 4:46-54; Acts 5:12-16; 14:8-15; 1 Cor. 12:4-11.

<sup>116</sup> **James 5:14-16** "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.



science.<sup>117</sup> We also believe that physical healing in this present life is subject to God's sovereign will<sup>118</sup> and that ultimate healing awaits every believer.<sup>119</sup>

## XV. The Second Coming of Christ

¶23. We believe that the imminent and bodily return<sup>120</sup> of Jesus Christ<sup>121</sup> is that blessed hope<sup>122</sup> of believers, providing a powerful incentive to holy living<sup>123</sup> and inspiring a zeal for world evangelism.<sup>124</sup> Upon His return, Jesus Christ will fulfill all Scripture concerning the final triumph of good over evil,<sup>125</sup> consummate His kingdom, and judge the world in righteousness.<sup>126</sup>

## XVI. The Resurrection of the Dead

¶24. We believe in the resurrection of all mankind<sup>127</sup> at which time the body and soul will be reunited. The resurrection of the just is unto eternal life<sup>128</sup>; the resurrection of the wicked is unto

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And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

<sup>117</sup> **Matthew 9:12** “When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”; cf. Isa. 38:21; Luke 10:34.

<sup>118</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

<sup>119</sup> **Revelations 21:4** “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”; cf. Phil. 1:21.

<sup>120</sup> **Acts 1:11** “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”; cf. Job 19:25-27; Acts 1:6-11; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Jam. 5:7-8.

<sup>121</sup> **John 14:1-3** “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”; cf. Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 17:22-37.

<sup>122</sup> **Titus 2:13** “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

<sup>123</sup> **1 Thessalonians 3:13** “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints”; cf. Tit. 2:11-14; Jam. 5:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:11-12; 1 John 3:2-3.

<sup>124</sup> **Matthew 28:19-20** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

<sup>125</sup> **Revelation 22:12-14** “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”; cf. Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 1:8-12; 1 John 3:2-3.

<sup>126</sup> **Acts 17:31** “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”; cf. Zech. 14:1-4; 2 Thess. 1:6-10; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16; 22:6-7.

<sup>127</sup> **John 5:28-29** “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

<sup>128</sup> **Romans 8:11** “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”; cf. 1 Cor. 6:14; 15:50-58; 2 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 4:14-17; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 20:6.

eternal punishment.<sup>129</sup> The bodily resurrection of Jesus is a miracle of supreme importance and foundational to our faith.<sup>130</sup>

## XVII. The Judgment of Mankind

¶25. We believe that God is the Judge<sup>131</sup> of all and the acts of His judgment are based on His omniscience and eternal justice.<sup>132</sup> His administration of judgment will culminate before His throne<sup>133</sup> of great majesty and power, where records will be examined<sup>134</sup> and final rewards and punishments<sup>135</sup> will be administered.

## XVIII. Eternal Destiny

¶26. We believe that there is conscious, personal existence after death.<sup>136</sup> The final destiny of each person is decided by his response to God's grace<sup>137</sup> and not by any arbitrary decree of God. The new heavens and new earth with their eternal glory<sup>138</sup> and the blessedness of Christ's presence is the final abode of those who choose the salvation which God provides through Jesus Christ.<sup>139</sup> The Lake of Fire with its everlasting misery and separation from God is the final abode of those who neglect this great salvation.<sup>140</sup>

## XIX. Gender, Sexuality, Marriage

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<sup>129</sup> **John 5:28-29** "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"; cf. Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:11-13.

<sup>130</sup> Matt. 28:1-20, Luke 24:1-53, John 20-21, 1 Cor. 15:12-22.

<sup>131</sup> **Ecclesiastes 12:14** "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"; cf. Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1.

<sup>132</sup> **Acts 17:31** "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead"; cf. Rom. 2:16.

<sup>133</sup> **Revelation 20:11-13** "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

<sup>134</sup> **Romans 14:10-12** "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

<sup>135</sup> Matt. 25:31-46.

<sup>136</sup> **Daniel 12:2** "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

<sup>137</sup> **Hebrews 2:1-3** "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him"; cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.

<sup>138</sup> **2 Peter 3:13** "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"; cf. Isa. 65:17, 22; Rev. 21:1.

<sup>139</sup> **John 14:3** "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

<sup>140</sup> **Matthew 25:41** "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"; cf. Matt. 9:43-48; 25:34-46; Rev. 20:11-15.

¶27. On matters of gender, marriage, and sexuality, we are committed to historic Christian beliefs and ethics. There are only two sexes, male and female, and a person's gender identity should correspond with their biological sex.<sup>141</sup>

¶28. Marriage is a lifelong covenant between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman, and no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of this holy union.<sup>142</sup>

¶29. Marriage is between one man and one woman, joined by mutual consent in a partnership of the whole of life. This sacred bond, whereby two become one flesh,<sup>143</sup> is a profound mystery that refers to Christ and the church,<sup>144</sup> and nothing but sexual immorality,<sup>145</sup> willful desertion by an unbelieving spouse, or domestic abuse is cause sufficient of its dissolution.<sup>146</sup> In cases of sexual immorality within marriage, we entreat our Members to seek godly counsel and, insofar as it is possible, reconciliation. In cases of domestic abuse, we support those who separate for their safety or for the safety of their children.

¶30. It is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord: "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers."<sup>147</sup> We implore our Members to pursue marriage only with serious and godly believers.

¶31. Sexuality is given by God for a beautiful expression of the spousal union, whereby mankind might be increased and the bonds of intimacy strengthened. Fornication, adultery, pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pederasty, polygamy, polyamory, and other forms of licentiousness are perversions of God's good gift of sexuality, and must not even be named among us, as is proper among the saints.<sup>148</sup> Do not be deceived: those who do such things, or give approval to those who practice them, will incur God's righteous judgment.<sup>149</sup>

¶32. Singleness and celibacy are likewise gifts from God, sanctified by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ought to be honored by all.<sup>150</sup>

¶33. The Nashville Statement, published by CBMW.org, A Coalition for Biblical Sexuality, in partnership with the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, as published on August 29, 2017, is printed in Appendix A of this Manual, and is further representative

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<sup>141</sup> **Genesis 1:27** "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."

<sup>142</sup> **1 Corinthians 6:18** "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."

<sup>143</sup> Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:8, Ephesians 5:31.

<sup>144</sup> **Ephesians 5:31-32** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."

<sup>145</sup> Matthew 19:3-9.

<sup>146</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:12-15.

<sup>147</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14.

<sup>148</sup> **Ephesians 5:3** "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints."

<sup>149</sup> **1 Corinthian 6:9-10** <sup>49</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

<sup>150</sup> **1 Corinthians 7:7-8** "I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am."

of our understanding of Scripture.

## **XX. The Authority of the Statement of Faith**

¶34. The Statement of Faith is not intended to include every detail of our beliefs. The Bible is our final authority, but we do believe that the Statement of Faith is an accurate scriptural summary of these doctrines. It should serve as a tool for instruction and discipleship.