

ARTICLES OF FAITH

"We also believe, and therefore speak." 2 Cor. 4:13

1. THE TRINITY

That there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father (Deut. 33:27), Son (John 1:1) and Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14).

2. VERBAL INSPIRATION

That the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing and are of supreme and final authority in faith and life (II Tim. 3: 16 - 17).

3. VIRGIN BIRTH

That Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:35), and truly God and man (I Tim. 2:5).

4. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

That man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27); but he sinned, and thereby incurred, not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; consequently, all human beings are born with a sinful and depraved nature (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23; 5:12).

5. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

That the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3) as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and all who believe on Him are justified on the single ground of His shed blood (Rom. 3:24-25).

6. PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

That the Holy Spirit is a person who reproves the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement (John 16:8-11); who regenerates and baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ which is the Church (I Cor. 12:12-13); and who indwells, guides and enlightens the individual believer (I Cor. 6:19) (John 16:13).

7. EVERLASTING LIFE

That all who, by faith, receive the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16), and are recipients of everlasting life (I Peter 1:3-5). All true believers endure to the end (John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:1, 29-39).

8. RESURRECTION

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord (Acts 2:32), in His ascension into Heaven (Acts 1:9-10), and in His present life reigns as High Priest and Advocate for the saved (Heb. 4:14; I John 2:1-2).

9. SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the rapture of the saved to meet Him in the air (I Thess. 4:13-18), and in the personal, visible, imminent and glorious return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:11-16).

10. LAST THINGS

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust (John 5:28-29; I Cor. 15:44), the everlasting blessedness of the saved (Rom. 6:5), and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost (Rev. 14:9-12; 21:8).

11. SATAN

That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, is a real person who deceives the whole world (I Peter 5:8; Job 1:6-7).

12. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

That all Christians are called into a life of separation to the Lord and to His joyous service and from all worldly and sinful practices (I Thess. 1:9-10; II Cor. 6:17-18; I John 2: 15-16).

13. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture (1 Timothy 3:2).

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. (Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3).

14. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

That Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The act is a symbol of our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior. The members of the church, by the use of bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the Lord's death until He comes again (Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Matt. 26:26-27; Luke 22:19-30; John 3:22-23; Acts 8:38-39; Rom. 6:3-4; I Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23-26).

15. THE LORD'S DAY

That the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. (Matt. 28:1; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Rev. 1:10).

16. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in His sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are, in His sight, wicked and under condemnation. This distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgement when final and everlasting rewards are made to all men (Matt. 25:31-36; Mark 9:48; Luke 23:43; John 3:36; Rom. 9:22-24; I Cor. 15:45-53; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:10-15; II Cor. 5: 1-10).

17. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men which are contrary to His word or not contained therein. Church and state should be separate. The states owe to the church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal. This implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power (Matt. 22:17-21; Mark 12:13-17; Rom. 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:14; I Peter 2:17).

18. SOCIAL SERVICE

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ dominant in his/her own life and in human society; to oppose (in the spirit of Christ) every form of greed, selfishness and vice; to provide for the orphaned, the widowed, the aged, the helpless and the sick; to seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love; to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of goodwill in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love, without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. All means and methods used in social righteousness among men must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. (Ex. 20:16; 22: 9-15; Lev. 6:15; Deut. 4:41-42; 15:1-2; 27:17; Ezek. 18:5-9; Zech. 8:16-17; Luke 10:25-37; 6:25-36; Rom. 12:14-21; Col. 3:12-17; James 2:8).

19. EVANGELISM AND MISSION

It is the duty of every Christian man and woman, as well as, every church of Jesus Christ, to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others.

Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerated life. It is also expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ.

It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods sanctioned by the Gospel of Christ (Matt. 10:5-15; 13:1-23; 22:8-10; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; 16:19-20; Luke 24:46-53; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4; 21:39; 8:1-40; 10:42-48; 13:13; 13:30-33; II Cor. 5:19-21).

20. FAMILY

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to Biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on Biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

21. CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

"We believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. *Our Elder Team and ministers are not to be called upon nor our properties/facilities used for any union that violates this belief. Our Elder Team and ministers will only be called upon and our properties/facilities shall only be used to conduct wedding ceremonies for one man and one woman as biologically defined by their natural birth. Furthermore, members and non-members shall not invite any outside individual, clergy or organization to use church properties/facilities to conduct any ceremony, funeral or celebration which violates this statement on marriage and sexuality.*

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. 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 sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a Biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement regarding Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are neither in accordance with scripture nor the doctrines of the Church."