

WE BELIEVE:

The Doctrinal Statement of the Kootenai Community Church

(A) THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Bible is God's written revelation to man, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible contained in the Old and New Testaments given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the complete Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-14; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments is both verbal (inspiration extends to the very words used) and plenary (inspired equally in all parts). The Scriptures are inerrant in the original autographs, infallible and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). The Scriptures thus constitute the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We believe that God has spoken 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 Peter 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).

We believe that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13). God's revelation is correctly understood as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit to each passage (John 7:17; 16:12-15; 1 John 2:20). We believe that there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, however, there is but one true interpretation. It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture through the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

(B) GOD

We believe that there is but one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three persons, called the Trinity Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14) each coeternal in being, coidentical in nature, and coequal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections, and equally deserving the same worship, homage, confidence and obedience (John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6).

(1) GOD THE FATHER

We believe that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes of all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6; Acts 17:22-29), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the

accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, through their regeneration, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

(2) 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 coeternal with the Father (John 10:30; 14:9). He is thus full Deity, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. We believe in the eternal sonship of Christ.

We believe that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by Whom all things continue in existence and operation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2).

We believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered 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, apart from sin, and so became the God-Man (Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:5-8). In the incarnation, the second Person of the Trinity took on Himself an existence appropriate to that of a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Philippians 2:5-8). We believe in the impeccability of Christ.

We believe that the incarnation was accomplished through the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23,25; Luke 1:26-35), Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:14), that He is God incarnate (John 1:1, 14), and that the purpose of this incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:29; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Christ, then, represents humanity and Deity in indivisible oneness (Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-10; Colossians 2:9).

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; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 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 (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

We believe that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. In this literal physical resurrection from the grave, three days after His crucifixion, 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 bodily resurrection for all believers (John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

We believe that having been raised in a glorified, incorruptible body and existing for eternity as the God-man, Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father in Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:3-23; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). From His position at the right hand of the Father, Christ now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

We believe that Christ is the sole Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5), Christ is the Head of His Body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 5:23; Colossians 1:18), and the coming universal King, who will reign on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33), and the final Judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the One through Whom God will judge mankind (John 5:22-23) including believers (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10), living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matthew 25:31-46), and the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

(3) GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and Deity including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Ephesians 4:30), will (1 Corinthians 12:11), eternity (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), omniscience (Isaiah 40:13-14), omnipotence (Romans 15:13), and truthfulness (John 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17).

We believe that the Holy Spirit has Sovereign activity in creation (Genesis 1:2), the incarnation (Matthew 1:18), the inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Peter 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (John 3:5-7).

We believe that the 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; Acts 2:1-4) to initiate and complete the building of the Body of Christ, which is His church (1 Corinthians 12:13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (John 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, and empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14). It is the duty of all of those born of the Spirit to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (John 16:13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 John 2:20, 27).

We believe that the Holy Spirit is given in full to a believer at the moment of his salvation and no second work of grace is needed to receive the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Ephesians 2:21-22).

(C) 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 (Genesis 2:7; 15-25; James 3:9). It was God's intention in the creation of man 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 (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 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 (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:1-20, 23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 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 (and that by virgin birth). All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration, and in need of a Savior (Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

(D) 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; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:1-19).

(1) REGENERATION

We believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; 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 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

(2) 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 (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

We believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 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 13:38; James 4:8).

We believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to an initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 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 (Romans 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 (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9). God's election is neither capricious nor arbitrary since it is according to the kind intention of His will which is neither capricious nor arbitrary (Ephesians 1:3-14).

(3) JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God (Romans 8:33) 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; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Thus God is able to be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

(4) SANCTIFICATION

We believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification, is 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 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 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 standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. 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; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

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 (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

(E) ETERNAL SECURITY

We believe in the eternal security of the believer, 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; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24). 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 occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

(F) SEPARATION

We believe that separation from sin is clearly taught in both the Old and New Testaments. Scripture teaches that in the last days apostasy and worldliness will increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We believe that out of our deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 1:1-2) living in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also believe that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

(G) THE CHURCH

(1) FORMATION AND PURPOSE

We believe that all who place their faith in the Lord 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 2:1-21, 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). Thus, the Church is 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).

We believe that 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 that the members of the one spiritual Body are commanded to associate themselves together in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 11:18-20; Hebrews 10:25).

We believe that the local church is totally autonomous, free from external authority or control, with the right to self-government and freedom from hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate together for the presentation and propagation of the faith. However, each local church, through the elders' application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We believe that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Ephesians 3:20) by building itself up in the faith (Ephesians 4:13-16), by instruction in the Word of God (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; 2:42).

(2) ELDERS AND DEACONS

We believe that there is one supreme authority of the Church, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18). The Church leadership, gifts, order,

discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 14:40). The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-5) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

We believe that these leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ and have His authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:7, 17).

(3) DISCIPLINE

We believe in the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2), the mutual accountability of all believers to each other, as well as the need for discipline of 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).

(4) ORDINANCES

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

We believe that Christian baptism is by immersion. It is a solemn and beautiful testimony of a faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and a union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Romans 6:1-11), and is to be administered after conversion (Acts 2:41; 8:35-39). It represents the spiritual reality of our baptism into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13), and is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible Body of Christ, the Church (Acts 2:41-42). Baptism is an act of obedience, does not convey grace in and of itself, and is not necessary for salvation.

We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by our Lord on the night He was betrayed (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33). The Lord's Supper is to be observed in remembrance of the Lord (Luke 22:19). It is a commemoration and proclamation of His death to be observed until He comes, and should always be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28-32). We believe that the elements of Communion are only representative of the body and the blood of Christ, however the ordinance is an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Corinthians 10:16).

(5) SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that all saints are called to the work of service (1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12).

We believe that God is using the Church to accomplish His purposes and to that end has given spiritual gifts. God has given 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 abilities to each member of the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11). 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 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; Hebrews 2:1-4).

We believe that there were two kinds of gifts given to the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the apostles' message (Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. 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). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (1 Corinthians 13:13-14; Revelation 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those nonrevelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Romans 12:6-8). We believe that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Luke 18:1-6; John 5:7-9; 2 Corinthians 12:6-10; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15).

(H) ANGELS

We believe that angels are created beings and as such are not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

We believe that Satan is a created angel. He is the author of sin and incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Genesis 3:1-15). He is the open and declared enemy of God and man referred to as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), the ruler of this world (John 16:11), and the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). He has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:20), currently exerts power only to the extent allowed by God (Job 1:12; 2:6), and his destiny is the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

(I) LAST THINGS (ESCHATOLOGY)

(1) DEATH

We believe that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8), that there is a separation of the soul and body (Philippians 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17), when our soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men both saved and lost. The saved are resurrected to eternal life (John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Corinthians 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15).

We believe that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (John 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Hell is the eternal destiny of all unbelievers, the devil, and his angels.

(2) THE RAPTURE

We believe in the personal, visible, bodily, and imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ before the seven-year tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:13) to translate His Church from this earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-5:11). Between this rapture and His glorious return with His saints, believers will be judged and rewarded according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). During this period the Church will be united with Christ as His Bride and will enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-10).

(3) THE TRIBULATION

We believe that following the removal of the Church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16). These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matthew 24:27-31; 25:31-46). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Daniel 12:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6). The tribulation period is the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

(4) THE SECOND COMING AND MILLENNIAL REIGN

We believe that after the tribulation period Christ will come to occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic Kingdom for a thousand years on earth (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:17-22; Revelation 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

We believe that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32; Romans 11:25-29).

We believe that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 11; 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Revelation 20:7).

We believe that following the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released (Revelation 20:7) at which time he will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Revelation 20:9). Following this rebellion, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10). Christ, Who is the Judge of all

men (John 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and the small at the Great White Throne Judgment. This resurrection of the unsaved dead will be physical and having received judgment, they will be committed to an eternal, conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15).

(5) THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Ephesians 5:5; Revelation 20:15; 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (John 17:3; Revelation 21-22).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

(J) CREATION

We believe in the direct creation of the heavens and the earth in six literal days by fiat from Almighty God as described in the first two chapters of Genesis (Genesis 1-2; Colossians 1:16-17; John 1:1-3). We believe Adam and Eve were literal historical characters (Genesis 1-3; Matthew 19:4-5; Romans 5:12-21), the parents of all men of every race, tribe, and kindred (Acts 17:26). We believe in the literal fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden resulting in the depraved, fallen, sinful state of all humanity, necessitating their regeneration. We believe that death, decay, and suffering entered creation for the first time as a result of this fall (Genesis 3:1-3; Romans 5:12-21). We believe in a literal global flood of Noah as described in Genesis 6-9. We believe that the early chapters of Genesis are literal history.

(K) HUMAN SEXUALITY

We believe that God has given sex to the human race for the purposes of procreation and recreation and that no intimate sexual activity is to be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. (Proverbs 5:15-23; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God rejects any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance.

We believe that the only legitimate biblical marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the Church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors/elders and deacons) of the Church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the Church (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12). This differentiation of roles in the ministry of the church is not cultural but is a reflection of the order of creation (1 Corinthians 11:1-16; 1 Timothy 2:8-15).

(L) DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We believe that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-17) and intends marriage to last until the death of one spouse (Romans 7:1-3). Marriage consists of one man and one woman entering a covenant and becoming one flesh (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31) a bond that can only be dissolved by the death of a spouse (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Because of the teaching of Jesus that divorce and remarriage constitutes adultery (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18); and because marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5: 22-33) and is to be held in high esteem (Hebrews 13:4), divorce and remarriage is not to be tolerated among God's people.

We believe that although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons who have repented may hold positions of service in the Church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor/elder or deacon (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

(M) ABORTION

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, inexcusable taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We do not believe that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable or justified (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).