



Statement of Faith

Section 1—Preamble to the Statement of Faith

We believe a statement of faith is but a fallible, though necessary, human attempt to summarize and systematize essential doctrines of the infallible divine revelation; that membership in a local church primarily depends on one's standing with God through Jesus Christ, not one's knowledge of the Bible; that, therefore, (1) the Statement of Faith of Community Baptist Church neither exhausts the extent of our faith nor is it final authority for faith and practice, and (2) membership in the Church is not dependent upon unreserved affirmation of each and every assertion found in the Statement of Faith; that, notwithstanding the preceding, unity of mind regarding the faith once delivered is required by the Bible, therefore, (1) any member who, in due time, finds themselves unable to conscientiously submit to the Statement of Faith is to quietly resign their membership, and (2) every pastor (elder), officer, deacon, employee, ministry leader, or other official representative of the Church shall, before assuming their office and at such other times as the Pastor deems appropriate, submit in writing to the Pastor a statement that they affirm, without mental reservation, the Statement of Faith and that they will conform their curriculum and perform their duties in accordance with it.

Section 2—Concerning Revelation

a) Its Presentation

We believe God has revealed Himself by general revelation—which manifests His eternal existence, power, and glory (Psalm 19:1-3; Romans 1:19-20)—and by special revelation—which manifests His character, grace, and program of redemption (John 1:1-5, 14, 18; 2 Timothy 3:15); that although special revelation has in times past been given by God through various means (Genesis 22:3, 22:28; Numbers 27:21; 1 Samuel 3:10; 1 Chronicles 24:5; Ezekiel 1:1; Daniel 10:12; Micah 6:5; Acts 3:21), it is now finally and pre-eminently given in the incarnate Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2), and the written Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments known collectively as the Holy Scriptures, or the Bible (2 Timothy 3:15); that the Bible is the complete and final written revelation of God so that no other religious writings or supposed revelations (Numbers 12:2) are to be accepted as divinely inspired or authoritative (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2); that the Holy Spirit superintended the writing of the Bible such that the writers, although their individual personalities and different styles of writing are evident, recorded the very words by which God desires to communicate to mankind (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21); that the Bible, in whole or in part, is equally and fully inerrant in relation to any subject addressed, either directly or indirectly (Psalm 119:140).

b) Its Interpretation

We believe the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential to properly understand the Bible (John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13); that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer guarantees the availability of His teaching ministry to all believers, not merely to an elite group (1 Corinthians 3:16); that human weakness (John 16:12), carnality (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), and unwillingness to obey the truth (John 7:17) can thwart the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit; that unbelievers, no matter how much they know about the Bible, cannot truly understand it (Acts 4:13-14; 1 Corinthians 2:14); that some passages are more difficult to understand than others (2 Peter 3:16); that incorrect interpretations of the Bible bring serious consequences (2 Peter 3:16); that God has gifted some believers with greater ability to teach the Bible for the benefit of all

(Romans 12:6-7; Ephesians 4:11-12); that no matter how gifted a believer is, diligent study is necessary to understand the Bible (Isaiah 28:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:15); that those who teach the Bible will be held strictly accountable for their teaching (James 3:1); that there is but one true interpretation of scripture although there may be several applications; that the Bible is to be interpreted within a dispensational framework according to the normal grammatical-historical meaning of its words within the context and literary genre (narrative, poetry, parable, etc.) of the passage given; that the Bible helps interpret itself (1 Corinthians 2:13); and that seeming contradictions are only so because of ignorance of all the facts (1 Corinthians 13:12).

c) Its Preservation

We believe the written revelation of God, the Word of God, is true (Psalm 119:160) and pure (Psalm 12:6); that God has promised to preserve His Word (Psalm 12:7, 119:89; Matthew 5:18) and is well able to do so (Jeremiah 32:27); that the preservation promise extends to each and every word of His Word (Deuteronomy 8:3); that the many translations available today, their words being demonstrably different—even contrary to one another—in hundreds of places, cannot be the true, pure, and preserved Word of God (Psalm 119:89-91); that Satan (Revelation 12:9) has sought to corrupt the Word of God from the beginning (Genesis 3:1-5); that God has expressly warned believers to keep His Word (Jude 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19) and to beware of corruption of it (1 Timothy 4:1); that, therefore, it is necessary to identify which translation is the true, pure, and preserved Word of God; and that the King James Bible is the true, pure, and preserved Word of God because: (1) it was translated from a preserved Greek text (Matthew 12:33); (2) it has proven itself to be the quick and powerful Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) by the changed lives of untold millions of believers (John 8:31-32) for over four-hundred years; and (3) it teaches fundamental doctrines necessary for salvation and sanctification which are often weakened by, if not eliminated from, the texts of spurious bibles (1 Timothy 4:1).

Section 3—Concerning God

a) The Triune God

i) His Being

We believe there is but one (Deuteronomy 6:4) only (Isaiah 44:6) living and true God (Jeremiah 10:10); that He is a Spirit (1 Kings 8:27; John 4:24), infinite (Job 11:7-9), eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 90:20), sovereign (Psalm 135:6), and unchanging (Malachi 3:6) in His being (Exodus 3:14), wisdom (Romans 11:33), understanding (Psalm 147:5), power (Matthew 19:26), holiness (Isaiah 6:3), justice (Revelation 15:3), goodness (Psalm 31:19), and truth (Exodus 34:6-7); that He is to be addressed with language using the male gender (Genesis 1:31; Matthew 7:11; Mark 1:1; John 14:25); that He is self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct persons—the Father (John 6:27), the Son (Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4)—each of whom is to be equally honored, worshiped, and obeyed as true God (Matthew 28:19); that as its Creator (Genesis 1:1), He is absolutely separate from and above creation (Ephesians 4:6) yet everywhere present in creation (Psalm 139:8; Hebrews 4:13) as the Preserver of all things (Nehemiah 9:6); and that He, according to the counsel of His own will (Daniel 4:35; Ephesians 1:4, 11-12) and for His own glory (Romans 15:4) and pleasure (Revelation 4:11), does whatever He desires in heaven and earth (Job 23:13-14), the knowledge of which enables His children to be patient in trouble (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4), thankful in prosperity (Philippians 4:10-13), and confident in the face of death (Romans 8:38-39).

ii) His Creation

We believe God began and finished creating the entire universe, things visible and invisible (Colossians 1:16), in six literal days (Exodus 31:17); that creation is not an on-going process but finished (Genesis 2:1-2); that the world was created perfect (Genesis 1:31); that the decay of the universe is a result of the curse of God (Genesis 3:16-19); that the curse will one day be lifted (Romans 8:21); that the present creation will be replaced (Revelation 21:1); that in spite of its degeneration, all of creation witnesses to the existence of God

(Psalm 19:1-4a) so that all persons are without excuse for denying their Creator the worship rightly due Him (Romans 1:18-21).

b) God the Father

We believe in God the Father (Ephesians 4:6), the first person of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19); that He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose (Isaiah 14:24-27) and grace (Ephesians 2:7); that He is sovereign in creation (Psalm 135:6), providence (2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 89:9; Matthew 6:26), and redemption (Ephesians 1:3-6); that He continually directs and governs all creatures and events (Isaiah 44:24-28); that He accomplishes His will without being in any way the author (Romans 7:7, 12-14; 9:14) or approver (Psalm 5:4; Ezekiel 18:23) of sin or abridging the accountability of human beings (Romans 3:4-6); that He has graciously chosen from all eternity those whom He would have as His own (Romans 8:28-30), yet saves from sin all who willingly come (Revelation 22:17) to him through Jesus Christ (John 6:37-39); and that He relates Himself to His own as their Father (Matthew 6:8-9).

c) God the Son

We believe in God the Son (Mark 1:1; John 1:34), the second person of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19), that He is the eternal Word (John 1:1) and only begotten Son (John 1:18), our great God and Savior the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13); that He, while retaining His absolute deity as the eternal Son of God (John 1:14; Hebrews 13:8), became man (Galatians 4:4) by the miracle of virgin birth (Matthew 1:23) to continue forever (Hebrews 7:24) as both God and man (Colossians 2:9), one person in two distinct natures (Luke 1:35; Romans 9:5); that He, as man, was in all points tempted like as we are (Hebrews 4:15), yet, because He, as God, had no sin nature (Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:52), He was constitutionally unable to sin (John 1:14; Hebrews 7:26), and did not sin in fact (John 8:29; 1 Peter 2:22); that He, as the perfect lamb of God (1 Peter 1:19), gave Himself in death (Matthew 20:28; John 10:17) upon the cross (Philippians 2:8) to bear there in His own body (1 Peter 2:24) the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53:6; John 2:2) and suffered the full penalty of divine wrath (Matthew 27:46; Galatians 3:13) in our stead—the Absolutely Just for the absolutely unjust (Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 3:18); that He actually died and was buried (Mark 15:44-46); that He arose from the dead (Matthew 28:6-7; 1 Corinthians 15:4) in the same, though glorified—not immaterial—body (Luke 24:39) in which He had lived and died (John 20:25-28); that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers (Philippians 3:21); that He, as our great High Priest (Hebrews 3:1), ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) to sit at the right hand of God the Father (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3) as our Advocate (1 John 2:1) and Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25); that He is the head of the church, His body (Ephesians 1:22-23); and that He is the final Judge (John 5:22) of His own (2 Corinthians 5:10) and of all who fail to place their trust in Him as their Savior from sin (John 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:11-15).

d) God the Holy Spirit

We believe in God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4), the third person of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19), the divine agent in nature (Genesis 1:2), revelation (1 Corinthians 2:10; 2 Peter 1:21), and redemption (2 Corinthians 3:18); that He caused Mary, a virgin, to conceive the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 1:35); that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 15:8-11); that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration (John 3:5-7) and baptizes all believers into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13); that He seals unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30), indwells (1 Corinthians 6:19), empowers (Ephesians 3:16), guides (Romans 8:14), teaches (John 14:26), sanctifies (1 Corinthians 6:11), and constantly works to conform to the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) all who become children of God through Jesus Christ; that He distributes spiritual gifts to believers (1 Corinthians 12:11) to glorify Christ (John 16:13-14) and edify the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12), not to glorify Himself, the gifts, or the recipients of the gifts; and that He no longer gives some gifts, such as the gifts of speaking in a foreign language without instruction and physical healing, which were given in apostolic times as signs to authenticate the gospel until the Bible was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

Section 4—Concerning Angels

a) Their Origin

We believe God the Son created the angels (Colossians 1:16), a distinct class of immortal and non-procreative (Luke 20:35-36), spirit-beings (Hebrews 1:7), having personality—intelligence (Genesis 19:15), emotion (Luke 2:13), and will (2 Timothy 2:26)—most of whom (Hebrews 12:22; Jude 6) kept their first estate of holiness (1 Timothy 5:21) and presently praise and worship God (Psalm 148:2-5; Isaiah 6:3) and serve His purposes (Matthew 26:53; Hebrews 1:14), but, as created beings, are not to be worshiped (Romans 1:25; Revelation 22:8-9).

b) The Devil or Satan

We believe the Devil or Satan (Revelation 12:9), fell from perfection through pride (Ezekiel 28:14-17) and unlawful ambition (Isaiah 14:13-14) thereby becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44); that he led a large number of angels (Mark 5:9), now called devils (Matthew 9:34) and evil spirits (Luke 7:21), to follow him (Matthew 12:24-26); that by subtle suggestion he accomplished the moral fall of the progenitors of the human race (Genesis 3:1-7); that he is inherently deceptive (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9) and the god of this present world (2 Corinthians 4:4); that he and his followers are the enemies of God, individually (2 Thessalonians 2:4) and collectively (Ephesians 6:12) opposing God (Matthew 4:1-10) and His people (1 Timothy 3:7), especially through idolatry (Leviticus 17:7; 1 Corinthians 10:20), false religions that deny the fundamentals of the faith (1 John 4:1-4) and promote salvation by human efforts (1 Timothy 4:1-3; Ephesians 2:8-9), and immorality (Revelation 2:20-24); that his powers are supernaturally great but strictly limited by God (Job 1:12, 2:6; Luke 22:31), who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Romans 8:28, 38-39); that he was judged at the Cross (John 12:31-32, 16:11) and, although the sentence was not then executed, his final doom is certain (Revelation 20:10); that we are able to resist and overcome him in the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:12-18) and by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:11).

Section 5—Concerning Mankind

a) Mankind's Origin

We believe God directly created mankind as male and female (Genesis 1:27) within one day (Genesis 1:31) without natural processes or in any way as the product of animal ancestry (Genesis 2:7, 21-22), but as a distinct kind of being made free from sin (Genesis 1:31; Ecclesiastes 7:29), in the image of God and after His likeness (Genesis 1:26a), set in order above animals (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:19) and lower than angels (Hebrews 2:6-7); and that the man, Adam, was made first and then the woman, Eve (Genesis 2:21-23), with both being created to glorify God (Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 10:31), enjoy His fellowship (Genesis 3:9) forever (Psalm 73:26), and do His will (1 John 2:17).

b) Mankind's Fall

We believe that God entrusted Adam with the care of the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15) and permitted him and Eve to eat freely from all of the trees in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17); that Eve, after being deceived by Satan, was the first to voluntarily disobey the revealed will of God, and then Adam (Genesis 3:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:13-14); that as a result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve lost their innocence (Genesis 3:7), were alienated from God (Genesis 3:8-10) and subject to death (Genesis 2:17) and decay (Genesis 3:16-19); that Adam passed to every person (Romans 5:12), Jesus Christ excepted (1 Corinthians 15:22), a sinful, totally corrupt nature (Romans 3:10) that inevitably manifests itself in actual sins (Romans 3:23); and that every person is born absolutely unable to remedy their own—or anyone else's—sinful condition (Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9), is apart from God (Ephesians 4:18), and is subject to death (Romans 6:23a) and the torments of hell forever (Matthew 25:40-41).

Section 6—Concerning Salvation

a) Its Nature

We believe in salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9); that it was purchased by Christ on the cross (John 3:14-17); that salvation is the free gift of God (Romans 3:24, 6:23), neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of any person (Romans 4:4-5; Titus 3:5), rather it is received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:28-29; Acts 16:30) through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Romans 10:17) as applied by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:22); that all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life (1 John 5:11-12), a perfect righteousness (Romans 3:21-22a), membership in the family of God (Galatians 3:26), deliverance and security from all condemnation (John 5:24), every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3), and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (John 10:27-29); that this salvation includes the whole man, body and soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24); and that apart from Christ there is no possible salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

b) Its Results

We believe salvation results in righteous living (Titus 2:11-12) and good works (Ephesians 2:10) as its proper evidence and fruit (1 John 3:9-10); that such evidence of salvation will be experienced as believers submit to the control of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) in their lives in obedience to the Word of God (Romans 12:2; James 1:21); and that this evidence of salvation is accomplished by conformity of believers to the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), culminating in their glorification at Christ's return (1 John 3:2).

Section 6—Concerning the Family

a) The Primacy of Marriage and the Family

We believe God designed marriage to be the lifelong and exclusive union of a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-6) to satisfy God-given longings for companionship (Genesis 2:20-14) and procreation (Genesis 1:28); that He commissioned the family as the basic unit of society (Genesis 2:18-25); that a family begins when a man and a woman become husband and wife (Genesis 2:24), grows as children are born to them, and is the primary sphere within which children are to be nurtured and trained (Ephesians 6:4).

b) The Role of the Husband

We believe the husband is to sacrificially love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25-28), even as his own body (Ephesians 5:28-30); that he is to commit himself to a lifetime relationship with her (Matthew 19:4-6); that he is to be understanding (1 Peter 3:7) and gentle (Colossians 3:19) toward her; that he is to be considerate of her need for intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:3); that he is to lead her in matters of the faith (1 Corinthians 14:25; Ephesians 5:25-27); and that in a complete family he is the head of the household (1 Timothy 3:4-5).

c) The Role of the Wife

We believe the wife is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24); that she is to revere him (Ephesians 5:33b); that she is to love him (Titus 2:4-5) and be considerate of his need for intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:3); and that she is to guide the house under his headship (1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:5).

d) The Role of Parents

We believe parents are responsible to God to direct the training of their children (Proverbs 22:6) in all kinds of growth (Luke 2:52); that the parents are to impart in their children a fear of evil and a desire for godliness

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 3:1-2, 4:1-2, 31:1) by godly means (Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 29:15; Hebrews 12:5-7; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21); and that the parents are to provide for the material needs of their children until the children are able to do so (2 Corinthians 12:14c).

e) The Role of Children

We believe children are to honor (Ephesians 6:2-3) and obey (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20) their parents; and that children are to assist their parents when their parents are incapable of providing for themselves (1 Timothy 5:4).

Section 7—Concerning Civil Government

a) Its Authority

We believe God has authorized mankind to rule itself at a level more comprehensive than the individual or family levels (Genesis 9:5-6); that although God does not require those who rule to do so in any particular form of civil government, He will require all who rule to give an account to Him for their actions (Romans 14:10c; Revelation 20:12); and that although those who have authority to rule have authority to formulate the laws of the land, they are not the source of morality (Revelation 4:8).

b) Its Purpose

We believe the fundamental purposes of civil government are: (1) to defend its subjects from the oppression of other nations (Genesis 14:1-2, 13-20) and (2) to execute judgment and justice (2 Samuel 8:15; Jeremiah 23:5) by punishing evil doers and promoting good behavior (1 Peter 2:13-17) so that the injustices and vagaries of personal vengeance for wrongs suffered are avoided (Genesis 4:13-16), the poor and defenseless are not oppressed (Psalm 82:1-4), and a peaceful environment is maintained to everyone's benefit (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

c) Its Subjects

We believe it is our duty to willingly subject ourselves to those who rule over us (Romans 13:1-2); pay to them such taxes as is lawfully required (Matthew 17:24-27; Mark 12:17a; Romans 13:6-7); honor them according to their position (Romans 13:7); pray for them with a view to achieving a society conducive to tranquility of mind, free from violence, and favorable to the spread of the gospel (1 Timothy 2:1-4); use our positions of authority for the general good (Genesis 41:41; Esther 4:14), and take advantage of whatever lawful means is available to promote godly government (Galatians 6:10a).

d) Its Limits

We believe that although civil government is authorized by God, because it is administered by fallen human beings, it inevitably reflects fallen human nature so that until the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish His reign on earth (Jeremiah 23:5), the hope of godly government cannot be fulfilled by any earthly leader or governing body (Isaiah 31:1); that although we may lawfully use government for our protection (Genesis 14:13-16), provision (Genesis 41:57), and to obtain justice (Acts 25:11), we must look to God for ultimate protection (Psalm 18:2, 20:7), provision (Matthew 6:11), and justice (Jeremiah 23:5); that when faced with tyranny, our happiness depends not on our circumstances but on pleasing God (Genesis 22:18; Matthew 5:3-12)—therefore we are to disobey commands that would compel us to kill the innocent (Exodus 1:15-21), worship idols (Daniel 3:10-12), pray to man not God (Daniel 6:8-10), stop proclaiming the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:4), or otherwise prevent us from worshipping God and obeying the Bible (Acts 4:18-19); that in responding to oppression we must not revolt against our leaders (1 Samuel 26:23; Romans 12:19-21) but pray (Exodus 2:23; Matthew 5:44; 2 Timothy 2:1-2), work to lawfully change the situation (Daniel 1:8; Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 2:5), flee if we want (Matthew 2:13; Acts 8:1), but always wait patiently on the

Lord (2 Samuel 22:48-49; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4; 1 Peter 4:12-16); and that, in short, we are to disobey human government that would compel us to disobey God (Acts 4:18-19), while realizing that we may ultimately be forced to suffer for our convictions (Daniel 3:16-18).

Section 8—Concerning the Church

a) The Body of Christ

We believe the church, the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), was founded by Him and that He is building it (Matthew 16:18); and will be complete when its members assemble to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17); that, unlike local assemblies which may have a membership composed of true and false believers, the church, the body of Christ, is one body composed only of persons—some now alive and some now dead—who, as truly regenerated, were placed into it by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12-13); that it is sovereignly ruled (Ephesians 1:22) and defended (Matthew 16:18) by Him from His throne in heaven (Mark 16:19) to accomplish His will on earth (Ephesians 1:4-6; Hebrews 13:20-21); and that, because: (1) it is composed only of true believers and (2) some of its members are not on earth but present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8) and (3) it does not operate as a body ruled by believers in Christ's stead but by Christ Himself (Ephesians 1:22), it does not exist as an organization composed of local assemblies of professing believers ecumenically banded together.

b) The Local Church

i) Its Description

We believe a local church is a number of persons of a locality (Acts 8:1) voluntarily united (Hebrews 10:25) because of a common nature (2 Corinthians 5:17) and interest (Philippians 1:5), and voluntarily (Romans 12:1) situated in an organization (Romans 12:4-8) devised by Christ to represent Him on earth (Matthew 18:17-18; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:20), whose operations—government (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17), teaching (1 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:1), discipline (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:4), and methods (2 Corinthians 10:4)—bring greater glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 9:13) by producing greater Christlikeness in its members (Ephesians 4:11-16), greater good works by its members (John 13:35, 14:12; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 10:24), and a greater number of converts (Acts 2:46-47) than could be obtained by individualistic efforts (Romans 14:7).

ii) Its Purpose

We believe the purpose of a local church is to glorify God (Romans 15:6; 1 Corinthians 6:20; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 15:4) through evangelization—preaching the gospel of salvation to reconcile the willing to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18-19; Romans 10:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Galatians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10); edification—improving the mind in knowledge, morals, faith, and holiness to prepare the willing for Christ's use on earth (Romans 12:2, 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:12, 26b; 2 Corinthians 12:19; Ephesians 4:11-12, 4:16, 4:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:21); and ministration—ministering one to another within the church to unify the members, and to those outside the church to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel (John 10:37; 2 Corinthians 9:13; Galatians 6:10; Titus 2:14, 3:8a, 3:14; Hebrews 6:10, 13:1, 16; James 2:17; 1 Peter 2:12, 3:8).

iii) Its Commission

We believe God has commissioned believers (Matthew 28:18-20), as ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), to individually, corporately, aggressively, and sacrificially proclaim the gospel (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8)

to all nations (Luke 24:45-48) so that there will be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:9-10).

iv) Its Government

We believe that local churches have authority from God to administer the order, discipline, and worship which Christ has appointed; and that its officers are bishops (pastors) and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1, 8, 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1).

v) Its Independence

We believe local churches may fellowship and cooperate with one another in contending for the faith and furtherance of the Gospel when such efforts are wholly in accordance with the Bible and do not organizationally link them together (2 Corinthians 8:1-4); that local churches may take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of other entities in order to excel in their endeavors (Philippians 1:9-10a) if they are not organizationally linked together (2 Corinthians 6:14); and that, as organizations authorized by God for their existence (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 10:32; 1 Thessalonians 1:1), local churches may not submit themselves to other powers for their right to exist.

vi) Its Ordinances

We believe Christ commanded the local church to keep two ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:2), baptism (Matthew 28:19) and the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 1:23-25); and that neither has inherent power to change the participants so as to make them acceptable to God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Baptism—We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a professing believer in water (Mark 1:9-10) in the name of the Triune God (Matthew 28:19); that Christ set the example for believers to follow Him in it (Mark 1:9); that He had His disciples perform it (John 4:1-2), that its fundamental meaning is willing identification of the believer with the message of the Gospel and the person of the Savior (Romans 6:3-5; Acts 8:36-38); that the early church considered it important (Acts 2:41, 8:12-13, 10:47-48a); that it is a foundational doctrine (Hebrews 6:1-2) symbolizing important theological truths (Romans 6:1-10; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21); and that believers who were baptized as unbelievers should be re-baptized (Acts 19:1-5).

Lord's Supper—We believe the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ as a memorial (1 Corinthians 11:24); that it proclaims His crucified body and shed blood (1 Corinthians 11:26); that it is an assurance of His return (Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 11:26); that it is a time of fellowship restricted to Christ and His people (1 Corinthians 10:21); that there is no prescribed frequency for conducting it (1 Corinthians 11:25); that unrepentant believers under church discipline are excluded from participating in it (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11-15); and that it should be taken only after careful self-examination of one's walk with Christ (1 Corinthians 11:27-31).

vii) Its Support

Routine Support—We believe churches are to be routinely supported by the tithes and offerings of their members (Acts 4:36-37; 1 Timothy 6:17-19) and by such other lawful means as opportunity and wisdom permits (Matthew 17:27; Acts 20:34); that gifts are to be made as unto the Lord without consideration of material reward (Matthew 6:19-21) or worldly recognition (Matthew 6:1-4); that church members have a solemn obligation to support their church, especially the Pastor (1 Timothy 5:17-18); that all rights to direct the use of the gift are relinquished once it has been made (Acts 4:35); that—because: (1) it is unethical to receive the benefits a local church provides without contributing to the support of its operations (Jeremiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 9:9-13), (2) the precedent of the tithe occurred before the law was given (Genesis 14:18-20), (3) the tithe was the minimum established by God to support the operations of the temple when He founded the nation Israel (Deuteronomy 12:5-6), (4) no New Testament passage nullifies the precedent

of the tithe or establishes a different amount for the support of the local church, (5) church members, as children of God who live not under the law but under grace, ought to exceed the requirements of the law (Matthew 5:20; Luke 6:38),—the most biblical answer to the question, “How much should I give to support the operations of my church?” is, “At least a tithe of your gross income.”

Special Support—We believe churches may voluntarily engage in special projects requiring them to solicit support above the amount necessary for routine operations (2 Corinthians 8:1-4); that the administration of special projects requires particular care (2 Corinthians 8:20-21); that those who are given the opportunity to participate in special projects are free to refuse to participate or, if they choose to participate, are free to determine the extent of their participation (2 Corinthians 9:7a); that those who participate in special projects are to perform their commitment (2 Corinthians 8:11) willingly and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7), knowing that a special promise attaches to such giving (2 Corinthians 9:8) and that they are following the lead of their Saviour in a special way (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Section 9—Concerning Reconciliation

a) Its Necessity

We believe believers are to love one another (John 13:34) and that such love manifests itself in interpersonal relationships characterized by, among other things, unity (Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 4:3) and peace (2 Corinthians 13:11) achieved in part by conscious efforts toward lowliness and meekness of mind, longsuffering, forbearance (Ephesians 4:2), truthfulness (Ephesians 4:25), and away from strife and vainglory (Philippians 2:3), bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, and malice (Ephesians 4:31); that despite such efforts, conflict has been a part of the Christian experience from the earliest days of Christianity (Matthew 20:24; Acts 15:39-40); that the Bible is the only authoritative guide for resolving conflict within local churches (Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-11; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Titus 3:10-11); and that it is the solemn duty of every local church to resolve conflict hindering its mission (John 15:10; 1 Corinthians 5:7a).

b) Its Extent

We believe local churches have been given all the resources necessary to justly resolve personal disputes between believers (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3); that believers have an obligation before God to resolve disputes between themselves so as to not bring reproach upon the name of Christ and His churches (1 Corinthians 6:6-7); that believers are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other believers or the local church and its ministries (1 Corinthians 6:1); that the judgment of the church is binding on all parties and backed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:18-20); and that the prohibition against lawsuits does not extend to cases where a believer or church seeks compensation for injuries from another believer’s or church’s insurance company if the claim is pursued without malice or slander, or in a way that does not bring reproach upon the name of Christ and His churches (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Section 10—Concerning Last Things

a) The Saved

i) The Intermediate State

We believe at death the spirit and soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23) of persons who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21-23) to remain there in conscious bliss (1 Chronicles 16:27) until they return with Him to assemble with the remainder of the church, His body, in the air, at which time they shall be reunited with their bodies raised from the grave, though then changed into the likeness of His glorious body (Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2).

ii) The Judgment Seat of Christ

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, before He establishes His millennial reign on earth, will descend from heaven in great power and glory to assemble the church (Mark 13:26-27), His body (Colossians 1:18a), in the air; that the members who are alive and remain on earth until that moment shall be changed into the likeness of His glorious body (Philippians 3:20-21) and caught up together with the other members to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17); that the purpose of the assembly is to remove believers from imminent wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9) and for each member to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards (2 Corinthians 5:10), a judgment that may issue in the loss of rewards but not in the loss of the soul (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2 John 1:8), and determines the member's position of service in the millennial reign of Christ (Luke 19:15-19).

iii) The Millennial Reign of Christ

We believe the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27) will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth in great power and glory with His saints to destroy His enemies and establish His messianic kingdom (Zechariah 14:1-9; Revelation 19:11-16) for one thousand years, during which time the saints will rule and reign with Him (Revelation 20:6), the covenant promises of God with Israel will be fulfilled (2 Samuel 7:12-16), and the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God (Habakkuk 2:14).

iv) The Eternal State

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of David, will deliver up His messianic kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) so that, as the eternal Son, He may reign forever with the Father in the new heaven and new earth (Luke 1:31-33; Hebrews 1:8) and that the saved shall ever be with their Savior (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

b) The Lost

i) The Intermediate State

We believe at death the spirits and souls of the lost are kept under punishment (2 Peter 2:9), in misery and conscious of condemnation (Luke 16:19-28); until reunited with their bodies at the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29).

ii) The Great White Throne

We believe the lost shall, at the close of the millennial reign of Christ, be reunited with their bodies to appear before the great white throne; that they will be judged according to their works and cast into the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15), not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Section 11—Concerning Miscellaneous Issues

a) Human Sexuality

We believe God created man and woman (Genesis 1:27) with reproductive powers reserved one for the other (Genesis 1:28); that the lawful marriage of one man to one woman for life (Genesis 2:24) is the way God intended for men and women to satisfy the sex drive (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9); that within marriage there is liberty (Hebrews 13:4) and responsibility (1 Corinthians 7:3-5) for the man and woman to enjoy and satisfy their sexuality one with the other; that sexual relations outside of God's design—whether in any form of homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:27), lesbianism (Romans 1:26), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23), incest (Leviticus 18:6, 9-11), fornication (1 Corinthians 5:1, 13b, 6:18), adultery (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus

18:20), whoremongering (1 Corinthians 6:15; Revelation 21:8), transvestitism (Deuteronomy 22:5), pornography (Jude 1:8), and such other ungodly means as may be devised (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)—is an unnatural (Romans 1:26-27a), sinful perversion of human sexuality (Leviticus 18:24-30) that is antithetical to true love (Romans 13:9-10) and sure to bring horrible natural consequences (Romans 1:27b), as well as God's judgment (Genesis 19:4-5, 12-13; Jude 7) if not repented of (Psalm 86:5; Revelation 2:20-22); and that a blurring of the distinction between men and women is to be avoided (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5).

b) The Present World

We believe true understanding of the present world requires correlation of all the data of science and history within the historical and prophetic framework provided by the Bible, including the following major events: (1) special creation of all things in six natural days (Genesis 1:31-2:1); (2) the entrance of sin (Genesis 3:6-7) and the Curse (Genesis 3:16-19) into the world; (3) the worldwide Flood, which cataclysmically changed the entire earth in the days of Noah (Genesis 7:17-24); (4) the origin of nations and languages at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:6-9); (5) the preparation of a special nation, Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6), through which God would send His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; (6) the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the surety of redemption (1 Corinthians 15:3-4); and (7) the consummation of all of God's redemptive plans, as well as His purpose in creation, through the events associated with the bodily return of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:10-11).

c) Racism

We believe mankind was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27); that every person is a descendent of Adam through Noah and his sons, from whom the races came (Genesis 10:1); that unkind and unjust behavior toward someone on the basis of circumstances of birth is oppressive and forbidden by the Bible (Exodus 22:21; Malachi 2:10; James 2:9); that the Lord Jesus demonstrated that right behavior toward someone of another race, although not a pretence of being unaware of the difference, completely disregards the difference (John 4:7-10); and that the presence of racist notions among believers is especially abhorrent to God because all who are in Christ are one body (1 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 3:28), with each member being equally indwelt (Colossians 1:17) and cherished (Ephesians 5:29-30) by Christ, who is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35).

d) Abortion

We believe in the sanctity of human life (Genesis 1:27, 9:6); that the Bible: (1) refers to unborn babies as babes (Luke 1:41-44) just as it does of infants and young children (Exodus 2:6; Psalm 17:14; Isaiah 3:4; Luke 2:16), (2) refers to the unborn by personal pronouns (Jeremiah 1:5) just as it does of any other human being, (3) teaches that the unborn are known by God just as personally and intimately as He knows the born (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5), (4) teaches that the unborn possess personal characteristics just as the born do (Luke 1:44), (5) teaches that the unborn are protected from death and injury (Exodus 21:22-25) just as the born are (Genesis 9:6), (6) refers to what is today called a foetus as a child (Exodus 21:22), (7) teaches that God may fill the unborn (Luke 1:15) with the Holy Spirit just as He does the born (Ephesians 5:18), (8) teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, was fully human at the moment of conception (Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:30-35); therefore, we reject notions that the unborn are potentially human or subhuman and believe that the unborn are fully human beginning at conception; that abortion is murder; and that abortion is never excused by God for the sake of the mother's quality of life or mental health, for pregnancies due to rape or incest, for physical defects in the unborn, or for purposes of birth and population control.