

# STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

This statement represents a full summary of the various convictions articulated in our Statement of Basic Beliefs.

## Scripture

We believe that the Scriptures, the 66 books of the Old and New Testament, are the only divinely inspired writings and the very words of God (2 Timothy 3:16) being the result of a divine confluence between human authors (their style, grammar, vocabulary) and the primary author, which is the Spirit of God (2 Peter 1:19-21). The Scriptures, as the word of God, are wholly true and never false when properly understood. They are the very words of God by which we are to know God, feed our souls, be encouraged, rebuked, instructed, and trained in righteousness. They are the primary way by which God speaks to us and are the final and supreme authority on all matters of faith and practice.

## The Nature of God

We believe that there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) who is the creator of all that is not God. God is eternal (Psalm 41:13), holy (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 4:8), sovereign (Isaiah 43:13), all-knowing (Psalm 139:1-4), all-powerful (Matthew 19:26), all-present, personal (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:2), loving (John 3:16, 1 John 4:8), completely self-sufficient (Isaiah 40:12-17) and transcendent (Deuteronomy 29:29, Isaiah 55:8-9). He exists eternally as one God in a united and diverse, triune community of three divine persons known as Father (Matthew 6:9), Son (John 1:34), and Holy Spirit (John 14:26). God is revealed to us in creation, the conscience, and most fully in the Scriptures and the person and deity of Jesus Christ.

## God The Father

We believe God the Father is the initiator and sustainer of creation, the author of life, and the one whose purposes are accomplished. He decreed to create all that is not God, permit the fall, and send the Son into the world for its redemption. He is fully pleased with God the Son, as the Son lives in joyful, eternal submission to the will of the Father. The Spirit is sent forth from the Father and the Son into the world to accomplish the purposes of the Triune God (John 14:16, 26; 15:26). Everything exists for His glory alone (Romans 11:36).

## God The Son, Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ as the Scriptures clearly reveal him, fully human and fully divine. His divinity was exhibited by the names He used for Himself, his attributes (eternal, unchanging, all powerful and all knowing), the works he did that only God can do (forgive sin, grant eternal life), and the worship he received from his followers. His friends and enemies alike acknowledged His claim to be God incarnate, God made flesh (John 1:1-14). In addition, Scripture is clear that Jesus was a real human being sharing in our weakness and struggle (Philippians 2:1-8, Hebrews 4:14-16). He was born of a virgin into humble circumstances (Matthew 1:1-2:23, Luke 2:1-51), lived an exemplary life without sin, and died a human death on a cross of execution. After being dead for three days, God raised Jesus bodily from the dead, after which he ascended to the right hand of God, ruling and reigning as our great covenant King.

## God The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is not an impersonal force or a spirit in

which all things share their being. He is fully God sharing the essence and attributes of the Godhead with the Father and the Son. He was sent into the world by the Father and Son to bring people to salvation (John 16:7-11, Titus 3:4-7), gift the church to continue the work of Jesus on the earth (1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40, Ephesians 4:1-16, Romans 12:1-8), empower us for gospel ministry (Acts 1:8) and transform our lives to become increasingly more like God (Galatians 5:16-26, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10).

## Humanity

We believe we were created by God and for God. We also believe our chief purpose is to bring glory to God and to enjoy relationship with him forever. Further, we believe human beings are created with intrinsic worth, value and dignity by virtue of their being created male and female in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). The Imago Dei, the image of God in us, is found in our makeup having a mind, emotions and will. This image explains our relational nature in that we are made to be in community with God and others. Finally, the image of God in us is also functional, in that we have been entrusted by God to steward and rule over His creation (Genesis 1:28, Psalm 8:1-9). As such, we are more “like God” than any other creature, being vested with beauty and worth, distinct within the created order. While we are created with this dignity and value, our nature is totally depraved as a result of the Fall. Our first parents Adam and Eve sinned and the created order was thereby cursed by God. People were relationally separated from God and discord was sown in our relationships with one another (Genesis 3:1-24). By nature we choose rebellion and independence from God and one another, living as fractured and broken people. The Scriptures clearly teach that we are sinful by nature and choice, receiving the due consequences from a just and holy God (Romans 3:1-31). As such human beings are capable of both, the most sinful and wonderful actions. The love of human community, creative works of art and beauty, technological and intellectual rigor producing wonderful inventions that ease suffering are all evidence of the Imago Dei. At the same time we have created and fostered injustice, racism, genocide, insidious ways of maiming and destroying one another, let alone the billions of hurtful and intolerant acts inflicted on each other daily during the course of time as evidence of our totally depraved and fallen nature. We believe that the gospel, the view of humanity in the Scriptures, holds both of these truths in tension. Human beauty and depravity, man’s glory and fallenness, are twin truths of reality. We hold to the truth revealed in Scripture that all people are valuable without forfeiting the evident truth that we are in great need of redemption and reconciliation to God and one another. Human beings are valuable enough to be worth redeeming; yet sinful and in desperate need of the fundamental change of heart that comes by the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

## Salvation

We believe all human beings are in need of forgiveness from God and reconciliation to God. The Scriptures use the term salvation to refer to the multifaceted work of God by which he rescues sinners from his wrath (Romans 5:6-9), forgives them (Ephesians 1:7), brings them back into relationship with himself (2 Corinthians 5:20), transforms their lives (2 Corinthians 3:18), and ultimately conforms them to be like His Son Jesus (Romans 8:29). God’s purpose from the foundation of the world was to redeem a people for himself who would declare his glory on the earth and to be made holy (1 Peter 2:9-10). God saves such a people by calling them to himself (1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Romans 8:28-30), through the extension of grace to them in the gospel which is the good news of the saving work of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God sent his own Son into the world, to live a perfect life without sin so He could pay the penalty for sin through His death on the cross, the penalty and death that we deserved. God then raised Jesus from the dead declaring his work to be victorious over Satan, sin, death and hell. In doing so, the just penalty for our sins was taken by Jesus as our substitute and we receive new life (Romans 6:4) and his righteousness by faith (2 Corinthians 5:21). It is by God’s grace, his kindness and goodness towards us, that we are saved (Ephesians 2:8-9). Our lives are united with Christ and we continue to live in him while he continues to mold and change us, making us ever more like him. The Lord continues to transform us throughout our

lives and progresses as we exercise spiritual disciplines and put to death sin by those same means (Romans 8:13). We cling to the hope of the promise that one day we will be glorified, fully changed and finally made perfect by God in the kingdom to come. Forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption, and a transformed life are the free gift and work of God. They are not rewards for our own self-righteousness, nor are they earned by keeping religious or moral rules. The good news is that God welcomes sinners home, loves them fully, adds them to his church and sends them on mission into their world. Only those who acknowledge their sin and great need for redemption can come to God in Christ, and He will never cast out those who come to Him.

## Divine Judgment and Blessing

We believe Jesus spoke of the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven and the terrible reality of the final judgment of God upon sin and evil (Matthew 25:46). Upon Jesus' return all people will be raised and will be justly judged by God. Those who take refuge in Jesus Christ will be raised to everlasting life and glory while those who persist in rebellion and the denial of God will be separated from him in hell, forever conscious of their state and choices. The reality of hell is a cause for prayer and deep concern. The urgency of the reality of eternal condemnation must cause us to love and care for the souls of our neighbors by sharing the good news of the grace of God in the gospel through which the Holy Spirit works to rescue the lost from the wrath to come.