

*Whereas the membership of the Fellowship, the extent of its work in the Kingdom of God and the scope of its influence have increased to such an extent that it has for a number of years become accepted as a church and; Whereas it is desirable to provide a constitution for the church and for matters incidental thereto.*

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

## 1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (1 Cor. 2:7–14; 2 Pet. 1:20,21). We believe that the Word of God is an objective, propositional ordered revelation (1 Cor. 2:13; 1 Thess. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We believe the literal, grammatical-historical interpretation of Scripture, which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 31:17).

We believe that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12,13; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17, Heb. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:20,21).

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) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

We believe that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20). It

is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognising that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgement of men; never do men stand in judgement of it.

## **2. GOD**

### **2.1 THE TRIUNE GOD / TRINITY**

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Is. 45:5-7, 1 Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience.

### **2.2 GOD THE FATHER**

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, 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 the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He 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 decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chr. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Pet. 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15, Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

## **2.3 GOD THE SON**

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and co-eternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9).

We believe that God the Father created "the heavens and the earth and all that is in them" according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operations (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. in His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).

We believe that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic. 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9, 10; Col. 2:9).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23,25; Luke 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (John 1:1,14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's Kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Is. 9:6, John 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25,26; 1 Pet. 1:18,19).

We believe that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (John 10:15; Rom. 3:24,25; 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:24).

We believe that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the

very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Rom. 3:25; 5:8,9; 2 Cor. 5:14,15; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18).

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High-Priest (Matt. 28:6; Luke 24:38,30; Acts 2:30,31; Rom. 4:25, 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 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 (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20,23).

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the Rapture and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; Rev. 20).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (John 5:22,23):

- a) Believers (1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:10);
- b) Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matt. 25:31-46); and
- c) Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

As the mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), the head of His body the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Is. 9:6,7; Ezek. 37:24-28; Luke 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Saviour (Matt. 25:14-46, Acts 17:30,31).

## **2.4 GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity, including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10–13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Is. 40:13,14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13).

In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3,4; 28:25,26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 2 Cor. 13:14; and Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).

We believe that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognise His sovereign activity in the creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20,21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We believe that a unique work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (John 14:16,17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ. His activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29, 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptising all believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9-11; 2 Cor. 3:6, Eph. 1:13).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (2 Pet. 1:19-21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Rom. 8:9-11; Eph. 5:18; 1 John 2:20,27).

We believe that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (John 16:13,14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4–11; 2 Cor. 3:18).

We believe, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today.

### **3. 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, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7,15-25; James 3:9).

We believe that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

We believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16,17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 2:13,14; 1 John 1:8).

We believe that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9 18,23; 5:10–12).

### **4. SALVATION**

We believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Eph. 1:4–7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18,19).

#### **4.1 ELECTION**

We believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world,

He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1,2).

We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Saviour and Lord (Ezek. 18:23,32; 33:11; John 3:18,19,36; 5:40, 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40,44; Acts 13:48, James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Eph. 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:2).

We believe that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom. 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:25-28; 2 Tim. 1:9).

## **4.2 REGENERATION**

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24), when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (1 Cor. 6:19,20, Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12b; Col. 3:12-17; 2 Pet. 1:4-11). This obedience causes the believer to be

increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 John 3:2,3).

### **4.3 JUSTIFICATION**

We believe that justification before God is an act of God (Rom. 8:30,33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Is. 55:6,7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9,10, 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:6) and involves the placing of our sins on Christ (Col. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Cor. 1:2,30; 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

### **4.4 SANCTIFICATION**

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Cor. 1:2,30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10,14; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2).

We believe that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the likeness of Christ through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17,19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:3,4; 5:23).

In this respect, we believe that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for

victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal. 5:16–25; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12, Col. 3:9,10, 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

## **4.5 ETERNAL SECURITY**

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

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 6:15–22; 13:13,14; Gal. 5:13,16,17,25,26; Titus 2:11-14).

## **5. SEPARATION**

We believe that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We believe that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Saviour. We also believe that separation from any association with religious apostasy, and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We believe that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:11,12; Heb. 12:1,2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a beatitude attitude (Matt. 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness

(Rom. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

## **6. THE CHURCH**

### **6.1 THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12,13), the bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7,8), of which Christ is the head (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

The formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:121,38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the Rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51,52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Ephesians 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1 Corinthians 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Ephesians 3:1-6, 5:32).

### **6.2 THE LOCAL CHURCH**

The establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23,27; 20:17,28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) and the members of the one scriptural body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

### **6.3 THE AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH**

The one supreme authority for the church is Christ (Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18) and church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (males) Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and

deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualification (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5). The elders lead or rule as servants of Christ (1 Timothy 5:17--22) and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7,17).

The Bible teaches the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19,20; 2 Timothy 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:15-17), as well as the need for discipline for sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19,20; Titus 1:10–16).

The local church is autonomous, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for God's churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Local churches, however, through their elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judges of the measure and method of their cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:4–7,13; 1 Peter 5:14); 1 Thessalonians 2:14.

## **6.4 THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

The purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Timothy 2:2,15; 3:16,17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Luke 22:19; Acts 2:38-42) and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8). We believe that all saints are called to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

## **6.5 THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH**

It is necessary for the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:7–12) and

He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:431; 1 Peter 4:10,11).

We believe God gave two kinds of gifts to the early church:

[1] miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing; they were given in the apostolic era to authenticate the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3,4, 2 Corinthians 12:12);

[2] ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another.

We believe with the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of a man's message, and confirming gifts of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (1 Corinthians 13:8-12). We believe that God is sovereign and He works miracles as He wills.

## **6.6 THE ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

We believe two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42).

Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6: 1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41,42).

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:23-32). Whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual Communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).