

ARTICLE 2– DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

2.1 Concerning the Scriptures

2.1.1 We believe that the Bible, sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and is the supreme and final authority for both faith and practice (*1 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:19-21*).

2.1.2 We believe that to correctly interpret the Scripture, one must recognize the dispensational framework of Scripture. This acknowledges that God has progressively revealed Himself to man throughout history. Man’s responsibilities have varied with each new revelation given (*Exodus 6:3; 1 Corinthians 9:1 7; Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2, 9, 11; 1 Timothy 1:4; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 7:12; 11*).

2.2 Concerning Creation

We believe that the Genesis account of creation is literally accurate (*Genesis 1:1; 2:3; Exodus 20:11; 31:1 7*). In six, twenty-four hour, solar days God miraculously created the heavens and the earth and all life, “each after its own kind,” mature and full-grown, and not by any process of evolution (*Job 38:3,4; Psalm 8:3; 33:6-9; Isaiah 40:18-26; John 1:1-3, 10; Romans 1:20; Hebrews 11:3*).

2.3 Concerning the Godhead

We believe that within the unity of the Godhead there are three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:19*), equal in both essence and divine perfection, but distinct in work (*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 28:19; John 10:30; 14:7-12; 1 Corinthians 13:14*).

2.3.1 God the Father:

2.3.1.1 We believe that there is only one perfect, living, holy and true God (*Deuteronomy 6:4, 5*). He is an infinite Spirit, the supreme Ruler of the universe and worthy of all worship (*Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-4; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4: 9-11*).

2.3.2 Jesus Christ:

2.3.2.1 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God (*Philippians 2:5-8*), conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (*Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18*).

2.3.2.2 We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a substitutionary sacrifice and rose from the dead (*Matthew 28:5, 6*). His literal, physical resurrection guarantees both our redemption and salvation (*I Corinthians 15:12-19; I John 2:1, 2*). We believe He ascended bodily into heaven (*Acts 1: 9*), and there lives for us as High Priest and Intercessor (*Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:23-25; 9:24*).

2.3.3 The Holy Spirit:

2.3.3.1 We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person (*Acts 5:1-5; I Corinthians 3:16-18; 6:19 20*). He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; bears witness to the truth; is the agent of the new birth; guides, teaches, assists and sanctifies the believer; indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts, and fills for service those yielded to Him (*John 3:8; 14:16, 17; 16:7-15; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18*).

2.3.3.2 We believe that the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit of apostleship, prophecy, tongues, healing, and revelation were temporary and are not to be expected today (*I Corinthians 12:4-13; 13:8-11*). The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ and never leads any person, at any time, contrary to the true teaching of the Bible (*John 14:16, 17; 15:26-27*).

2.4 Concerning the Existence of Satan

We believe that Lucifer, created by God as a holy and beautiful angel, rebelled against God and became utterly depraved in character (*Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19*). He now is the great adversary of God and His People, is the leader of all other fallen angels, and is the deceiver and god of this present world (*I Corinthians 4:3, 4; 11:3*).

Ephesians 2:1-4). His powers are vast, but limited by God who overrules all his wicked devices for good. We are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God, by the blood of the Lamb, and through the power of the Holy Spirit (*Ephesians 6:10-18; I John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-10*).

2.5 Concerning the Sinful Nature of Man

We believe that God created man in His image and likeness (*Genesis 1:26*). When Adam sinned, the human race fell and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death, separating man from God (*Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 3:9-23; 5:12*). Henceforth, all mankind is born with a sinful nature (*Ecclesiastes 7:20; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:1-6, 12*) and is therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin in a literal hell without defense or excuse before God (*John 3:18, 19; Romans 1:20; Revelation 20:15*).

2.6 Concerning Salvation

2.6.1 We believe that through Christ's shed blood on the cross (*John 14:6; I Peter 1:18, 19*) God has both initiated and provided salvation from the consequences of sin (*John 3:16; Romans 6:23*). It is universally available to all mankind with no imitations whatsoever (*I John 2:2*) so that all who personally receive Him by faith become saved (*Romans 10:13; John 3:4-8; 16:8*). Consequently, the sinner is made alive spiritually and is reconciled to God's favor, thereby becoming a saint (*John 3:16, 36; Romans 5:1, 2, 10; 8:1; 10:9-10*).

2.6.2 We believe that regeneration, or the new birth, is that transformation in man's nature by the Holy Spirit. A new nature and spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, making the person a new creation in Christ Jesus (*John 3: 3-6; I Corinthians 5: 17; Titus 3: 5; I Peter 1: 23*).

2.6.3 We believe that from the moment of regeneration the salvation of every believer is secure for all eternity. This security is guaranteed to each believer and is kept by the power of God (*John 5:24; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 29, 30, 38, 39; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30*).

2.7 Concerning Sanctification

2.7.1 We believe that immediate, *positional sanctification* is that act of God in which believers are eternally set apart as belonging to Him, placed in the family of God as His children and become joint heirs with Jesus Christ (*I John 3:1; Romans 8:14,17; I Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:10-14*).

2.7.2 We believe that *progressive sanctification* is that process by which, according to God's will, believers are made partakers of His holiness (*John 17:17; Philippians 2:12-16; I Peter 1:3, 4*). It begins at regeneration and continues throughout life as the believer is yielded to the Holy Spirit's control (*Ephesians 4:22-24*).

2.7.3 We believe that *ultimate sanctification* will be the portion of every believer when finally in the presence of the Lord, complete and entire, with soul and spirit united to the resurrected body, forever free from every trace or effect of sin and rebellion (*I John 3:2; I Corinthians 15:52-54; Ephesians 4:30; 5:2 7; Philippians 4:20, 21*).

2.8 Concerning the Eternal State

We believe that at death a believer's soul/spirit (inner being) passes instantly into the presence of Christ into the literal place known as heaven (*Luke 23:43; I Corinthians 5:1-13*) and an unbeliever's soul/spirit (inner being) descends instantly into the literal place called hell (*Luke 16:19-31; I Peter 2:9*).

2.9 Concerning Future Events

2.9.1 We believe that the Rapture is the imminent, personal, pretribulational, premillennial appearance of Christ to snatch away all New Testament believers, identified as the Bride of Christ (*Ephesians 5:22-27; I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Titus 2:13*). Deceased believers will be resurrected and reunited with their bodies while living believers will instantly be translated into heaven. (*I Corinthians 15:51-5 7; I Thessalonians 4:13-17*) at which time each will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to have works evaluated and rewarded (*I Corinthians*

3:11-15; *I Corinthians 5:10-11*).

2.9.2 We believe that God's righteous judgments will then be poured out on an unbelieving world during the seven year Tribulation (*Daniel 9:20-27; Matthew 24:9-26; Revelation 6-19*). The last half of this period is known as the Great Tribulation (*Matthew 24:21*). The climax of this fearful era will be the physical return of Jesus Christ with His own to the earth in great glory to establish the Davidic kingdom (*Revelation 19:11-16*).

2.9.3 We believe that Jesus Christ will then rule and reign on this earth as the Seed of David for one thousand years, hence the name, Millennium. At the end of this Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment will occur, where every unbeliever will be judged and cast into the Lake of Fire (*Romans 11: 26, 27; Revelation 20: 1-15*). Believers will live with Christ in the presence of God throughout eternity. (*I Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21, 22*).

2.10 Concerning the Local Church

2.10.1 We believe that a New Testament church is a voluntary and independent autonomous group of baptized believers who form a spiritual body with Christ as the Head (*Colossians 1:18, 24*). They assemble for worship, service, fellowship, discipline, prayer, teaching, testimony, the observance of the ordinances and the spread of the Gospel into all the world. (*Acts 2:42-47; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*). Each congregation recognizes its own democratic self-containing government for carrying out the will of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Revelation 2:3; Colossians 3:15, 16; Acts 20:17; I Corinthians 3:10-17; 12:12-27; 5:1-5; 11:2*).

2.10.2 We believe that every believer has the responsibility to join with and be faithful to the program of a New Testament local church. While the church depends on individual believers for prayer, support and work, the individual depends upon the church and its ministries for Spiritual nourishment, fellowship and the opportunity to exercise their Spiritual gifts (*Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:3-8*;

I Corinthians 12:4-31; 16:2; Hebrews 10:19-25; 13:17).

2.10.3 We believe that the officers of the church are limited to pastor and deacons and are to be filled by Scripturally qualified men of God (*I Timothy 2:12; 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9*).

2.11 Concerning the Ordinances

2.11.1 We believe that *Baptism* is the immersion of a believer, one time backwards in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36*), symbolizing the believer's salvation in Christ (*Romans 6:3-5; I Peter 3:21*). It is a Scriptural pre-requisite to church membership (*Acts 2:38-41*).

2.11.2 We believe that *the Lord's Supper* is a memorial service commemorating His suffering, sacrifice and salvation for us. The partaking of bread, symbolizes Christ's body and the fruit of the vine symbolizes His shed blood (*Matthew 26:26-30*). Participation is limited to only those believers who are walking in obedient fellowship with Jesus Christ (*Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 11:23-32*).

2.12 Concerning Baptists

We believe that the name "Baptist" is a historical distinction (rather than Biblical) and that they have stood for the same following principles we dearly espouse:

1. Baptism by immersion after salvation.
2. Regenerated church membership.
3. Autonomous church government.
4. Priesthood of the believers.
5. Soul Liberty.
6. Ecclesiastical and ethical separation.
7. Separation of church and state.
8. The Bible is the only standard for faith and practice.

2.13 Concerning Separation

2.13.1 Moral

Believers are called to live a holy life in the fear of God, withdrawing from worldly activities and sinful situations and

being responsible to expose them as wrong. (*Proverbs 4:18; I Corinthians 7:1; I Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23; I John 2:15-17; 3:1-3*).

2.13.2 Personal

Since believers live in the world, but are not of the world (*John 17:14-26*), we shall not enter unions, alliances or partnerships with unbelievers (*Amos 3:3; Psalm 1:1, 2; I Corinthians 6:14-18*).

2.13.3 Ecclesiastical

While recognizing the unity of all believers in Christ, the church must endeavor to keep itself pure (*Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 5:1-13*) and to separate itself from explicit doctrinal error and apostasy (*Romans 16:17-18; I Timothy 6:3-5*). It is also the church's responsibility to expose such error and those individuals, churches, groups and associations involved in error. (*Galatians 6: 1; I Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 1: 9-11*).

2.14 Concerning Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, originally established to protect the image of God in man (*Genesis 9:5-6*) and to protect mankind against the sinful acts of man (*Exodus 18:21, 22; Romans 13:1-7*). Rulers are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only when they contradict the laws of God (*I Timothy 2:1-4; Acts 5:29*). Being the light of the world and the salt of the earth, Christians have the responsibility to exert a strong influence for righteousness in civil government in ways consistent both with the laws of the nation and God (*I Samuel 23:3; Matthew 5:13-16, 22:21; Acts 4:19, 20; 23:5; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-15*).

2.15 Concerning Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded intimate sexual activity for only a husband (male) and wife (female) within their marriage relationship. We believe that participation in any form of private or public sexual activity apart from the husband/wife marriage relationship is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender

by surgery or apparel (*Genesis 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 7:1-16; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4*).

2.16 Concerning Marriage

2.16.1 We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the uniting together of one man and one woman (*Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23*) and that God intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies (*Romans 7:1-3*). We believe God disapproves of and prohibits divorce (*Malachi 2:14-17*); though not encouraged, divorce is permitted in the case of abandonment by an unbeliever and / or unrepentant adultery. (*Matthew 19:3-12; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15*) While divorced believers and / or divorced and remarried believers may hold positions of service in the church and can be greatly used of God for Christian service, such cannot be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (*1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6*).

2.16.2 We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society (*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Mark 10:6-12*). The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church and the wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ (*Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18,19; 1 Peter 3:1-7*). Children are an heritage from the Lord (*Psalms 127:3-5*). Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them in these values, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction (*Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 14; Ephesians 6:1-4*).

2.17 Concerning Lawsuits between Believers

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other born again believers or the church to resolve personal disputes (*1 Corinthians 6:1-8*). We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (*Matthew 18:15-18*).