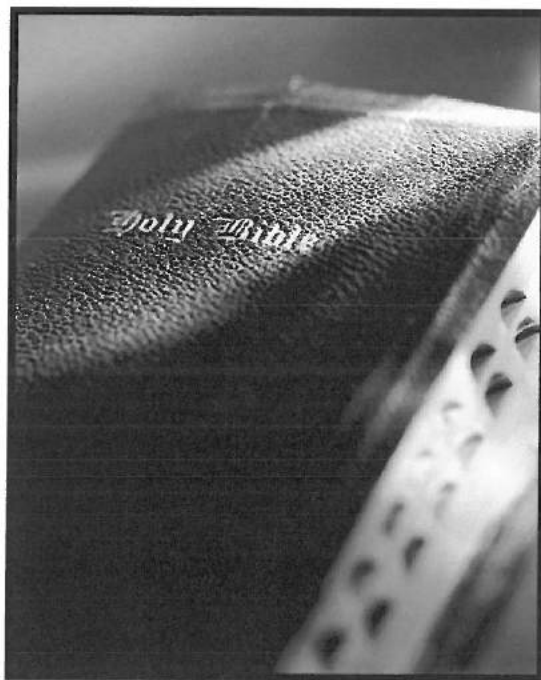


Winter Park Christian Church



Doctrinal Statement

Updated July 2013

Winter Park Christian Church ♦ PO Box 518 ♦ 274 Ponderosa Trail ♦ Tabernash, CO 80478
Phone: 970-887-9784 ♦ Fax: 970-887-9785 ♦ website: www.wpcc4Him.org

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document and the Council of Elders and Teachers of WPCC's adherence to it, aims to preserve the unity of the church through a commitment to Biblical truth.

Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach "the whole counsel of God." Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.

"We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries."

Contents

1. Scripture, the Word of God Written.....	4
2. The Trinity, One God as Three Persons.....	5
3. God's Eternal Purpose and Election.....	6
4. God's Creation of the Universe and Man.....	8
5. Man's Sin and Fall from Fellowship with God.....	10
6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God.....	11
7. The Saving Work of Christ.....	14
8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit.....	16
9. The Act of God in Justification and Sanctification.....	19
10. Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer.....	21
11. Christ's Church and Her Ordinances.....	23
12. Christ's Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations.....	26
13. Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord.....	27
14. The Spirit of This Affirmation and the Unity of the Church.....	29

1. Scripture, the Word of God Written

1.1 We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God,¹ and without error² in the original manuscripts. We recommend five word for word translations (as opposed to paraphrased translation) King James Version, New King James Version, New American Standard, Revised Standard, and English Standard Version. This doctrinal statement uses the English Standard Version.

1.2 We believe that God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

1.3 We believe God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' intention was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as, for example, in the case of some Old Testament prophecies.³ Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed historical reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors.⁴

1.4 Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible (which is its fullest meaning) is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure Biblical texts. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is essential for right understanding of the Bible,⁵ and prayer for His assistance belongs to a proper effort to understand and apply God's Word.⁶

¹ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).*

² *Every word of God proves true; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him (Proverbs 30:5).*

³ *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories (1 Peter 1:10-11).*

⁴ *There are some things in [Paul's epistles] that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16).*

⁵ *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).*

⁶ *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Psalm 119:18).*

2. The Trinity, One God as Three Persons

2.1 We believe in one⁷ living,⁸ sovereign,⁹ and all-glorious¹⁰ God, eternally existing in three¹¹ infinitely excellent and admirable Persons: God the Father,¹² fountain of all being;¹³ God the Son,¹⁴ eternally begotten,¹⁵ not made, without beginning,¹⁶ being of one essence¹⁷ with the Father; and God the Holy Spirit, proceeding in the full, divine essence,¹⁸ as a Person,¹⁹ eternally from the Father and the Son. Thus each Person in the Godhead is fully and completely God.

2.2 We believe that God is supremely joyful²⁰ in the fellowship of the Trinity, each Person beholding and expressing His eternal and unsurpassed delight in the all-satisfying perfections of the triune God.

⁷ *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one (Deuteronomy 6:4).*

⁸ *Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).*

⁹ *I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted (Job 42:2). Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases (Psalm 115:3).*

¹⁰ *And they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD (Psalm 138:5).*

¹¹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).*

¹² *No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (John 1:18).*

¹³ *There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (1 Corinthians 8:6).*

¹⁴ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3). This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:18).*

¹⁵ *For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you?" Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?" And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him" (Hebrews 1:5-6).*

¹⁶ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).*

¹⁷ *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9).*

¹⁸ *But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:3-4).*

¹⁹ *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John 14:26).*

²⁰ *His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).*

3. God's Eternal Purpose and Election

3.1 We believe that God, from all eternity,²¹ in order to display the full extent of His glory²² for the eternal and ever-increasing enjoyment²³ of all who love Him,²⁴ did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His will,²⁵ freely and unchangeably²⁶ ordain²⁷ and foreknew²⁸ whatever comes to pass.

3.2 We believe that God upholds and governs all things – from galaxies²⁹ to subatomic particles,³⁰ from the forces of nature³¹ to the movements of nations,³² and from the public plans of politicians³³ to the secret acts of solitary persons³⁴ – all in accord with His eternal, all-wise³⁵ purposes to glorify Himself,

²¹ *[He] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began (2 Timothy 1:9).*

²² *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:36).*

²³ *Delight yourself in the LORD (Psalm 37:4). Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)*

²⁴ *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*

²⁵ *In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).*

²⁶ *God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it? (Numbers 23:19)*

²⁷ *The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD (Proverbs 16:33).*

²⁸ *I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does all these things. (Isaiah 45:5-7)*

²⁹ *[God] commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars (Job 9:7). Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing (Isaiah 40:26).*

³⁰ *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:16-17).*

³¹ *He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool; he scatters hoarfrost like ashes. He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow (Psalm 147:15-18).*

³² *The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations (Psalm 33:10-11).*

³³ *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He will (Proverbs 21:1).*

³⁴ *A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand His way (Proverbs 20:24)?*

³⁵ *O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom have You made them all (Psalm 104:24).*

(3. God's Eternal Purpose and Election - Continued)

yet in such a way that He never sins,³⁶ nor ever condemns a person unjustly;³⁷ but that His ordaining and governing all things is compatible with the moral accountability³⁸ of all persons created in His image.

3.3 We believe that God's election is a sovereign³⁹ act of grace⁴⁰ which was given through His Son Christ Jesus before the world began.⁴¹ By this act God chose, before the foundation of the world, those who would be delivered from bondage to sin⁴² and brought to repentance⁴³ and saving faith⁴⁴ in His Son Christ Jesus.

³⁶ *The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he (Deuteronomy 32:4).*

³⁷ *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Romans 1:20).*

³⁸ *Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God (Romans 3:19).*

³⁹ *Though [Jacob and Esau] were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills (Romans 9:11-18).*

⁴⁰ *So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day" (Romans 11:5-8).*

⁴¹ *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4).*

⁴² *But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed (Romans 6:17).*

⁴³ *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 2:24-25).*

⁴⁴ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44).*

4. God's Creation of the Universe and Man

4.1 We believe that God created the universe in six days,⁴⁵ and everything in it,⁴⁶ out of nothing,⁴⁷ by the Word of His power. Having no deficiency in Himself, nor moved by any incompleteness in His joyful self-sufficiency,⁴⁸ God was pleased in creation to display His glory⁴⁹ for the everlasting joy⁵⁰ of the redeemed, from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.⁵¹

4.2 We believe that God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. We believe that Adam and Eve were the historical parents of the entire human race;⁵² that they were created male and female equally in the image of God,⁵³ without sin;⁵⁴ that they were created to glorify⁵⁵ their Maker, Ruler, Provider, and Friend by trusting His all-sufficient goodness, admiring His infinite beauty, enjoying His personal fellowship, and obeying His all-wise counsel; and that, in God's love and wisdom,

⁴⁵ *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)*

⁴⁶ *The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers (Psalm 24:1-2).*

⁴⁷ *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible (Hebrews 11:3).*

⁴⁸ *[God is not] served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything (Acts 17:25).*

⁴⁹ *...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made (Isaiah 43:7).*

⁵⁰ *And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:10).*

⁵¹ *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation"*

⁵² *Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (Genesis 2:7). And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man (Genesis 2:21-22).*

⁵³ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).*

⁵⁴ *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (Genesis 1:31).*

⁵⁵ *After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10)*

they were appointed differing and complementary roles in marriage as a type of Christ and the church.⁵⁶

4.3 We believe that life is precious and a gift which comes from God. We are made in God's image, therefore man is not to take life either in the womb or as a convenience to terminate life at old age. God orders our days both with blessing and suffering. Life should not be terminated out of convenience or to eliminate man's suffering.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband (Ephesians 5:22-33)*

⁵⁷ *For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16) And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, (Luke 1:41) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5) "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it." (Genesis 9:6-7) And he burned his son as an offering and used fortune-telling and omens and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger. ... Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he made Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. (2 Kings 21:6,16) "If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. ... You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel." (Numbers 35:30,33-34)*

5. Man's Sin and Fall from Fellowship with God

5.1 We believe that, although God created man morally upright, he was led astray from God's Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit,⁵⁸ and chose to take what was forbidden,⁵⁹ and thus declare his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward his all- good and gracious Creator. Thus, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God.⁶⁰

5.2 We believe that, as the head of the human race, Adam's fall became the fall of all his posterity, in such a way that corruption, guilt, death, and condemnation belong properly to every person.⁶¹ All persons are thus corrupt by nature,⁶² enslaved to sin,⁶³ and morally unable⁶⁴ to delight in God and overcome their own proud preference for the fleeting pleasures of self-rule.

5.3 We believe God has subjected the creation to futility,⁶⁵ and the entire human family is made justly liable to untold miseries of sickness,⁶⁶ decay,⁶⁷ calamity,⁶⁸ and loss.⁶⁹ Thus all the adversity and suffering in the world is an echo and a witness of the exceedingly great evil of moral depravity in the heart of mankind. We believe in the Sanctity of Life, that abortion is one of these evils and that every new day of life is a God-given, merciful reprieve from imminent judgment, pointing to repentance.⁷⁰

⁵⁸ *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"* (Genesis 3:1)?

⁵⁹ *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die* (Genesis 2:17).

⁶⁰ *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned* (Romans 5:12).

⁶¹ *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous* (Romans 5:12-19).

⁶² *In [sin] you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind* (Ephesians 2:2-3).

⁶³ *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ...When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness* (Romans 6:16, 20).

⁶⁴ *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned* (1 Corinthians 2:14).

⁶⁵ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope* (Romans 8:20).

⁶⁶ *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies* (Romans 8:23).

⁶⁷ *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day* (2 Corinthians 4:16).

⁶⁸ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered"* (Romans 8:35-36).

⁶⁹ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope* (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

⁷⁰ *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance* (Romans 2:4)?

6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God

6.1 We believe that in the fullness of time⁷¹ God sent forth His eternal Son as Jesus the Messiah,⁷² conceived by the Holy Spirit,⁷³ born of the virgin Mary.⁷⁴ We believe that, when the eternal Son became flesh,⁷⁵ He took on a fully human nature,⁷⁶ so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one Person, without confusion or mixture. Thus the Person, Jesus Christ, was and is truly God⁷⁷ and truly man,⁷⁸ and the only Mediator between God and man.⁷⁹

6.2 We believe that Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life.⁸⁰ He preached and taught with truth and authority unparalleled in human history.⁸¹ He worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation: dispatching demons,⁸² healing the sick,⁸³ raising the dead,⁸⁴ stilling the storm,⁸⁵ walking on water,⁸⁶ multiplying

⁷¹ *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law (Galatians 4:4).*

⁷² *Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).*

⁷³ *And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).*

⁷⁴ *Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us) (Matthew 1:23).*

⁷⁵ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).*

⁷⁶ *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).*

⁷⁷ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)*

⁷⁸ *Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8).*

⁷⁹ *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*

⁸⁰ *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).*

⁸¹ *The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man" (John 7:46)! And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:27).*

⁸² *"He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:27).*

⁸³ *And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people (Matthew 4:23).*

⁸⁴ *And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me" (Matthew 11:4-6).*

⁸⁵ *And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm (Mark 4:39).*

⁸⁶ *And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea (Matthew 14:25).*

(6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God - continued)

loaves,⁸⁷ and foreknowing what would befall Him and His disciples,⁸⁸ including the betrayal of Judas⁸⁹ and the denial, restoration, and eventual martyrdom of Peter.⁹⁰

6.3 We believe that His life was governed by His Father's providence with a view to fulfilling all Old Testament prophecies concerning the One who was to come,⁹¹ such as the Seed of the woman,⁹² the Prophet like Moses,⁹³ the Priest after the order of Melchizedek,⁹⁴ the Son of David,⁹⁵ and the Suffering Servant.⁹⁶

⁸⁷ *Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over (Matthew 14:19-20).*

⁸⁸ *I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am He (John 13:19).*

⁸⁹ *"But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him) (John 6:64).*

⁹⁰ *"Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me" (John 21:18-19).*

⁹¹ *And He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory" (Luke 24:25-26)?*

⁹² *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15).*

⁹³ *[He has sent] the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Moses said, "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people" (Acts 3:20-23).*

⁹⁴ *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).*

⁹⁵ *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).*

⁹⁶ *Behold, my servant shall act wisely; He shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted... He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 52:13, 53:3).*

(6. Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God - continued)

6.4 We believe that Jesus Christ suffered voluntarily⁹⁷ in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan,⁹⁸ that He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,⁹⁹ that He died,¹⁰⁰ was buried¹⁰¹ and on the third day rose from the dead¹⁰² to vindicate the saving work of His life and death¹⁰³ and to take His place as the invincible, everlasting Lord of glory.¹⁰⁴ During forty days after His resurrection, He gave many compelling evidences of His bodily resurrection¹⁰⁵ and then ascended bodily into heaven,¹⁰⁶ where He is seated at the right hand of the Father,¹⁰⁷ interceding for His people¹⁰⁸ on the basis of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, and reigning until He puts all His enemies under His feet.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁷ "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father" (John 10:18).

⁹⁸ This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men (Acts 2:23).

⁹⁹ For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place (Acts 4:27-28).

¹⁰⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (John 19:30). For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3).

¹⁰¹ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid (John 19:40-41).

¹⁰² He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:4). He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay (Matthew 28:6).

¹⁰³ [He] who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification... (Romans 4:25).

¹⁰⁴ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

¹⁰⁵ To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

¹⁰⁶ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

¹⁰⁷ But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God (Luke 22:69).

¹⁰⁸ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us (Romans 8:34).

¹⁰⁹ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25). And to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (Hebrews 1:13)?

7. The Saving Work of Christ

7.1 We believe that by His perfect obedience to God¹¹⁰ and by His suffering and death¹¹¹ as the immaculate Lamb of God,¹¹² Jesus Christ obtained forgiveness of sins¹¹³ and the gift of perfect righteousness¹¹⁴ for all who trusted in God prior to the cross¹¹⁵ and all who would trust in Christ thereafter.¹¹⁶ Through living a perfect life and dying in our place, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed our punishment,¹¹⁷ appeased the wrath of God against us,¹¹⁸ vindicated the righteousness of God in our justification,¹¹⁹ and removed the condemnation of the law against us.¹²⁰

7.2 We believe that the atonement of Christ for sin warrants and impels a universal offering of the gospel to all persons, so that to every person it may be truly said, "God gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life."¹²¹ Whosoever will may come¹²² for cleansing at this fountain, and whoever does come, Jesus will not cast out.¹²³

¹¹⁰ *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous (Romans 5:18-19).*

¹¹¹ *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit (1 Peter 3:18).*

¹¹² *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)!*

¹¹³ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7).*

¹¹⁴ *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).*

¹¹⁵ *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:3).*

¹¹⁶ *[He is] the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26). For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law (Romans 3:28).*

¹¹⁷ *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:1, 3).*

¹¹⁸ *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God (Romans 5:9). For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9).*

¹¹⁹ *...whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:25-26).*

¹²⁰ *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross (Colossians 2:13-14).*

¹²¹ *For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).*

¹²² *And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely (Revelation 22:17, KJV). Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever (John 4:14).*

¹²³ *Whoever comes to me I will never cast out (John 6:37).*

(7. The Saving Work of Christ - Continued)

7.3 We believe, moreover, that the death of Christ did obtain more than the bona fide offer of the gospel for all; it also obtained the omnipotent New Covenant¹²⁴ mercy of repentance¹²⁵ and faith¹²⁶ for God's elect. Christ died for all, however, in His death, Christ expressed a special covenant love to His sheep,¹²⁷ and His bride.¹²⁸ For them He obtained the infallible and effectual working of the Spirit to triumph over their resistance and bring them to saving faith.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ [He took] the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

¹²⁵ See note 43.

¹²⁶ See note 44

¹²⁷ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep (John 10:14-15).

¹²⁸ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).

¹²⁹ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit

8.1 We believe that the Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation,¹³⁰ awakening faith in the remnant of God's people,¹³¹ performing signs and wonders,¹³² giving triumphs in battle,¹³³ empowering the preaching of prophets¹³⁴ and inspiring the writing of Scripture.¹³⁵ Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the Father on His Church.¹³⁶

8.2 We believe that the newness of this era is marked by the unprecedented mission of the Spirit to glorify the crucified and risen Christ.¹³⁷ This He does by giving the disciples of Jesus greater power to preach the gospel of the glory of Christ,¹³⁸ by opening the hearts of hearers that they might see Christ and believe,¹³⁹ by revealing the beauty of Christ in His Word and transforming His people from glory to glory,¹⁴⁰ by manifesting Himself in spiritual gifts (being sovereignly free to dispense, as He wills, all

¹³⁰ *When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground (Psalm 104:30). The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2).*

¹³¹ *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Romans 8:7-9).*

¹³² *Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat (Judges 14:6).*

¹³³ *The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim (Judges 3:10).*

¹³⁴ *Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man (1 Samuel 10:6).*

¹³⁵ *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord..." (Matthew 22:43, referring to Psalm 110:1).*

¹³⁶ *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28)*

¹³⁷ *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 16:13-14).*

¹³⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

¹³⁹ *One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul (Acts 16:14).*

¹⁴⁰ *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).*

(8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit - continued)

the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:8-10) for the upbuilding of the body of Christ¹⁴¹ and the confirmation of His Word,¹⁴² by calling all the nations into the sway of the gospel of Christ,¹⁴³ and, in all this, thus fulfilling the New Covenant promise to create and preserve a purified people¹⁴⁴ for the everlasting habitation of God.¹⁴⁵

8.3 We believe that, apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith,¹⁴⁶ because all are dead in trespasses and sins;¹⁴⁷ that they are hostile to God, and morally unable to submit to God or please Him,¹⁴⁸ because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God.¹⁴⁹ Thus, for God's elect, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance,¹⁵⁰ awakens the dead,¹⁵¹ removes blindness,¹⁵² and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart.

¹⁴¹ *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:7-10). God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (Hebrews 2:4).*

¹⁴² *[Our great salvation] was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (Hebrews 2:3-4).*

¹⁴³ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).*

¹⁴⁴ *"I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me" (Jeremiah 32:40).*

¹⁴⁵ *[In Christ] the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord (Ephesians 2:21).*

¹⁴⁶ *Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)*

¹⁴⁷ *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).*

¹⁴⁸ *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:7-8).*

¹⁴⁹ *The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful (Mark 4:19).*

¹⁵⁰ *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Romans 8:7-9).*

¹⁵¹ *...in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:4)*

¹⁵² *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).*

(8. The Saving Work of the Holy Spirit - continued)

8.4 We believe the Holy Spirit does this saving work in connection with the presentation of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.¹⁵³ Thus neither the work of the Father in election, nor the work of the Son in atonement, nor the work of the Spirit in regeneration is a hindrance or discouragement to the proclamation of the gospel to all peoples and persons everywhere. On the contrary, this divine saving

work of the Trinity is the warrant and the ground of our hope that our evangelization is not in vain in the Lord. The Spirit binds His saving work to the gospel of Christ, because His aim is to glorify the Christ of the Gospel.¹⁵⁴ Therefore we do not believe that there is salvation through any other means than through receiving the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ *One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul (Acts 16:14).*

¹⁵⁴ *[The Holy Spirit] will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you (John 16:14).*

¹⁵⁵ *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).*

9. The Act of God in Justification and Sanctification (See Endnote # 1 for source citation)

Sanctification is that immeasurable gift of grace from God in which a regenerated person is both declared "holy" by God and gifted by the Father with an internal divine work in that person's spirit resulting in a progression in personal righteousness. Though sanctification and justification happen simultaneously at salvation, both are separate in scope and action. While justification strikes at the guilt of sin which results in fear, sanctification deals with the filth and corruption of sin resulting in shame. We believe justification once and for all, removes the condemnation under the law for the believer. We also believe it pleased our Lord to go beyond simply declaring His child not guilty in justification. He also wanted to remove the stain of sin which defiles to declare His child holy. In sanctification, God makes a remedy for the indwelling power and pollution of sin by making a provision for the believer's heart and life towards righteousness. In other words, He does not want his children to be holy in title only but in practice as well. We believe that while justification is a one time act of acquittal through redemption, sanctification has a more complex scope. It has *past present and future dimensions*. A person is sanctified at regeneration.¹⁵⁶ He is being sanctified throughout his life of faith in Christ.¹⁵⁷ Finally he will be fully sanctified in the future.¹⁵⁸

Due to the manifold blessings inherent in sanctification, further elaboration of this gift is necessary. The essence of sanctification essentially consists of three parts in which the new believer enjoys being (1) set apart - for God's delight, glory. As instruments and furniture of the temple were set apart and reserved only for holy use, so too are believers set apart as holy for God's exclusive use.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ So Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: (Acts 26:1) *To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours: ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 1:2,6:11) And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ... So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. (Hebrews 10:10,13:12) But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)*

¹⁵⁷ *I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ... But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. (Romans 6:19,22) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ... that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ... For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. (1 Thessalonians 4:3,4,7) Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (Ephesians 5:25,26)*

¹⁵⁸ *he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, (Colossians 1:22) so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints. ... Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 3:13,5:23) And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:30)*

¹⁵⁹ *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10) But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)*

(9. The Act of God in Justification and Sanctification - continued)

(2) cleansed and purified - the stain and defilement of sin is blotted out judicially as if it never existed. There is also an on going washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁰ Throughout the believer's life he can appropriate the blood of Christ for cleansing of sin and his conscience is purged.¹⁶¹

(3) adorned and beautified - the Spirit morally renovates the soul of those set apart and cleansed whereby the believer is made inwardly holy so that he loves and delights to do the will of God in a cheerful manner and is tormented by the sin he still experiences within.¹⁶²

While affirming the above we also believe sanctification *is not*:

(1) A blessing which often is separated from justification by a long interval of time or a second work of grace where the justified believer is not sanctified until some future "complete surrender."

(2) A protracted process where the Christian is made "ready" for heaven.¹⁶³

(3) Eradication of the carnal nature. A sanctified person still battles with sin until the day he dies.¹⁶⁴

(4) Wholly objective in Christ, that is relegated only to Christ's work for us but instead compels believers to participate in that work and process of change towards righteousness.

¹⁶⁰ *he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)*

¹⁶¹ *and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. (Acts 15:9) who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. ... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 9:14,10:22)*

¹⁶² *For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; (1 Thessalonians 4:2-3) and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:15) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)*

¹⁶³ *And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43) 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)*

¹⁶⁴ *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (Romans 6:12) Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (Ephesians 4:22)*

10. Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer

10.1 We believe that faith is awakened and sustained by God's Spirit¹⁶⁵ through His Word¹⁶⁶ and through prayer.¹⁶⁷ The good fight of faith is fought mainly by meditating on the Scriptures¹⁶⁸ and praying¹⁶⁹ that God would apply them to our souls.

10.2 We believe that the promises of God recorded in the Scriptures are suited to save us from the deception of sin by displaying for us, and holding out to us, superior pleasures in the protection, provision, and presence of God.¹⁷⁰ Therefore, reading,¹⁷¹ understanding,¹⁷² pondering,¹⁷³ memorizing,¹⁷⁴ and savoring¹⁷⁵ the promises of all that God will be for us in Jesus are primary means of the Holy Spirit to break the power of sin's deceit in our lives. Therefore it is needful that we give ourselves to such meditation day and night.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁵ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day (John 6:44).*

¹⁶⁶ *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).*

¹⁶⁷ *Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24)!*

¹⁶⁸ *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers (Psalm 1:1-3).*

¹⁶⁹ *Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain (Psalm 119:36)! Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of your law (Psalm 119:18). Teach me your way, O LORD; that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name (Psalm 86:11).*

¹⁷⁰ *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-4).*

¹⁷¹ *When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:4).*

¹⁷² *Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17).*

¹⁷³ *Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything (2 Timothy 2:7).*

¹⁷⁴ *I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11).*

¹⁷⁵ *Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). O taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him (Psalm 34:8)!*

¹⁷⁶ *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:2).*

(10. Living God's Word by Meditation and Prayer - continued)

10.3 We believe that God has ordained to bless¹⁷⁷ and use¹⁷⁸ His people for His glory through the means of prayer, offered in Jesus'¹⁷⁹ name by faith.¹⁸⁰ All prayer should seek ultimately that God's name be hallowed, and that His kingdom come, and that His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.¹⁸¹ God's sovereignty over all things is a reason for confidence that our prayers will succeed.¹⁸²

10.4 We believe that prayer is the indispensable handmaid of meditation, as we cry out to God for the inclination to turn from the world to the Word,¹⁸³ and for the spiritual ability to see the glory of God in His testimonies,¹⁸⁴ and for a soul-satisfying sight of the love of God,¹⁸⁵ and for strength in the inner man to do the will of God.¹⁸⁶ By prayer God sanctifies His people,¹⁸⁷ sends gospel laborers into the world,¹⁸⁸ and causes the Word of God to spread and triumph over Satan and unbelief.¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁷ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).*

¹⁷⁸ *Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:38).*

¹⁷⁹ *"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13).*

¹⁸⁰ *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:5-8).*

¹⁸¹ *Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:9-10).*

¹⁸² *Thus says the Lord GOD: This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them: to increase their people like a flock. Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD (Ezekiel 36:37-38).*

¹⁸³ *Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain (Psalm 119:36)!*

¹⁸⁴ *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law (Psalm 119:18). I pray that the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18).*

¹⁸⁵ *Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days (Psalm 90:14).*

¹⁸⁶ *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being (Ephesians 3:14-16).*

¹⁸⁷ *And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13).*

¹⁸⁸ *Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:38).*

¹⁸⁹ *Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you (2 Thessalonians 3:1).*

11. Christ's Church and Her Ordinances

11.1 We believe in the one universal Church, composed of all those, in every time and place, who are chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit in one Body, with Christ Himself as the all-supplying, all-sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head.¹⁹⁰ We believe that the ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God¹⁹¹ in the everlasting and ever-increasing gladness of worship.¹⁹²

11.2 We believe it is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches¹⁹³ in which believers agree together to hear the Word of God proclaimed,¹⁹⁴ to engage in corporate worship,¹⁹⁵ to practice the ordinances of baptism¹⁹⁶ and the Lord's Supper,¹⁹⁷ to build each other's faith through the manifold ministries of love,¹⁹⁸ to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical

¹⁹⁰ *He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent (Colossians 1:18).*

¹⁹¹ *Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10).*

¹⁹² *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9)!*

¹⁹³ *And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord (1 Corinthians 16:19).*

¹⁹⁴ *And he gave... pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching (2 Timothy 4:1-2).*

¹⁹⁵ *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God (Colossians 3:15-16).*

¹⁹⁶ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).*

¹⁹⁷ *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).*

¹⁹⁸ *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness (Romans 12:6-8).*

discipline exercising church discipline according to Biblical directives,¹⁹⁹ and to engage in local and world evangelization.²⁰⁰ The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry for His gifts;²⁰¹ it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells;²⁰² it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world;²⁰³ and it is a city set on a hill so that men may see the light of its good deeds – especially to the poor²⁰⁴ – and give glory to the Father in heaven.²⁰⁵

11.3 We believe that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have repented and come to faith²⁰⁶ express their union with Christ²⁰⁷ in His death and resurrection,²⁰⁸ by being immersed in

¹⁹⁹ *But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler- not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you" (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error (Romans 1:26-27).*

²⁰⁰ *Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4:5-6).*

²⁰¹ *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose (1 Corinthians 12:13-18).*

²⁰² *[We have been] built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22).*

²⁰³ *[I am writing these things to you, so that,] if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of truth (1 Timothy 3:15).*

²⁰⁴ *Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do (Galatians 2:10).*

²⁰⁵ *You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).*

²⁰⁶ *[You Have] been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).*

²⁰⁷ *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free- and all were made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).*

²⁰⁸ *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).*

(11. Christ's Church and Her Ordinances - continued)

water²⁰⁹ in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²¹⁰ It is a sign of belonging to the new people of God, the true Israel,²¹¹ and an emblem of burial²¹² and cleansing,²¹³ signifying death to the old life of unbelief, and purification from the pollution of sin.

11.4 We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord²¹⁴ in which gathered believers²¹⁵ eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood.²¹⁶ We do this in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes. Those who eat and drink in a worthy manner partake of Christ's body and blood, not physically, but spiritually, in that, by faith, they are nourished with the benefits He obtained through His death, and thus grow in grace.²¹⁷

11.5 We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of pastor-elder in the ministry of the Word and prayer. Women are not to fill the role of pastor-elder in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel.²¹⁸

²⁰⁹ *As they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:36-39).*

²¹⁰ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).*

²¹¹ *For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God (Romans 2:28-29).*

²¹² *See note 259*

²¹³ *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22).*

²¹⁴ *See note 248.*

²¹⁵ *But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part....When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God (1 Corinthians 11:17-20, 22)?*

²¹⁶ *See note 248*

²¹⁷ *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).*

²¹⁸ *Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve (1 Timothy 2:12-13).*

12. Christ's Commission to Make Disciples of All Nations

Discipleship is a Godly lifestyle to be passed on to others²¹⁹ in areas such as faithfulness,²²⁰ tithing,²²¹ and evangelism.²²² Our overall goal is to fulfill God's great commission both locally and worldwide.²²³ We ask that all our missionaries be accountable to an evangelical mission organization that meets the Elder board approval.²²⁴ Our prayer is that God will lead many from our congregations into missionary service,²²⁵

We believe that the commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church to the end of the age.²²⁶ This task is to proclaim the Gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation,²²⁷ baptizing them, teaching them the words and ways of the Lord,²²⁸ and gathering them into churches²²⁹ able to fulfill their Christian calling among their own people. The ultimate aim of world missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience.²³⁰ When the time of ingathering is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions.

²¹⁹ *Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)*

²²⁰ *"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much." (Luke 16:10)*

²²¹ *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. (Malachi 3:10)*

²²² *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9-10)*

²²³ *And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they remained no little time with the disciples. (Acts 14:25-28)*

²²⁴ *When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. ... Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, ... And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. (Acts 15:4,22,33)*

²²⁵ *Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)*
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

²²⁶ *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)*

²²⁷ *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (Revelation 5:9).*

²²⁸ *See note 270*

²²⁹ *When they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed (Acts 14:23).*

²³⁰ *And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him" (Romans 15:11).*

13. Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord

13.1 We believe that when Christians die they are made perfect in holiness,²³¹ are received into paradise,²³² and are taken consciously into the presence of Christ, which is more glorious and more satisfying than any experience on earth.²³³

13.2 We believe in the blessed hope²³⁴ that at the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally,²³⁵ visibly,²³⁶ physically,²³⁷ and suddenly²³⁸ in power and great glory;²³⁹ and that He will gather His elect,²⁴⁰ raise the dead,²⁴¹ judge the nations, and establish His kingdom.²⁴² We believe that the righteous will enter into the everlasting joy of their Master,²⁴³ and those who suppressed the truth in unrighteousness²⁴⁴ will be consigned to everlasting conscious misery.²⁴⁵

²³¹ *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect (Hebrews 12:22-23).*

²³² *And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43).*

²³³ *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better (Philippians 1:23).*

²³⁴ *[We are] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).*

²³⁵ *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11).*

²³⁶ *But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61-62).*

²³⁷ *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself (Philippians 3:20-21).*

²³⁸ *For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3).*

²³⁹ *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (Luke 21:27).*

²⁴⁰ *He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31).*

²⁴¹ *For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).*

²⁴² *I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom (2 Timothy 4:1).*

²⁴³ *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11). His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' (Matthew 25:23).*

²⁴⁴ *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth (Romans 1:18).*

²⁴⁵ *of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2). They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might (2 Thessalonians 1:9).*

(13. Death, Resurrection, and the Coming of the Lord - continued)

13.3 We believe that the end of all things in this age will be the beginning of a never-ending, ever-increasing happiness in the hearts of the redeemed, as God displays more and more of His infinite and inexhaustible greatness and glory for the enjoyment of His people.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ *[God] raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6-7).*

14. The Spirit of This Affirmation and the Unity of the Church

14.1 Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach “the whole counsel of God.”²⁴⁷ Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth,²⁴⁸ and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion²⁴⁹ and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine.²⁵⁰ And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works.²⁵¹

14.2 We believe that the cause of unity in the church²⁵² is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other²⁵³ across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

14.3 We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture.²⁵⁴ Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.²⁵⁵ As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

* * *

NOTE: The many Biblical descriptions of God’s work in salvation are diverse. Therefore, similar or identical terms may be used differently in different contexts. Our aim in this affirmation of faith is not to limit how Biblical writers can use the terms we use here, or to say that the terms of this affirmation may not be used differently by the Biblical writers in various contexts, but rather our aim is to claim that the reality described here is in fact Biblical reality.

²⁴⁷ *For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).*

²⁴⁸ *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God’s elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness (Titus 1:1).*

²⁴⁹ *[We minister for the building up the body of Christ] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes (Ephesians 4:13-14).*

²⁵⁰ *The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5).*

²⁵¹ *And those who know your name put their trust in you (Psalm 9:10).*

²⁵² *There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call- one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:4-6).*

²⁵³ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).*

²⁵⁴ *For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12). But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity Amen (2 Peter 3:18).*

²⁵⁵ *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so (Acts 17:11).*

Endnotes:

The Board of Elders of Winter Park Christian Church expresses their appreciation to Bethlehem Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota for graciously giving their permission to use their “Elder Affirmation of Faith” in the development of this Doctrinal Statement.

¹ For this full treatment on the subject of sanctification, we are indebted to Arthur W Pink in his teaching entitled *The Doctrine of Sanctification* from his monthly periodical entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*. The essential points were distilled and summarized by David Newell. The monthly studies were edited and combined in book form and can be found in various printings. One such edition is in Paperback: **The Doctrine Of Sanctification, by A. W. Pink, published May 1999 by Christian Heritage.** ISBN: 857924142

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from: *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.