

**COMPASSION CHRISTIAN CENTER**  
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**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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**ARTICLE I - THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**

**1. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS (Heb. 11:6)**

Nowhere does the Bible attempt to prove God. His existence is assumed as being self-evident (Genesis 1:1).

There are several philosophical proofs of God. The arguments from: (a) creation, (b) design, (c) man's nature, (d) history, and (e) universal belief.

We believe He is a person, not a power of first cause.

**2. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IS A SPIRIT**

God is a **SPIRIT**, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth.

In scripture, many names are used to designate God. Each is as valid as any other. These names reveal God's character: Elohim, Jehovah, combinations with Jehovah (e.g. Jehovah-Rapha (Ex. 15:26)), Adonai, and Father.

We reject agnosticism, polytheism, pantheism, materialism, and deism.

We believe God is a Spirit (John 4:24).

We believe God is ONE (Deut. 6:4, Ex. 20:3).

He is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, all wise, and sovereign.

He is holy, righteous, faithful, merciful, loving and good.

### **3. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD IS A TRINITY.**

“We worship one god in trinity and trinity in unity, neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the substance.” (Athanasian Creed)

### **4. WE DO NOT WORSHIP THREE GODS.**

There is one God eternally manifest in three Persons. We can expect mystery when finite man seeks to comprehend the nature of an Infinite and Almighty God.

The word “trinity” does not appear in the Bible; however, the truth it describes is taught everywhere in the Bible.

Sabellianism teaches that Father, Son and Spirit are only three names of God, not three Persons. A reading of John 17 reveals the folly of this.

Unitarianism denies the deity and personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost.

### **5. PROOF OF THE TRINITY.**

Each Person of God is mentioned in the Old Testament (Isa. 63:16, Psalm 45:6-7, Gen. 1:2).

The Bible ascribes the attributes of Deity to each of the Persons in God: Creator (Gen 1:1, John 1:3, Job 33:4), Omnipresent (Jer. 23:24, Eph. 1:22, Psalm 139:7-8), and Source of Life (Deut. 30-20, Col. 3:4, Romans 8:10).

Man is tripartite. He is made in God’s likeness.

Our government is one but it has three branches: legislative, judicial and executive.

The Father loved and sent. The Son came. The Spirit is “another Comforter.”

**NOTE:** “In Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily” (Col. 2). Yet, “He (Christ) shall deliver the kingdom to God, even the Father” (1Cor. 15:24).

### **6. WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

Knowledge of what the Bible teaches concerning the personality and attributes of God is essential to intelligent faith. Such knowledge guards you against the claims of the cults and pseudoscience.

Belief in the Trinity saves you from robbing God the Son and God the Holy Spirit of the worship they deserve.

This faith also assures us of Two Divine Advocates. These are (1) God the Holy Ghost praying within God and us and (2) the Son interceding in Heaven (Rom. 8:1, I John 2).

A true comprehension of the doctrine of God must underlie every other tenet of faith and is essential to an understanding of the Bible. For instance, the scene of our Lord's Baptism at Jordan involves all three divine Persons.

## **ARTICLE II - THE DOCTRINE OF MAN**

### **1. THE ORIGIN OF MAN**

We believe that man came from the hand of God by special creation (Gen. 1:26-27). The Bible clearly teaches that God made each species of plant and animal "after their own kind." Man was made "in His own image." (Gen. 1:27). Accordingly, we reject the many theories of evolution to explain Origins.

We are not dogmatic about the date of the Adamic creation.

We recognize the validity of much scientific dating and find ample room for pre-historic ages between Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 1-2.

### **2. THE NATURE OF MAN**

a) We believe that man is a trinity of body, soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12, 1Thes. 5:23). However, frequently in Scripture the terms soul and spirit are interchangeable. The body is material. It is the vehicle or tabernacle of the human spirit (2Cor. 5:1). The Spirit is the true personality (Act 7:59). It is not material. The soul embodies spirit (Gen. 2:7).

Frequently in Scripture the word "soul" is used to mean physical life, and in that sense animals have souls (Gen 1:20-original). However, animals do not have a spirit, cannot know God or worship God. We find no reference to angels having a soul.

b) The soul has world consciousness through the body with the divine endowments of five instincts: preservation, acquisition, food-getting, reproduction and self-preservation (dominance). Free will and reason make man morally responsible. Conscience is a result of man's intelligent awareness of divine law.

Sin occurs when the soul knowingly uses the body to defy God's will.

This combination of a sinning soul and the body is called "the flesh" (Gal. 5:24).

The inclination to sin is "the carnal mind" (Romans 8:7).

Sin is the perversion or abuse of God-given powers.

c) The soul is "Dead in trespasses and sins" when fellowship with God is lost because of a defiled conscience (Eph. 2:1).

Sin brings: Guilt and Defilement

The cure: Asking forgiveness and repenting to receive atonement, which brings righteousness to remove the guilt and defilement.

### **3. GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN**

This does not refer to physical similarity. God is a spirit (John 4:24).

The likeness means: moral capacity, reason, capacity for immortality and capacity to rule.

The FALL resulted in the effacing of the divine image. This meant a loss of innocence and moral integrity.

## **ARTICLE III - THE DOCTRINE OF SIN**

Having considered briefly the doctrines of God and of man, we now think about the doctrine of SIN. A personal Creator made man by a special act of creation in His own image. Man was given dominion. "But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb 2:8). A tragedy has obviously befallen the human race. How do we account for man's bondage, fears, and depravity? The answer is sin.

### **1. THE FACT OF EVIL**

This world is now most apparently a place of physical and moral evil; similarly, man is obviously far from angelic. However, God pronounced everything good in the beginning.

### **2. THE ORIGIN OF SIN**

Satan is a real person (a fallen angel whose history is outlined in Eze. 28) who led a rebellion against God and was cast down (Luke 10:18). He deceived our first parents by appealing to the lusts of the eye and the flesh and the pride of life. They doubted God's word and listened to the devil's lie. As a result, they sinned, and by this act lost their innocence, moral integrity, fellowship with God (life) and dominion, and the image of God was effaced (Gen. 3). Man's free will made sin possible.

### **3. THE NATURE OF SIN**

Sin is an ACT of disobedience to the known will of God (1John 3:4).

It is also CONTAMINATION. It is a virus let loose in the bloodstream of the race. "In Adam all die" (1Cor. 15:22). All are born in sin. Men sin because they are sinners. This is the natural fruit of fallen human nature. There is a warp; a propensity toward evil in man. You do not need to teach a child to be selfish or disobedient.

Original sin is the term we use to describe the inherited sinful nature of man. Sin is rebellion against God's word. It is ingratitude for God's provision. It is self-will in defiance of God's will. It is suspicion of, and insult to God's character. As Torrey said, "It is high treason against the government of Heaven". The modern, shallow ideas about sin are both ridiculous and tragic.

#### **4. THE FALL**

We believe that Adam's sin distanced man from God. Man is only a pathetic physical, mental, and physical shadow of what he was created to be.

The fall brought a curse upon man, the serpent and all creation. Pestilences, disease, blights, weeds, pests, atmospheric and climatic disturbances are all evidence of the curse on nature (Rom. 8:22).

#### **5. DEATH**

God's decree was: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This happened. Man died the moment he sinned. Death means separation, not annihilation. Man died spiritually (Eph. 2:1) and in due course he died physically. Since then "death has reigned". What a cruel monarch! CHRIST will abolish death one day (1Cor. 15:26).

Physical death is not the final price of sin. There is a second death (Rev. 20:14).

#### **6. THE CURE FOR SIN**

All sin is capital crime. Its penalty is death (Rom. 6:23). The wrath of God abideth on man (John 3:36). Hence, no man can save himself. Autosoterism (Cain's religion) is absurd. The Doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement was introduced by God the day man sinned. Only unforfeited life can redeem forfeited life (Lev. 17:11). This truth runs like a scarlet thread through the Bible. **SIN, BEING WHAT IT IS...IT'S PENALTY BEING WHAT IT IS.....SALVATION MUST BE BY GRACE!**

"He hath made Him to be sin for us.....that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2Cor. 5:21).

### **ARTICLE IV - THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST**

We have surveyed the essential Bible doctrines concerning God, man and sin. Now in preparation for the Doctrine of Salvation, we first ask: What do we believe about the Savior?

#### **1. THE NATURE OF CHRIST**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the uncreated, eternal Son of God. He is the Author of creation. He is the Father of eternity. He was "In the beginning with God and He was God" (John 1:1, Isa. 9:6).

We believe that He took a perfect human nature into union with His divine nature through the miracle of the Incarnation (Gal. 4:4).

He was as much God as if He had never become man, and as much man as if He had not been God. "Perfect God and perfect man in human flesh subsisting."

As a result, we believe in the true humanity and the true deity of our Lord

Phil 2:5-11 portrays the amazing condescension of the Son of God to become the Son of Man.

Jesus claimed divine prerogatives. The entire New Testament is written to the church's faith in His Deity (1John 1).

The names given to our Lord summarize our belief regarding Him. He is the Son of God (Deity), the Word (revelation of God), Lord (sovereignty), Son of man (humanity), Christ (anointed to redeem), Son of David (royal earthly lineage and Messiah), Jesus (saving work).

Hebrews 1 is a delightful condensation of much of Christology.

## **2. THE OFFICES OF CHRIST**

Jesus was prophet in His teaching and preaching Ministry (Isa. 61).

Jesus is priest in His present intercessory ministry (Heb. 14-18, 4:14-16).

He will be King in the millennial reign and eternally (Rev. 11:15). Melchizedek, a king-priest, is a type of God's perfect King (Heb. 7:1-3).

This threefold ministry is clearly outlined in (Heb. 9:24-28).

## **3. THE WORK OF CHRIST**

The New Testament gospel, in its basic essentials, centers around Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension. (1Cor. 15:1-5). Of course, His deity and humanity qualified Him to be the substitute for sinners (Heb. 2:14).

a) His obedience: He kept the Law and honored it (a lamb without blemish) (1Peter 1:19).

b) His death: It was substitutionary, vicarious, atoning. "God laid on Him the iniquities of us all." (Isa. 53).

His "tasting death for every man" was more than physical death (Heb. 2:9). He bore the wrath of God, was made sin for us, tasted the separation from God which is the essence of Hell.

Here we walk softly, for this is the mysterious heartland of our Faith.

c) His resurrection: It was vindication of His son and of all who trust in the Son as Savior (Rom. 1:14).

He is the first fruits from death (1Cor. 15:23).

d) His ascension: .It was confirmed by the descent of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:33) constitutes Christ as our Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate (Heb. 7:25).

**HE IS THE BRIDEGROOM OF THE CHURCH** (Eph. 5:25-27). **HE IS YET TO BE ISRAEL'S KING** (Zech. 14:9). Readers will see more on this topic when we come to the doctrine of last things (or Eschatology).

## **ARTICLE V - THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**

The doctrines of God, man, sin and Christ, lead us directly to consider the Bible teaching regarding salvation. God is holy. Man is alienated by inherent sin and by wicked works. God is just. Therefore, no flesh shall stand in His presence (1Sam. 6:20). But God is also gracious, merciful, and full of compassion (Psalm 86:15). Therefore, He has planned to redeem and restore man (Psalm 103:10-12). See also Psalm 85:10.

### **1. ORINATION**

The plan of salvation was formulated in the eternities past (Eph. 1:4).

It is entirely divine (Psalm 37:39).

### **2. FOR ALL**

How can God be just and yet justify the ungodly? Romans 3:26

How can the wages of sin be death and yet sinners live in God's sight? Romans 6:23

How can the guilt and stain of sin be removed from the sinner? 1John 1:9

How can the guilty be made righteous, even sons and heirs of God? Romans 5:17

**THE ANSWER IS IN CHRIST'S ATONING, SUBSTITUTIONARY WORK AND IN THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO APPLIES THE MERITS OF CHRIST'S PERSON AND REDEEMING WORK TO THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL.** God cannot write pardon contrary to the demands of His holy nature. The Cross affords an answer!

### **3. CHRIST ON THE CROSS**

When Christ died for sinners, He was our **SUBSTITUTE** (He was made sin for us (2Cor. 5:21). He took our place in judgment (1Cor. 5:7). God laid on Him the iniquities of us all (Isa. 53:6)). He **REDEEMED** us to God (Eph. 1:7) i.e. He paid the **RANSOM** price to the Father to release us from bondage to sin and Satan. He **RECONCILED** us to God (Rom. 5:10) i.e.. He overcame our enmity by His dying love. He **PROPITIATED** the Father, i.e.. He satisfied all the claims of the divine nature against man (1John 2:2). He made **ATONEMENT**, i.e.. He made reconciliation by an expiatory sacrifice (Rom. 5:11).

**4. THIS FINISHED WORK** of the cross is made over to us in:

**a) Repentance.** Repentance is a gift of God, a work of the Spirit in the sinner's heart so that he turns from his sins with a godly sorrow to God in humility (2Cor. 7:10).

**b) Conviction.** Conviction is the Holy Spirit's ministry, making a sinner aware of the sinfulness of his nature and his need for salvation (John 16:8).

**c) Saving Faith.** Saving Faith is a gift of God enabling man to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in utter surrender (Eph. 2:8).

**d) Regeneration.** Regeneration is the subjective side of Conversion. It is New Birth (John 3). It is the renewing work of the Holy Spirit through the cleansing of Jesus' blood, so that the penitent receives a new heart (new creature) (2Cor. 5:17).

**e) Justification.** Justification means to be declared righteous before God (Rom. 5:1, Act 13:39, Titus 3:7). This is the objective side of conversion. It means to be acquitted at the bar of divine justice of all charges and declared righteous. Only God can justify the ungodly, and that only in Christ.

**f) Conversion.** Conversion means to turn about. It denotes the changed life (Matt. 18:3).

**g) Assurance.** Assurance is the confidence of acceptance with God, of forgiveness of sins, which is ours by virtue of the witness of God's Word, (1John 5:11-13), the witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16), and the witness of a new life (2Cor. 5:17).

**h) Adoption.** Adoption speaks of legal placement in the family of God so that we are not servants but sons, heirs and joint heirs (Rom. 8:17)^

**i) Sanctification.** Sanctification is by the Word (John 17:17), the Spirit (Rom. 15:16), and the Blood (Heb. 13:12). It means to be set apart for God's service and so made holy.

**j) Righteousness.** Righteousness is the merit of Christ imputed to us. Christ is our righteousness (1Cor. 1:30). There is also a practical righteousness of life to which we are called (Eph. 2:10, Titus 3:8). The righteousness of the law can be fulfilled in us by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4).

## **5 WE BELIEVE**

We believe salvation is by grace, through faith, **PLUS NOTHING**. Christ is the **ONLY** Savior. Eternal life is the gift of God through Christ. All can be saved (Rom. 10:12).

We believe in God's power to keep the Christian (Jude 24). We also believe in our responsibility to "keep ourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21).

## **ARTICLE VI - THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS**

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace. The word ordinance is also used, i.e., ordained or ordered by the Lord Jesus. We believe there are only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Church of Rome teaches there are seven. Some holiness and Mennonite groups add Foot washing to the two that we accept.

**SACRAMENTALISM** is the teaching that men and women actually receive divine grace in the act of observing the ordinance. This concept is utterly foreign to the spirit of New Testament Christianity. It makes the church and its clergy the custodians and administrators of divine grace. We believe in the priesthood of all believers.

### **1. WATER BAPTISM**

This is Christ's command (Matt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16).

It was practiced in the Early Church (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 16:33).

It was in the name of Jesus, i.e., in recognition of His Lordship and as a witness to discipleship to Him.

We believe the baptismal formula is given in Matt. 28:19, that baptism is committed after the new birth in every case where both are mentioned (Act 8:37, 10:47, 18:8).

Every baptism in the New Testament, without exception, was after conversion. The New Testament records no incidents of infant baptism. Intelligent, saving faith was required in every case before baptism. By every rule of logic and Scripture interpretation, one must arrive at this conclusion.

Baptism is a descriptive symbol of Christ, death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5, Gal. 2:12, 1Pet. 3:21).

John the Baptist insisted to discipleship. It is as important as obedience to Christ.

### **2. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The remembrance of our Lord's death by partaking of bread and wine was commanded in Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20, and referred to in 1Cor. 11:23-26, 10:16-17.

Trans-Substantiation is the Romish doctrine that the bread and wine are literally changed into the body and blood of Jesus when consecrated on the altar. Hence, they teach "the infinite merit of the perpetual sacrifice of the Mass". This is the heart of papal doctrine. We believe Heb. 10:10, 9:26, and 7:27. We do not believe in the superstition of the Mass.

The wine represents Christ's blood. The bread represents His body.

It is a memorial feast (1Cor. 11:24).

It is a dramatized sermon on the Cross (1Cor. 11:26).

It is not a “means of grace” except insofar as the participant feeds on Christ in his soul by living faith as he comes to the Table.

God’s displeasure and judgment follow those who share in this sacred ordinance insincerely or hypocritically (1Cor. 11:28-30).

It is an error to apply John 6:53-58 directly to the Lord’s Supper. John 6:35 explains John 6:53. This assimilation of the life of God is an act of appropriating faith and is a continuous thing, not limited in any wise to the Table.

There is a deep spiritual meaning to the Lord’s Supper mentioned in 1Cor. 10:16-17. “We being many, are one bread and one body”. The organic unity of the invisible Church is here in view and is emphasized by the Lord’s Supper. The bread not only represents the human body of Jesus, but also the Church – His Body, and we all are members.

## **ARTICLE VII - THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

### **1. THE PERSON AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Spirit of God, as much as the Father or the Son, is a person, not merely an influence or a power. He creates, regenerates, resurrects, etc. (Heb. 9:14). Divine attributes are ascribed to Him in the Bible such as omnipotence, eternal, etc. (1Cor. 2:10-11) which are used to love us, teach us, and comfort us (Rom. 8:27, Ga. 4:6, John 14:26, 16).

### **2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

God the Spirit was the Agent of creation (Gen. 1:2). He inspired and anointed such persons as Moses (Num. 11:16), Gideon (Judges 6:34), etc. He inspired the Scriptures (2Peter 1:21).

The prophets spoke of a future with a plentiful outpouring of the spirit (Ezek. 36:25-29, Joel 2:28-32).

### **3. THE MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT**

a) GENERAL: He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11).

He gives repentance, faith, and regeneration to the sinner.

He guides, empowers, teaches trusting saints (John 16:13)

He glorifies Christ (John 16:14).

b) DISPENSATIONAL: He is the Heavenly Eliezer, seeking out a bride for the divine Isaac (Acts 15:14).

He baptizes into the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12:13-30)

His coming at Pentecost inaugurated the Church.

#### **4. THE DEPENDENCE OF JESUS UPON THE SPIRIT**

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost, anointed of the Spirit at Jordan, wrought His miracles by the power of the Spirit, was raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit. How much more do we need Him!

#### **5. THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT**

This is a special ministry of the Spirit to Believers (Acts 2:4). It is for power for service. It is for all (Acts 2:39, Acts 10:45-46, 19:6). We must clearly distinguish this baptism from baptism into Christ.

#### **6. THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

Gal.:5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit. These Christ-like graces are evidence that the Spirit is controlling the life. Growth in grace will be marked by constantly increasing evidence of this fruit. The nine fruits are: Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness and Temperance (self-control).

#### **7. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

These are listed in 1Cor. 12. There are nine gifts, all super-natural manifestations of the Spirit. They are all for today. We are bidden to covet the best gifts. They are distributed in the sovereignty of the Spirit (1Cor. 12:11). "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit" (1Cor. 12:7).

ADDED NOTES: Pentecostal churches seek to correct the neglect of this vital doctrine by returning to a Bible emphasis. New Testament fire and power and evangelism were directly traceable to the experience of the Day of Pentecost. The abundant life (John 7:37-39), so needed by all of us, is the outflow of a soul saturated by the Spirit. New Testament signs and healings and miracles accompany a true emphasis upon the Spirit's place. Pentecost is not a denomination, a methodology, or spiritual fetish. It is a life with God; one of yieldness, of giving all and taking ALL.

### **ARTICLE VIII - THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH**

#### **1. ONE BODY**

There is one body into which all believers are baptized by the Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). This is the church, the mystical organism, which Christ said He would build (Matt. 16:18). It is not an earthly organization and is totally independent of denomination. It is close to sacrilege for any denomination to teach that it is this church of Christ.

#### **2. DERIVATION**

The word ecclesia is translated to imply “church.” Literally, it means “called out ones”. The true church includes all who have been called out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13) who are born into God’s family (John 3:3-5). The word church is derived from “kuriakon” meaning “belonging to the Lord”.

**3. OTHER TERMS** used to denote the church are:

a) The body of Christ (Eph. 1:23, Col. 1:18). This term stresses the organic unity of the church in vital relation to Christ, the head. It stresses the interdependence and individual responsibility of each member (1Cor. 12, Eph. 4:16).

b) The temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 3:16, Eph. 2:21-22, 1Peter 2:5).

c) The new Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26). Zion is a term we use in hymnody.

d) Pillar and ground of the truth (1Tim. 3:15). The church is the guardian, citadel and defender of the truth.

#### **4. TWO DISTINCT CONCEPTS**

The invisible church spans the centuries, includes both militant and triumphant saints. It is the living organism of all the elect.

The visible churches are local counterparts of that invisible entity. Each local congregation is called a church (Rev. 1:20). All who profess faith are included. Sometimes tares grow with the wheat.

#### **5. THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH**

As far as we can gather from the New Testament, there were two types of services; one public, for prayer, praise and preaching, the other private, the agape or love feasts. Preaching, song, praise, prayer and the contribution of ministry gifts (1Cor. 12) were all a part of the early gatherings. The keynote was simplicity. The Holy Spirit was honored. God worked with them confirming the Word.

#### **6. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH**

Christ outlined no framework of organization. The Spirit directed in this as the church grew. Acts 6:1-5 tells of the appointment of deacons to serve in secular matters. Acts 15:6 tells of a council of the apostles and elders to consider a doctrinal matter. The early churches were democratic in government and locally autonomous. There was no ecclesiastical hierarchy. However, they cooperated together (Rom. 15:26, Gal. 2:10). There is no New Testament warrant for the Romish concept of the Papacy or of sacramentalism. Both Laodiceanism and Nicolaitanism is rejected (Rev. 2 & 3).

#### **7. THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH**

a) General: Apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers. The apostles received their commission from the living Christ. The word means “missionary”. Prophets had gifts of inspired utterance. Evangelists gathered converts. Teachers were gifted in exposition. All of these were often itinerant.

b) Local: Presbyters, elders, bishops, pastors and shepherds seem to be interchangeable terms. They took oversight of the spiritual life of the church. Deacons and deaconesses seem to have done visitation and practical ministry to the poor (Eph. 4:11, 1Tim. 3, Phil. 4:3, 1Tim. 5:8-11).

**Note:** Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Every sincere Christian will also love the church, support its witness, submit to its discipline, share its commission, and defend it against enemies. Local church membership is a practical assertion of your acceptance of the divine arrangement, which makes us members of one another in the body of Christ.

## **ARTICLE IX - THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)**

Eschatology has to do with the biblical revelation concerning the events, which will climax this Church Age, and what is in store for Jew, Gentile and the Church, in the ages to come.

### **1. REVELATION**

We teach that Revelation chapters 2 and 3, pictures the present church age, that chapter 4 shows the church in heaven, chapters 4-19 portray the 7 years of Antichrist’s reign, chapter 19 shows Christ returning with His saints to judge the nations, bind Satan and reign for 1000 years (20:4-6). After this comes the release of Satan, the battle of the great Day of God, the White Throne Judgment, and the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21-22).

### **2. DANIEL**

We believe that the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Daniel outlines world history up to the time when Christ shall reign (Dan. 2:44-34). The ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, we identify with the ten kingdoms of Rev. 17:12. This end-time federation of states is thought by many to be a United States of Western Europe, a revived Roman Empire.

### **3. SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST**

We believe that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent of Christ, referred to over 300 times in the New Testament is in two stages.

a) A secret Rapture of the living and sleeping saints into the air (1Thess. 4:16-17).

This is the return of the Bridegroom for His Bride. It is the Blessed Hope of the church (Titus 2:13). It can take place any time.

b) A public REVELATION of Christ with His saints (Jude 14, Rev. 19:11, Zech. 12:10, 14, 4) to take the reins of world government for 1000 years of millennial bliss. This follows the time of Jacob's trouble, the Great Tribulation (the last week of Daniel).

#### **4. OTHER TERMS USED**

Pre-Tribulation Rapture: that Christ will return before Antichrist is revealed.

Post-Tribulation theory: that the church will go through the Tribulation.

A-millennialism: that there is no literal 1000-year reign.

Pre-millennialism: that Christ will return (and must) to bring in righteousness.

Post-millennialism: that the world will gradually improve until a golden age.

#### **5. THE JUDGMENTS**

The Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) is for Christians and will take place in the heavenlies after the Rapture to determine rewards and their place in the coming kingdom (1Cor. 3:11-15, Rom. 14:12).

The Great White Throne Judgment follows the Millennium and includes all who did not share in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6).

#### **6. THE BATTLES**

Armageddon (Rev. 16:16, 19:19): end of Tribulation.

Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38:39): destruction of world communism. (Anytime now?)

Great Day of God (Rev. 20:8-10): close of Millennium.

#### **7. HEAVEN AND HELL**

Both are eternal. As there is unending joy for the redeemed, so there is a hell for the rejecters of mercy. Nowhere does the Bible intimate a second chance or support the theory of the restitution of all things.

#### **8. THE ETERNAL STATE**

The ultimate, endless kingdom of God.

“Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and authority and power. For He just reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet...and when all things shall be subdued unto Him. Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all” (1Cor. 15:23-28).

## ARTICLE X - THE DOCTRINE OF AUTHORITY

Underlying, and essential to, every cardinal belief we defend as a church, is the doctrine of the Plenary Inspiration and Absolute Authority of Holy Scripture. We believe that “all scripture is inspired of God and is profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction” (2Tim 3:16). We believe the Bible, in its original writing, is the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice.

This is not Bibliolatry. We do not worship the Bible.

This defends against mysticism, the teaching that men are to be guided by the inner light in matters of faith. Such makes every man his own Bible.

It contrasts with rationalism. Human reason is not adequate to criticize God’s Word. The Work criticizes us (Heb. 4:12). Rationalism puts God on trial in the court of human reason.

We reject neo-orthodoxy...that the Bible contains God’s Word and this Word is different for every man.

We cannot accept additional authorities, whether tradition, apocryphal books, papal edicts, utterances of the gifts of prophecy, new Bibles (Book of Mormon, Science and Health, etc.) or anything additional whatsoever. We believe that the faith once delivered (Jude 1:3)

What do we mean by plenary or verbal inspiration of the Bible?

We mean that God by His Spirit, used holy men of old to write the Scriptures, guarding the writings from error or human prejudice, yet using the vocabulary and personality of the author. We believe that every word was inspired, not only the thoughts or the spiritual message (2Peter 1:21, Matt. 5:18, John 5:39, 10:35).

The Bible contains the words of Satan as well as of God, good advice and bad, the record of sin as well as of righteousness. The record of these things is inspired. This does not mean that every Bible verse is a safe guide for conduct. We are to “study to show ourselves approved unto God...rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Tim. 2:15). It is dangerous to lift verses out of their context, or to build doctrines on isolated proof texts. Failure to observe the simple rules of sound biblical interpretation has led sincere people into all sorts of erroneous positions.

What do we mean by illumination?

This is the light God sheds upon the sacred page of His Spirit so that a prayerful person may grasp the meaning and message of the BOOK.

How can we be sure the Bible is the Word of God?

a) Historical Evidence: It is written by 40 authors over 55 generations, preserved across the centuries, universally acclaimed, speaking with perennial freshness, 66 books yet one unity, an encyclopedia of knowledge never equaled.

b) Internal Evidence: 2500 Times in the Old Testament such terms as “Thus saith the Lord” is used. There is evidence of fulfilled prophecy, our Lord’s testimony to the Old Testament, and the doctrinal, structural, prophetic and spiritual harmony of the Bible.

c) Experimental Evidence: Witness the power of the Bible to elevate, save and preserve. It has no competitor.

**PROBLEMS:** The writers of most present-day school science textbooks, present a world-view and theories of origins utterly opposed by the Bible. Liberal theologians reject and often ridicule faith in the infallibility of Holy Scripture. Often Bible Christians are labeled naï ve or anti-intellectual. Nothing could be further from the truth. The great weight of true scholarship is on the side of the evangelical Christian. We do not believe that the demonstrable facts of science ever contradict the Bible. God is the Author of creation and the Bible. We do not concede for a moment that unbelief is intellectual. Unbelief is wicked. Men deny the Bible for spiritual and moral, never for valid intellectual reasons.