

Aletheia Church Statement of Faith

Aletheia Church accepts the authority and validity of both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as expressions of orthodox Christian doctrine.

I. The Gospel

We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope, and thanksgiving to God in all things.

II. The Scriptures - The Word of God

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught, and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.

III. God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and his perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of humans. To him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

We believe God as Father reigns with providential care over his universe, his people, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of his grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth toward all who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

B. God the Son

We believe Christ is the eternal Son of God. In his incarnation as Jesus Christ he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying himself completely with human beings, yet without sin. He honored the divine law through his obedience, and in his substitutionary death on the cross he made provision for the redemption of all people from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to his disciples as the person who was with them before his crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where he is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, through whom humans are reconciled to God. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate his redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers through the Holy Spirit as the living and ever present Lord.

C. God the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination he enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls people to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration he baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through his church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

IV. Man

According to the Genesis account in the Old Testament, humans are the special creation of God, made in his own image and placed in the earth to be “angled mirrors” who are created in order to reflect the worship of all creation back to the Creator and by that same means to reflect the wise sovereignty of the Creator into the world. (N.T. Wright, *The Day The Revolution Began*).

God created humans male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. God's creation of humans as male and female defines the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family.

In the beginning humans were innocent of sin and were endowed by their Creator with freedom of choice. By their free choice humans sinned against God and brought sin to their descendants. Through the temptation of Satan humans transgressed the command of God, and fell from their original innocence whereby their posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring them into his holy fellowship and enable them to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created them in his own image, and in that Christ died for them; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

V. Salvation and the Lordship of Jesus Christ

We proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Savior from sin, judgement, and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to him as Lord and Savior.

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal, based upon principles of his righteousness, of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which Christian believers are set apart for God's purposes, and are enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

VI. God's purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which he regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of human beings, and comprehends all intermediate means in connection with God's final purpose of salvation. Election is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but will persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, encounter difficulty, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, in which (before the foundations of the world were laid) he has decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. For this reason, those who are endued with so excellent a benefit of God, are called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they are justified freely: they are made children of God by adoption: they are made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting comfort and rest.

Human beings must receive God's promises in the manner in which they are generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and, in their doings, endeavor to follow God's Will, which is declared unto us in the Word of God.

VII. 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 sacraments 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. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors, elders, and deacons.

While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the offices of pastor and elder are limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

We accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptize, teach, and bring new believers to maturity.

We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.

VIII. Sacraments

Sacraments ordained by Christ are not only badges or tokens of the Christian's profession, but also they are sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, and of God's good will towards us, by which he works invisibly in us, and not only enlivens, but also strengthens and confirms our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. We believe that these sacraments are ordained in Scripture and operate in the Church on that basis.

IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both his general sovereignty over the universe and his particular kingship over humans who willingly acknowledge him as King. In particular, the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which humans enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

X. Last Things

We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.