

HERITAGE CHURCH

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The pre-eminent principle of our historical faith is that the Word of God is the sole and sufficient authority for all faith and practice. The Bible, and not tradition, shall determine what His Church believes. His priorities shall dictate our program and test the worth of all we do.

We believe that all true Christians affirm certain essential doctrines; such as the doctrine of Christ; specifically, His deity, His incarnation and virgin birth, His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for sin, His bodily resurrection, salvation by grace alone, and His coming again personally and visibly.

However, in affirming the principle of individual liberty of every believer in matters of faith, and the supremacy of Scripture we do not hold to a human-authored creed as though it were of equal authority with Scripture itself. Nor shall we hold this Statement of Faith as binding upon the conscience, but rather as a guideline. It shall serve as the doctrinal basis for teaching in this church.

The Bible

We believe that the Bible (Old & New Testaments) is the completed written Word of God, and His revelation to man, given to us by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). We believe that the Bible is inspired in its every word, therefore making it inerrant and infallible (as far as the original manuscripts) in every area in which it speaks (2 Tim. 3:16). And it is the only infallible rule of faith and practice for the Christian. We therefore interpret it literally, through its historical context, within its grammatical construction (Mt. 5:18; 24:35; Jn. 10:35; 16:12-13; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). We believe that God spoke in His written Word by 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 Pet. 1:20-21).

God

We believe that there is but one true living God (Deut. 6:4; Isa.. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4). He is all-knowing, infinite in all His ways and attributes, and is a Spirit Being (Jn. 4:24). Within the nature of the eternal God, there exist three Persons (Mt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 6:11), Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (The Trinity), equally deserving of worship and obedience.

God the Father - is the first Person of the Trinity, who orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; 1 Cor. 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9). As Creator of all things is Father to all men (Eph. 4:6), but He is Spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who

come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

God the Son - is Jesus Christ the second Person of the Trinity, who possesses all the Divine attributes of and is coequal and coeternal with the Father (Jn. 10:30; 14:9). He too was involved in the creation of all things (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1: 15-17; Heb. 1:2). He was born of the virgin Mary (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23); He was God incarnate (Jn. 1:1,14); and the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). We believe He literally arose from the dead in bodily form (1 Cor. 15), and is now at the right hand of the Father, where He is our advocate with the Father (Mt. 28:6; Lk. 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 Jn. 2:1).

We believe 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 atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers (Jn. 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20,23). We believe Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:15), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isa. 9:6; Lk. 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Mt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Holy Spirit – is the third Person of the Trinity, and He too possesses all the attributes of God the Father (1 Cor. 2:10-13; 12:11; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 9:14; Ps. 139:7-10; Isa. 40:13-14; Rom. 15:13; Jn. 16:13). He too is coequal to God the Father, and God the Son (Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 10:15-17). The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the Divine Will with relation to all mankind, and He too had activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Mt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (Jn. 3:5-7). We reject the teaching that the practice of "speaking in tongues" (or any other act – other than being "reborn") is necessary as an evidence of the baptism or indwelling of the Spirit. A person is "baptized" in the Spirit by Christ at the time of regeneration (Jn. 1:33; 1 Cor. 12:13). We believe the Holy Spirit indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers the saints for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).

Man

We believe that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7; Jam. 3:9). We believe that it was God's intention in the creation of man, that man should glorify God, enjoy His fellowship, and live in the will of God. But because of Adam's voluntary/willful disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, all men are born with a sin nature, are children of wrath, and have become separated from God and His fellowship. With no power on his own, man is unable to redeem himself to God, and is hopelessly lost. We believe all mankind is lost (every person ever born), sinful and there is no righteousness in him (Rom. 3:10,23; 6:23; Isa. 53:6; Jn. 3:36). Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; 1 Jn. 1:8).

Satan

Satan is a literal spirit personality, fallen angel and is the originator of sin (Eze. 28:1-19; Isa. 14:12-17). He was the seducer of our first parents, Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-5), both our tempter and accuser (Eph. 6:11-12; Rev. 12:10), and the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Having been judged at the cross (Jn. 16:11), his ultimate end is the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

Two Destinies

Heaven or Hell – We believe that heaven is a place of eternal life and bliss with our Savior through faith, and that hell is a place of eternal death, punishment, torment, loss and separation from God for those who have rejected the Savior (Lk. 16:19-26; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:1-15; 21:22).

Salvation

We believe that salvation from sin and God's judgement is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemptive shed blood of Jesus Christ, and not on the basis of human merit or works (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

One atonement made by Jesus Christ is a substitutionary and sacrificial death on the cross through the shedding of His blood for all. Thus taking every legal obstacle out of the way of all, and on these grounds to be offered to all, and that all must be born again or be forever lost (Heb. 2:9; 9:22; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; 1 Jn. 2:2; Jn. 11:50; Mk. 10:45; Jn. 3:3,18).

Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, is instantaneous, and is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). Regeneration is the act of God whereby He creates a new nature in the individual, thus freeing him from his old sin nature (Eze. 36:25-26; Jn. 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:17). Genuine regeneration is manifested by good works and is demonstrated in a righteous attitude and conduct; and that the believer is submissive and obedient to the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10; 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10).

Justification

We believe that justification of sinful man before a holy God is an act of God, whereby He declares sinners who have put their faith in Christ - to be righteous. Justification comes from the righteousness imputed to us as sinners because of Jesus Christ, and is the righteousness of Christ, free from any external work, merit, or virtue of man, and is solely based upon the work of Christ (Rom. 3:20-31; 4:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Faith

We believe true saving faith comes through a repentant heart that has trusted in Jesus only for salvation (Jn. 14:6). Faith is a gift of God and the responsibility of man (Eph. 1:4-6; 12-13). It is an abandonment of all other means (be they works, or any religion) of salvation in order to gain Christ (Phil. 3:4-8).

Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God, and is declared to be holy and therefore identified as a saint, at the point when one has been regenerated by God through faith in Christ. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2,30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1 10:10,14). We believe that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which

the believer is brought to and conformed more like the Savior, Jesus Christ. Through obedience to the Word of God, confession of sin, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God (Jn. 17:17,19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23).

Security

We believe that all the redeemed once justified/regenerate are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (Jn. 5:34; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1,31-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24).

The Church

We believe that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit ("baptism of the Spirit") into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Cor. 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18). We believe that the church is thus a unique organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph. 2: 11-3:6).

We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Christ (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. We believe that the leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Tim. 5:17-22) and have His authority in directing the church. We believe the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; Rev. 22:12). We believe that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism (Acts 2:38-42; 8:36-39) is the public outward testimony of a believer showing forth his obedience and faith, and the fact that he has passed through judgement because of being justified by Christ (1 Pet. 3:20-21). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42). We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28-32). We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2,15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts. 2:47; 1 Jn. 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Lk. 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), by advancing and communicating the gospel to the people of all nations (Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42). We believe in 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 hierarch of individual or organizations (Titus 1:5). We believe that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Cor. 5:4-7,13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Things to Come

We believe and accept the literal teaching of Scripture concerning the imminent, personal, and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ, to establish His Kingdom on earth (Mt. 25:31; Rev. 20:1-7). We believe in the great tribulation (Rev. 4:1-19:21), the rise of a personal false teacher (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 14:1-3, 20:1-7), the rapture of the saints (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:15-5:11; Titus 2:13), the salvation of Israel's remnant (Isa. 59:20-21; Rom. 11:25-32; Rev. 7:1-8), the resurrection of the dead, and final judgement of those who rejected Christ (Rev. 20:12-15). Those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life will reign with Christ in a new heaven and new earth for all eternity (Rev. 21, 22).