

UNABRIDGED STATEMENT OF FAITH

Calvary Community Church  
at  
East Millstone, NJ

## PREFACE

Doctrinal statements, being creations of men, are subject to all the pitfalls of anything put into print. While we acknowledge this inherent flaw, we also recognize their benefit to Christ's church: they greatly aid its members in discerning truth from error. Having a statement of faith does not mean that we believe that we have "arrived" and are thus no longer needful of careful study of the Scriptures; for no man (or group of men) has complete knowledge of any subject, let alone the Bible. It is important, however, in obedience to the Lord, that we "exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict" (*Titus* 1:9); that we "[r]etain the standard of sound words" which we have received from God (*2 Timothy* 1:13); and that we "pay close attention...to [our] teaching" (*1 Timothy* 4:16). Since God's church is the "pillar and support of the truth" (*1 Timothy* 3:15), we must be to careful lift up sound doctrine, avoiding all forms of biblical apostasy from within the church and without. It is with this in mind that we have prepared this *Unabridged Statement of Faith* for Calvary Community Church.<sup>1</sup> If, for any reason, there is conflict over the meaning of any particular part of this Statement, the elders reserve the right to act as final interpreters of this Statement.

*Soli Deo gloria.*

The Elders, 2015

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<sup>1</sup> The primary source of following material is the Statement of Faith of The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, CA. It is used with permission.

## Chapter One: The Scriptures (Bibliology)

1. We teach that the Bible is the written revelation of God and the sixty-six (66) books of the Bible constitute the plenary<sup>2</sup> word by the Holy Spirit (1 *Corinthians* 2:7-14; 2 *Peter* 1:20-21).
2. We teach that Scripture is God's verbal revelation to man and is objective (1 *Thessalonians* 2:13), inspired<sup>3</sup> in every word (2 *Timothy* 3:16), absolutely inerrant<sup>4</sup> in the original documents (*Isaiah* 30:8), and infallible (*Isaiah* 55:11). We teach that an accurate understanding of Scripture requires what has come to be known as grammatico-historical exegesis,<sup>5</sup> which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six, twenty-four hour days (*Genesis* 1:31; *Exodus* 31:17).
3. We teach that it constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (*Matthew* 5:18; 24:35; *John* 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 *Corinthians* 2:13; 2 *Timothy* 3:15-17; 2 *Peter* 1:20-21; 3:15-16; *Hebrews* 4:12).
4. We teach that God spoke in His written Word through a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 *Peter* 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (*Matthew* 5:18; 2 *Timothy* 3:16).
5. We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies (2 *Timothy* 2:15) the grammatico-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (*Luke* 24:27, 31-32; *John* 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 *Corinthians* 2:14-15; 1 *John* 2:20).

## Chapter Two: God (Theology)

1. We teach that there is but one living and true God (*Deuteronomy* 6:4; *Isaiah* 45:5-7; 1 *Corinthians* 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (*John* 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Matthew* 28:19; 2 *Corinthians* 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.
2. God the Father: We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (*Psalms* 145:8-9; 1 *Corinthians* 8:6). He is the creator of all things (*Genesis* 1:1-31; *Ephesians* 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (*Psalms* 103:19; *Romans* 11:36). His fatherhood involves His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (*Acts* 17:29), but He is Spiritual Father only to believers (*Romans* 8:14; 2 *Corinthians* 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (*Ephesians* 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and

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<sup>2</sup>**Plenary**: Complete or full.

<sup>3</sup>**Inspired**: This word has been used in many Bible translations for the Greek word *theopneustos*, which literally translated, is God-breathed. Therefore, when we say that the Scriptures are inspired, we mean that they have come from God Himself--He is their source.

<sup>4</sup>**Inerrant**: Without error.

<sup>5</sup>**Grammatico-historical exegesis**: A method of interpretation that emphasizes the need to take into account the original languages and the historical context of Scripture. Because the term is opposed to allegorical interpretation it is roughly equivalent to literal interpretation. By *literal* we mean that the words of Scripture are to be read according to their normal grammatical and philological sense.

governs all creatures and events (1 *Chronicles* 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (*Habakkuk* 1:13; *John* 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 *Peter* 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom he would have as His own (*Ephesians* 1:4-6); He saves from sin and the penalty thereof all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (*John* 1:12-13; *Romans* 8:15; *Galatians* 4:5; *Hebrews* 12:5-9).

3. God the Son: We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial,<sup>6</sup> and coeternal with the Father (*John* 1:1; 10:30; 14:9).
  - a. We teach that God the Father created “the heavens and the earth and all that is in them” according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (*John* 1:3; *Colossians* 1:15-17; *Hebrews* 1:2).
  - b. We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives<sup>7</sup> of deity but nothing of divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (*Philippians* 2:5-8; *Colossians* 2:9). We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (*Philippians* 2:5-8).
  - c. We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (*Isaiah* 7:14; *Matthew* 1:23; *Luke* 1:26-35); that He lived a sinless life (2 *Corinthians* 5:21; 1 *Peter* 2:21-22); that He was God incarnate (*John* 1:1, 14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God’s kingdom now and forever (*Psalms* 2:7-9; *Isaiah* 9:6; *John* 1:29; *Philippians* 2:9-11; *Hebrews* 7:25-26; 1 *Peter* 1:18-19).
  - d. We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious,<sup>8</sup> substitutionary, propitiatory,<sup>9</sup> and redemptive (*John* 10:15; *Romans* 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 *Peter* 2:24).
  - e. We teach that the Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, fully satisfied the justice of God (*Romans* 3:25-26; *Hebrews* 9:14; 10:14), procured reconciliation, and purchased an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father has given Him (*John* 17:2; *Hebrews* 9:15).
  - f. We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ died for the purpose of actually and certainly saving the elect<sup>10</sup>; He died for his own people (*John* 10:11, 15; 11:49-52; *Acts* 20:28; *Romans* 8:32-34; *Ephesians* 5:25). While Christ’s death on the cross was representative of God’s love for mankind, it did not procure the salvation of all men, but only of those who would believe in Him (*John* 3:14-16; 6:37-40, 44; 10:14-15, 25-30; 17:2, 9, 20; *Titus* 3:4-7). Christ

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<sup>6</sup>**Consubstantial:** Of one and the same substance, essence, or nature.

<sup>7</sup>**Prerogatives:** Exclusive rights, privileges, etc., exercised by virtue of rank, office, or the like.

<sup>8</sup>**Vicarious:** Performed, exercised, received or suffered in place of another.

<sup>9</sup>**Propitiatory:** Satisfying the justice of God.

<sup>10</sup>For further discussion on the elect, see Chapter 4.2.

- died for all men without distinction, not without exception.
- g. We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day, the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).
  - h. We teach that our justification<sup>11</sup> is made sure by His actual, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).
  - i. We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (*John* 5:26-29; 14:19; *Romans* 4:25; 6:5-10; *1 Corinthians* 15:20, 23).
  - j. We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18; *Revelation* 20).<sup>12</sup>
  - k. We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (*John* 5:22-23): believers (*1 Corinthians* 3:10-15; *2 Corinthians* 5:10); living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46); unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (*Revelation* 20:11-15).
  - l. As the only mediator between God and man (*John* 14:6; *1 Timothy* 2:5), the head of His body the church (*Ephesians* 1:22, 5:23; *Colossians* 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (*Isaiah* 9:6; *Luke* 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as their Lord and Savior (Acts 17:30-31; *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-10).
4. *God the Holy Spirit*: We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (*1 Corinthians* 2:10-13), emotions (*Ephesians* 4:30), will (*1 Corinthians* 12:11), eternity (*Hebrews* 9:14), omnipresence (*Psalms* 139:7-10), omniscience (*Isaiah* 40:13-14), omnipotence (*Luke* 1:35; *1 Peter* 3:18 with *Acts* 2:32 and *Romans* 1:4), and truthfulness (*John* 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (*Matthew* 28:19; *Acts* 5:3-4; 28:25-27 with *Isaiah* 6:9ff.; *1 Corinthians* 12:4-6; *2 Corinthians* 13:14; and *Jeremiah* 31:31-34 with *Hebrews* 10:15-17).
- a. We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (*Genesis* 1:2), the incarnation (*Matthew* 1:18), the written revelation (*2 Peter* 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (*John* 3:5-7).
  - b. We teach that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (*John* 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (*1 Corinthians* 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (*John* 16:7-9, 13-14), glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, and transforming

<sup>11</sup>For further discussion on justification, see Chapter 4.4.

<sup>12</sup>For further discussion on both the rapture and millennial kingdom of Christ on the earth, see Chapter 7.2, 4.

- believers into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29 with 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18).
- c. We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (1 *Corinthians* 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (*Romans* 8:9, 11; 2 *Corinthians* 3:6; *Ephesians* 1:13; 1 *Peter* 1:2; 1 *John* 2:27).
  - d. We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the writers of Scripture into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer continually possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation (*Ephesians* 1:13-14), and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (*Romans* 8:9; *Ephesians* 5:18-21 with *Colossians* 3:16-17; 2 *Peter* 1:19-21; 1 *John* 2:20, 27).
  - e. We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentation,<sup>13</sup> but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (*John* 16:13-14; *Acts* 1:8; 1 *Corinthians* 12:4-11; 2 *Corinthians* 3:18).
  - f. We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints and that speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues, gifts of miracles, and gifts of healings were given in the beginning days of the church for the purpose of pointing to the judgment of the unbelieving nation of Israel, and/or the Gentiles being included in the gospel offer, and/or authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and are no longer in operation today (1 *Corinthians* 12:4-11; 13:8-13; 14:21-22; 2 *Corinthians* 12:12; *Ephesians* 4:7-12; *Hebrews* 2:1-4).

### Chapter Three: Man (Anthropology)

1. We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness (*Genesis* 1:26-27; 2:7, 20). Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, and moral responsibility to God (*Genesis* 2:15-25; *James* 3:9).
2. We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was the manifestation of His own glory (*Psalms* 8:1; 19:1; *Romans* 1:20; 11:36; *Colossians* 1:16; *Revelation* 4:11). As a result, we teach that man's purpose in life is to glorify God and to fully enjoy Him forever (*Psalms* 16:11; 1 *Corinthians* 10:31).
3. We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the just penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt, radically depraved, and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Genesis* 2:16-17; 3:1-19; *John* 3:36; *Romans* 3:23; 6:23; 8:5-8; 1 *Corinthians* 2:14; *Ephesians* 2:1-3; 1 *Timothy* 2:13-14; 1 *John* 1:8).
4. We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted at conception to all men of all time (*Psalms* 51:5; 58:3), Jesus Christ being the only exception (2 *Corinthians* 5:21; 1 *Peter* 2:22). All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, by

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<sup>13</sup>**Ostentation:** Pretentious display.

divine declaration, and are thus guilty, standing condemned before God (*Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12*).

#### **Chapter Four: Salvation (Soteriology)**

1. We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (*John 1:12-13; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19*).
2. Election: We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (*Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2*).
  - a. We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent (*Acts 17:30*), trusting Christ as Lord and Savior (*Ezekiel 18:23, 32, 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:19-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17*). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself (*Ephesians 2:8-9*), sovereign election will result in what God determines. All of whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (*John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48*).
  - b. We teach that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (*Ephesians 1:4-11; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2 with 1:19-20*).
  - c. We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (*Romans 9:11-16*).
3. Regeneration: We teach that regeneration<sup>14</sup> is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (*John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4*). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word of God (*John 5:24*), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. The evidence of regeneration includes not only the performance of good works but also righteous attitudes (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10*). It will be experienced in one's life to the same degree that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit through faithful obedience to the Word of God (*Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10*). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (*2 Corinthians 3:18*). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (*Romans 8:17; 1 John 3:2-3*).
4. Justification: We teach that justification before God is an act of God (*Romans 8:33*) by which He declares righteous those who through faith in Christ alone (*Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:16, 21*) repent of their sins (*Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 20:21; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10*) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (*Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10*). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (*Romans 3:20; 4:6*) and involves the

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<sup>14</sup>**Regeneration**: This is the biblical-theological term that refers to being born again.

placing of our sins on Christ (*Colossians* 2:14; *1 Peter* 2:24) and the imputation<sup>15</sup> of Christ's righteousness to us (*1 Corinthians* 1:2, 30; *2 Corinthians* 5:21; *Philippians* 3:9). By this means, God is thus "just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (*Romans* 3:26).

5. **Sanctification:** We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Positional sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (*Acts* 20:32; *1 Corinthians* 1:2, 30; 6:11; *2 Thessalonians* 2:13; *Hebrews* 2:11; 3:1; 10:10,14; 13:12; *1 Peter* 1:2).
  - a. We teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the prescriptive will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (*John* 17:17, 19; *Romans* 6:1-22; *2 Corinthians* 3:18; *1 Thessalonians* 4:3-4; 5:23). And in this respect, the believer's growth in Christ is guaranteed (*Romans* 8:29; *Philippians* 1:6; *1 Thessalonians* 5:23-24).
  - b. We teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh (*Romans* 7:14-25)—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are not biblical (*1 John* 1:8). Although eradication of sin is not possible, the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (*Galatians* 5:16-25; *Ephesians* 4:22-24; *Philippians* 3:12; *Colossians* 3:9-10; *1 Peter* 1:14-16; *1 John* 3:5-9).
6. **Security:** We teach that all the redeemed are kept in faith by the power of God and are thus secure in Christ forever (*Matthew* 18:12-14; *John* 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 17:11-12; *Romans* 8:1; *1 Corinthians* 1:4-8; *Ephesians* 1:13-14; 4:30; *Philippians* 1:6; *Hebrews* 7:25; *1 Peter* 1:5; *Jude* 1, 24).
  - a. We teach that nothing can separate them from the eternal and unchangeable love of God (*Romans* 5:8-10; 8:35-39; *Ephesians* 1:5), and that they have been predestined unto eternal glory and are therefore assured of heaven (*Romans* 8:29-30).
  - b. Not all that profess the Christian faith, however, are assured of heaven. It is saints only who will persevere to the end. Many who profess faith fall away, but they do not fall from grace, for they were never in grace (*Matthew* 7:22-23; *Colossians* 1:22-23; *1 Timothy* 4:1-2; *Titus* 1:16; *Hebrews* 3:14; *James* 2:14-19; *1 John* 2:19, 25).
7. **Separation:** We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy<sup>16</sup> and worldliness<sup>17</sup> shall increase (*2 Corinthians* 6:14-7:1; *1 Timothy* 4:1-2; *2 Timothy* 3:1-5).
  - a. We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in

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<sup>15</sup>**Imputation:** The act of charging or reckoning something to someone's account.

<sup>16</sup>**Apostasy:** A desertion of or departure from the truth of the word of God.

<sup>17</sup>**Worldliness:** The state that results from having embraced the values and behaviors of a world in rebellion against God.



such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from any association with religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (*Romans* 12:1-2; *1 Corinthians* 5:9-13; *2 Corinthians* 6:14-7:1; *1 John* 2:15-17; *2 John* 9-11).

- b. We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (*2 Thessalonians* 1:11-12; *Hebrews* 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a “beatitude attitude” (*Matthew* 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (*Romans* 12:1-2; *2 Corinthians* 7:1; *Titus* 2:11-14; *Hebrews* 12:14; *1 John* 3:1-10).

### **Chapter Five: The Church (Ecclesiology)**

1. We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (*1 Corinthians* 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (*2 Corinthians* 11:2; *Ephesians* 5:23-32; *Revelation* 19:7-8), of which Christ is the Head (*Ephesians* 1:22; 4:15; *Colossians* 1:18).
2. We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (*Acts* 1:5-2:47; 20:28; *Ephesians* 3:8-10) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His church (*1 Corinthians* 15:51-52; *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18).
3. We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all believers in this present age (*Ephesians* 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel, a mystery not revealed until this age (*Romans* 9:30-31; 10:1-11:27).
4. We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (*Ephesians* 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (*Ephesians* 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (*2 Timothy* 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (*Acts* 2:47; *1 John* 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (*Luke* 22:19; *Acts* 2:38-42), by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (*Matthew* 28:19; *Acts* 1:8; 2:42), and by living out the truth of the Scripture in its corporate identity (*1 Timothy* 3:15).
5. We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (*Acts* 14:23, 27; 20:17, 28; *Galatians* 1:2; *Philippians* 1:1; *1 Thessalonians* 1:1; *2 Thessalonians* 1:1) and that the members of one scriptural body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (*1 & 2 Timothy*; *Titus*; *Hebrews* 10:25).
6. We teach that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (*1 Corinthians* 11:3; *Ephesians* 1:22; *Colossians* 1:18) and that the church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ in the church are elders (males, who are also called bishops, overseers, shepherds, pastors, and pastor-teachers [*Acts* 20:28; *Ephesians* 4:11]); and deacons (males as well), both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (*1 Timothy* 3:1-13; *Titus* 1:5-9).
7. We teach that the elders lead or rule as servants of Christ (*1 Timothy* 5:17-22; *1 Peter* 5:1-5) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (*Hebrews* 13:7, 17). With regard to deacons, we teach that it is their responsibility to serve the elders as they lead the congregation. Most of the ways in which deacons serve are through the meeting of physical needs as well as general acts of benevolence (*Acts* 6:1-5).
8. We teach that marriage is an exclusive covenant institution (*Malachi* 2:14) established by God between one man and one woman (*Matthew* 19:4-6), first exemplified by Adam and Eve (*Genesis* 2:18-25), and designed by God for companionship (*Genesis* 2:18), pleasure (*Genesis*

2:25, Proverbs 5:18-19, Song of Solomon 5:1), procreation (Genesis 1:28, Genesis 9:1, 1 Timothy 2:15, 1 Timothy 5:14), purity (Proverbs 5:15-23, 1 Corinthians 7:9, Hebrews 13:4), and God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

- a. We teach that God's glory is especially seen through marriage's picture of Christ's relationship with His Church (2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-33) and the glorious Consummation at the end of the age (Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-4, 9). The behavior of husbands and wives before and during their earthly marriages is to reflect these glorious realities (1 Corinthians 6:13-20, Ephesians 5:22-33). To this end, Christians are only to marry "in the Lord," that is, believer with believer (1 Corinthians 7:39, 2 Corinthians 6:14-17).
  - b. We teach that the bond of marriage, while involving the wills of two people, is something God joins together Himself (Matthew 19:6). Therefore, marriage is not to be broken through divorce (Malachi 2:16, Matthew 19:3-8), though divorce is permitted by God in the case of unrepentant marital unfaithfulness (Matt 19:9) and of an unbelieving spouse unwilling to continue in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:12-16). Marriages are designed by God to last until He Himself breaks the bond through the death of one spouse (Matthew 19:6); in such case, the surviving spouse is permitted to remarry (1 Corinthians 7:31).
  - c. We teach that marriage is the only legitimate sexual relationship; any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 5:27-28, Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Leviticus 20:10-21).
  - d. We teach that, while God tolerated polygamy in the times of the Old Testament, polygamy has always been sinful and against God's design for marriage. Polygamy violates the one man, one woman marriage pattern established in Adam and Eve and confirmed by Christ (Genesis 2:18-25, Matthew 19:3-9). Polygamy also distorts marriage's picture of Christ's total devotion to His Church and the Church's total devotion to Christ. (Ephesians 5:22-33). The Bible frequently depicts the jealousy, strife, and sin brought about by polygamous relationships (Genesis 29:21-30:24, 1 Samuel 1:1-7, 1 Kings 11:1-8).
9. We teach that women are of equal value with men in the sight of God and that He shows no partiality with regard to gender (*Genesis 1:27-31; Romans 2:11; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 5:21*).
- a. We teach that while there is no difference in value between the sexes, God has ordained a difference in role (1 *Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:11-15 w/ Genesis 2:18-3:20*). This is to be carried out in the home (*Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6*) and in the church (1 *Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12*). As a result, we teach that women are not to hold offices in the church (1 *Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6*), yet if they are married to an officer, they must be similarly qualified (1 *Timothy 3:11*). Women have a solemn obligation to teach one another and their children (*Titus 2:3-5*), but are not permitted to teach men (1 *Timothy 2:11-12*).
  - b. We teach that each person's gender is a gift from God. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (*Genesis 1:26-27*). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We also teach that that God forbids the

- alteration of one's physical appearance to present oneself as the opposite gender (Deuteronomy 5:22) or to confuse God-given gender roles (1 Corinthians 11:3-16).
10. We teach the importance of discipleship (*Matthew* 28:19-20) worked out in the training of men for the work of the ministry (*2 Timothy* 2:2), as well as through the mutual accountability of all believers to each other (*Matthew* 18:5-14). In this regard, we teach the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (*Matthew* 18:15-22; *1 Corinthians* 5:1-13; *2 Thessalonians* 3:6-15; *1 Timothy* 1:19-20; *Titus* 1:10-16).
  11. We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (*Titus* 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Local churches, however, should be the sole judges of the measure and method of their cooperation (*Acts* 15:19-31; 20:30-33; *1 Corinthians* 5:4-7, 13; *1 Peter* 5:1-4).
  12. We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (*1 Corinthians* 12:7, 24b-26; *Ephesians* 4:12; *Revelation* 22:12).
  13. We teach the need of the church to be obedient to God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the equipping of the saints for the work of service (*Ephesians* 4:7-12), and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (*Romans* 12:5-8; *1 Corinthians* 12:4-31; *1 Peter* 4:10-11).
  14. We teach that God has given two categories of gifts to the body: speaking gifts and serving gifts (*1 Peter* 4:10-11). None of the spiritual gifts given to the church were meant to be permanent (*1 Corinthians* 13:8-13). We teach that four of these gifts were given only in the apostolic era for distinct purposes. The gifts of tongues and the interpretation of tongues were given for the purpose of pointing to the judgment of the unbelieving nation of Israel through the Gentiles being included in the gospel offer (*1 Corinthians* 14:21-22). The gifts of healings and the effecting of miracles<sup>18</sup> were given for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles and their message (*2 Corinthians* 12:12; *Hebrews* 2:3-4). Once the purposes for which these gifts were given were fulfilled, their operation became unnecessary. The only gifts in operation today are those whose purposes have not yet been fulfilled: prophecy (non-revelatory, i.e. preaching), teaching, exhortation, helps/ministering, mercy, leading/administration/rule, faith, giving, discernment, word of knowledge, word of wisdom (*Romans* 12:5-8; *1 Corinthians* 12:4-31).<sup>19</sup>
  15. We teach that although no one possesses the gifts of healings today, God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will do so in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (*Luke* 18:1-6; *John* 5:7-9; *2 Corinthians* 12:6-10; *James* 5:13-16; *1 John* 5:14-15).
  16. We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Table (also called Lord's Supper or Communion) (*Acts* 2:38-42). Christian baptism by

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<sup>18</sup>**The Effecting of Miracles:** This gift is mentioned in *1 Corinthians* 12:10 and literally translated is "workings of powers" (*energemata dunameon*). This spiritual gift consisted of exorcisms cf. *Matthew* 10:1; *Luke* 9:1; 10:1-9, 17; *Acts* 8:6-7; 19:11-12. Therefore, when we speak of the gift of the effecting of miracles, we speak of the divine ability to cast out demons.

<sup>19</sup>For the definitions of the spiritual gifts, see our *Membership Information & Application* packet pp. 4-5.

immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11). It is also a picture of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42). The Lord's Table is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ (Matthew 26:26-29), the Lord's Table is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

### **Chapter Six: Angels (Angelology)**

1. Holy Angels: We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man is, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:6-14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).
2. Fallen Angels: We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He is referred to as a murderer (John 8:44), a liar (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15), a confirmed and practicing sinner (1 John 3:8), and the accuser and opposer of Christians (Romans 8:33; 1 Peter 5:8). He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his creator (1 Timothy 3:6), taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 12:14-26; 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-15).
  - a. We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Matthew 4:1-11; 13:28, 39; Revelation 12:9-10) and the ruler of the world system (John 12:31; 16:11; 17:14; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19), but has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8). Although Satan has been defeated, he is not presently bound as he will be in the future (Revelation 20:1-3); rather, he is limited in his operations by God (Job 1:12; 2:6; John 17:15; 1 John 5:18) and will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

### **Chapter Seven: Last Things (Eschatology)**

1. Death: We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ and remains in joyful fellowship with Him (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (2 Corinthians 5:6-8), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until their resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54).
  - a. We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).
  - b. We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until their resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the

resurrection body will be united (*John 5:28-29*). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment (*Revelation 20:11-15*) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (*Matthew 25:41-46*), cut off from the life of God forever (*Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10*).

2. The Rapture of the Church: We teach the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (*1 Thessalonians 4:16-5:3; Titus 2:13*) to translate His church from this earth (*John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11*) and, between this event and His glorious return with His saints, to reward believers according to their works (*1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10*).
3. The Tribulation Period: We teach that before Christ's second coming to the earth, there will be a period of great tribulation wherein the Antichrist will come to power claiming to be God and demanding worship (*Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4*). During that time also, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (*2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16*), and will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (*Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46; Revelation 19:1-2, 11-21*). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (*Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46*).
4. The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign: We teach that after the tribulation period, Christ will come to physically occupy the throne of David (*Ezekiel 37:21-28; Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-31; Hebrews 10:12-13*) and establish His Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (*Revelation 20:1-7*). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet (*Revelation 19:20*), and by the removal of Satan from the world (*Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7*).
  - a. We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (*Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17*) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (*Deuteronomy 28:15-68*). The result of their disobedience was that they were temporarily set aside (*Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26*) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (*Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29*).
5. The Judgment of the Lost: We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand years reign of Christ (*Revelation 20:7*), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from Heaven (*Revelation 20:9*). Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (*Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10*) whereupon Christ who is the judge of all men (*John 5:22*), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment.
  - a. We teach that this resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment, they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (*Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15*).
6. Eternity: We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (*2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15*), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (*2 Peter 3:10*) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (*Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15, 21-22*). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven

(*Revelation 21:2*) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy fellowship with God and one another (*John 17:3; Revelation 21, 22*). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 *Corinthians 15:24-28*) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 *Corinthians 15:28*).