



## **Statement of Faith and Practice**

# The Orchard

We exist to ....

Help people discover Christ  
and live life to the full

**Go**

**Gather**

**Give**

**Grow**



Come as you are - Be transformed - Make a difference

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*This Statement of Faith is intended to provide a broad Scriptural base for our Chapel fellowship as well as an understanding of our theological position to those who would join in fellowship with us.*

*We recognize every born again believer in the body of Christ, and would 'endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' - Ephesians 4:3.*

*As each Christian fellowship has its own distinctive in both life and practice we also may differ from some - but would want our union in Christ to be far greater and stronger than the apparent differences we may have and so encourage those of our Chapel fellowship and in fact all believers in Christ to love, respect and accept each other in the bonds of true Christian love. John 13:34-35.*

**“By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”**

## **THE SCRIPTURES**

We are an evangelical fellowship which acknowledges that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God in their totality, 2 Timothy 3:16.

In fulfillment of Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth, John 16:13. We believe that the New Testament completes the canon of 'God breathed' Holy Scripture. Hebrews 1:1-3, Jude 3, 2 Timothy 1:13-14, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

We believe and teach that the Scriptures are the product of the dual authorship of the Holy Spirit and selected men, 2 Peter 1:20-21 and as a result are inspired by God in all their parts, fully and equally - historical, poetical, doctrinal and prophetic, 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Scriptures being the Word of God, John 10:35, are therefore inerrant in the original writings even to the smallest letter, Matthew 5:18.

The Scriptures being the very Word of God are sufficient to completely equip the believer for all Christian service, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

The Scriptures are the complete weapon against the enemy, Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, Ephesians 6:17.

The liberty and strength Christ speaks into the believers life through the Scriptures give the endurance to stand in all circumstances, Romans 15:4-6.

In this age of deception, Matthew 7:21-23, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, the Scriptures will be the unchallenged guide as to the ministry of the Holy Spirit amongst us. We hold that certain manifestations of the

Spirit were uniquely intended as signs to prove the genuineness of the events recorded for all time in Holy Scripture and not normative throughout the church age. The early Apostles and Prophets were unique, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 3:5, Hebrews 2:4.

## **THE GODHEAD**

We believe and teach that there is only One True and Living God. Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 45:5 who exists in Three Persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all three being co-equal, co-eternal and co-substantive, Matthew 28:18-19, Mark 12:29, John 1:14, Acts 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Hebrews 1:1-3, Revelation 1:4-6.

We believe and teach that the members of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit; possesses in total equality all the attributes of deity to infinity.

## **GOD - THE FATHER**

We believe and teach that God the Father is:

- a. The *Centre* of all things - Romans 11:36, Ephesians 1:11
- b. The *Cause* of all things - Genesis 1:31, Ephesians 3:9
- c. The Controller of all things in creation, providence, history and salvation. Psalm 103:19, Psalm 145: 8-19, 1 Chronicles 29:11, Ephesians 1:11.

We believe and teach the Fatherhood of God over all persons Creatorially, Ephesians 3:15, Ephesians 4:6 but is the Father Redemptively only over those who believe in Christ, Romans 8:14, 2 Corinthians 6:18 and that He becomes such by His gracious act of adopting believers in Christ into His family, John 1:12, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:5. In His role as the Redemptive Father He lovingly

provides for His children, Matthew 6:8, Philippians 4:19 and faithfully parents His children, Hebrews 12:5-11.

## **GOD - THE SON**

We believe and teach that God the Son is:

- a. *Co-equal* with God, John 10:30, John 14:9.
- b. *Co-eternal* with God, John 8:58 and as such is the pre-existent Son, Isaiah 9:6.

We believe that the Pre-existent Son became man, John 1:14, John 6:33, 41 and that He was Jesus of Nazareth, Luke 24:19, Matthew 1:21, 25, Matthew 21:11, Mark 1:9, who, though human was without a sinful nature, Hebrews 4:15 and thus stood apart from sinners, Hebrews 7:26.

In becoming fully man, Luke 2:40, Philippians 2:8, by the virgin birth, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 14: 23-25, Luke 1:26-35, the Son did not cease to be God, John 5:23, John 14:9-10, Colossians 2:9.

In the Incarnation the Son added sinless humanity to perfect Deity thus possessing the very nature of man and the very nature of God. These two natures were indissolubly bonded together in one perfect personality of the man, Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5, Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:19, Colossians 2:9.

We affirm therefore that the Lord Jesus possessed all the perfection's and attributes of God, and that His earth-life sometimes functioned within the sphere of that which was human and sometimes within the sphere of that which was divine. But that every act was the act of the God-man, Christ Jesus. Taking the form of a servant, He voluntarily surrendered His right to be immediately and constantly worshipped as God, Philippians 2:5-11, veiling His splendour with assumed humanity. Hebrews 10:20.

His purpose in coming into the world was to:

1. *Reveal the Father.* John 1:18, John 14:9-11, which task was accomplished in His earthly life and teachings, John 17:4-8.
2. *Redeem mankind:* Psalm 2:7-9, Hebrews 7:25-27, Hebrews 9:26, John 3:16-18, 1 Peter 1:18-19 which task was completed fully and finally in His substitutionary, propitiatory redemptive death, John 1:29, 1 John 2:2, John 10:15, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:14, 1 Peter 2:24, 2 Peter 3:18. That his death was acceptable to the Father is evidenced in the resurrection of Jesus. Hebrews 1:3, Romans 1:4, Romans 4:25, Matthew 28:26, Luke 24: 38-39, Acts 2: 30-31 which was literal and physical. He is therefore, the only Saviour of the lost, John 14:6, Hebrews 10:5-14, Acts 4:12. Until that appointed hour, Acts 2:23, He now functions as our Mediator, 1 Timothy 2:5, Advocate, 1 John 2:1 and Head of His body, the Church, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18.

We believe and teach that in fulfillment of prophecy, Christ came first to Israel, the chosen nation, Exodus 19:5, as her Messianic King, and that being rejected by the nation He gave His life as a ransom for all in keeping with the eternal plan of God. Matthew 10:5-6, Matthew 12:24-32, Matthew 21:31, 43, Matthew 26:18-20, Acts 14: 46-48, John 1:11, Acts 22:22-24, 1 Timothy 2:6.

## **GOD - THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit is of one essence and substance with the Father and the Son in their Deity. Matthew 28:19, Acts 5:34, Acts 28:25-26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, and that He thus is a person, John 14:17, John 15:26, John 16:7-8, possessing all the perfection's and attributes of God, Psalm 139:7, Isaiah 40:13-14, Romans 15:13, having the capacities of intellect, 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, will, 1 Corinthians 12:11 and emotion, Ephesians 4:30.

His work is evident in Creation, Genesis 1:2, the incarnation, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35, the production of Scripture, 2 Peter 1: 20-21 and in the personal regeneration of every believer in Christ, John 3:5-7.

Though the Holy Spirit has been omnipresent from all eternity, He came in a special sense and with unique purpose on the Day of Pentecost as promised by the Father, Acts 1:4, and by the Son, John 14:16-17, John 15:26.

We further believe and teach that in this age certain well defined ministries of Spirit are in clear operation toward both believer and unbeliever, and that it is the obligation of every Christian to understand, adjust to and enjoy the ministry of the Spirit.

1. *In relation to Believers, the Holy Spirit came to:*

- (a) *Initiate the Body of Christ*, the Church which was a Divine mystery until the day of Pentecost, Ephesians 3:4-5, 9, 11, awaiting the coming of the Spirit John 7:39, so that Jew and Gentile could both be made equal in the Church, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 1:18, 24-27.
- (b) *Indwell the Church*. Ephesians 2:22, 1 Corinthians 3:16 and the individual Christian, 1 Corinthians 6:19, which individual indwelling is necessary to salvation, Romans 8:9 and provides eternal security Ephesians 1:13, thus signifying a permanent residence within the believer, John 14:15-17.
- (c) *Induce Christlikeness* in the believer's life, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18 through His control, Ephesians 5:18.
- (d) *Instruct Apostles* in the complete truth, John 16: 12-15, John 14:25-26, John 15:26, 1 John 2: 20, 27, 2 Peter 2:1-20, which

is now inscripturated in the Bible as the full and final revelation of the Spirit for this age Hebrews: 2:1-4, 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

- (e) *Impart Gifts and Graces* to the believer for the work of the ministry, 1 Corinthians 12:11, 2 Corinthians 3:6, according to His Sovereign will, 1 Corinthians 12:11. We further believe and teach that since the Church possesses all the truth in the Scriptures, John 16:12-15, that no further truth is either necessary or available and thus that with the gifts related to revelation and signs accrediting that apostolic revelation have ceased, 2 Corinthians 12:12, Hebrews 2:1-4. The only gifts in operation today are the non-revelatory gifts for the edification and equipping of the body, Romans 12:6-8.

## **SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE**

We affirm that special insight may at times be given for specific situations.

Anything of claimed significance to the congregation will first be taken to the eldership for evaluation before being communicated to the assembly.

## **BAPTISM AND FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe and teach that these two terms are not synonymous. According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, the only passage which identifies the significance, recipients and timing of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Spirit baptism is a sovereign, once for all act of God incorporating all true believers into the body of Christ.

Being filled with, or controlled by, the Holy Spirit is a command for

which the believer is entirely responsible.

It is a necessary daily exercise, Ephesians 5:18.

It is possible to grieve and quench the work of the Holy Spirit by sin, Ephesians 4:30, 1 Thessalonians 5:19.

It is even possible to be ignorant of His presence, 1 Corinthians 6:19.

## **DEMONIC DELIVERANCE**

We accept that the Holy Spirit can be quenched and that the Devil can gain a foothold in a believer's life through disobedience, Acts 5:3, especially through occult involvement.

So, we encourage all believers to:

- a. Keep strictly away from all occult involvement, Deuteronomy 18:10-12
- b. Practice prompt forgiveness and seeking of forgiveness Ephesians 4:26-27

While angels are of a higher creational order than man, Hebrews 2:7, this is not forever, Hebrews 2:5-8 and believers anticipate being raised with Christ to take authority over such beings, 1 Corinthians 6:3. Meanwhile angels are the servants of both God and His people, Luke 2:9-14, Luke 15:10, Ephesians 1:21, Hebrews 1:6-7, 14, Hebrews 2:6-7, Revelation 5:11-14, Revelation 7:12.

- c. Live in full appreciation of our liberty in Christ, i.e. put on the armour of God, Ephesians 6:10-17

If there is still good reason to suspect demonic activity, then it will be dealt with in accordance to Scripture by an appointed counsellor in total fellowship and under the supervision of eldership.

2. *In relation to Unbelievers, the Holy Spirit came to:*

(a) *Bring conviction of sin* John 16:7-9, Romans 3:23

(b) *Bring conviction of the necessary and freely available righteousness of God through faith in Christ.* John 16:7-9, Romans 4:21-26, the only Holy and Righteous One, Acts 3:14

(c) *Bring conviction of judgement* John 16:7-9, and that God's judgement on sin was suffered fully by Christ in His death on the cross, Romans 8:3-4. The Spirit further shows that if anyone does not take Christ as Saviour from coming judgement for sin, then Christ shall be the judge of that one. John 5: 22-23, Acts 17:31.

## **ANGELS**

We believe and teach that God created an innumerable company of spiritual, sinless beings known as angels and that one, Lucifer, rebelled against God and incurred His judgement and expulsion from Heaven where he originally functioned before the Throne of God, Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:11-19. In his rebellion Lucifer took a number of angels with him who are now known as demons. Matthew 25:41, Revelation 12:1-14, 1 Timothy 3:6, 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6.

Satan's fall to earth was the occasion for his temptation of the progenitors of the human race who, following his leading, sinned, Genesis 3:1-19, plunging their posterity into bondage to Satan, Romans 5: 12-14, Ephesians 2:1-3. With his demonic forces, Satan is the avowed enemy of God and His people, Isaiah 14:13-14, Ephesians 6:10-12, Revelations 12:9-10 and is in constant opposition to the Christian Gospel, deceiving the people, 2 Corinthians 11: 13-

15, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, destroying its preaching, Mark 4:15, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 and denying its precepts, 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

Satan was judged at the Cross, John 12:31, Romans 16:20, Colossians 2:15, but the effect and execution of that judgement awaits the end of history and his banishment to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire, Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20: 1-3, 10.

Through the crosswork of Christ, Satan was destroyed – rendered inoperative in regard to his power over death.

The keys – his tokens of authority were wrested from him by Christ who now has authority over Hades and Death, Hebrews 2:14, Revelation 1:18.

## **MANKIND**

We believe and teach that man was created directly and immediately by God in His own image and likeness which pertains to man's personal and moral dimensions, Genesis 1:26, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 2:15-25, James 3:9. We believe and teach that man was created good in that he was perfect in his innocence, but that he had both the capacity and the responsibility to progress through obedience to perfect holiness. Instead, man rebelled against God who in judgement subjected man to death – spiritual, physical and eternal. Genesis 3: 1-19, Ephesians 2:1-4, Revelation 20:11-15.

We further believe and teach that in the rebellious act of Adam, man became inherently and totally corrupt. By total depravity, we do not mean that man is as bad as he can be, but that every part of his being is affected by sin. Genesis 6:5, Romans 3:10-19, Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9 and being without any recuperative powers within himself to effect his own recovery, Romans 5:6, man became completely and hopelessly lost, Luke 15:1-32, Ephesians 2:1-4. eternal. Genesis 3: 1-19, Ephesians 2:1-4, Revelation 20:11-15.

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This acquired sinful disposition and state of lostness in relation to God was immediately passed on to all of Adam's posterity, Romans 5:12-21, the only exception being the Man Christ Jesus, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 10:10. Universal death is the proof of universal sin, Romans 5:12-14, since death comes by sin, Romans 5:12, Romans 6:23. Left to himself man is irrevocably bad, John 6:35-40, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23 and stands in need of Christ the Saviour.

## **SALVATION ONLY THROUGH CHRIST**

### **THE NEW BIRTH**

We believe and teach that salvation is wholly and solely of God's grace, Ephesians 2:8-9, on the basis of the redemption effected through the shedding of Christ's blood, Leviticus 17:11, Matthew 26:28, Romans 5:6-8, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19 and is made a reality in the life of the believer through the Holy Spirit bringing a new nature and implanting a new life from above. John 3:1-18, Titus 3:5-7. Such regeneration issues in the inseparable and simultaneous responses of repentance toward God and faith in the Divinely provided Saviour. Acts 11:18, Acts 20:21, there being absolutely no other condition whatsoever for salvation, Acts 13:38-39, Romans 3:20 Romans 4:6-7, Titus 3:5 and that regeneration also issues in a new lifestyle, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Ephesians 2:10, which lifestyle is

maintained by submission to the Spirit-given Word of God, Ephesians 5:17-21, Colossians 3:16, 2 Peter 1:4-10.

## **ELECTION**

We believe and teach that election is that act of God by which He chose in Christ, before the foundation of the world, those whom He graciously regenerates, saves and sanctifies. Ephesians 1:4-12, Romans 8:28-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:1-2. This choosing is not caused by an initiative on the part of the chosen one, and while it is according to God's foreknowledge it is not caused by His prescience or His anticipation of what individuals might do by their own will, but is caused only by His sovereign mercy, Ephesians 1:4-7, Titus 3:4-7, Romans 8:11-16, operating in perfect harmony with all His other attributes of justice, righteousness and holiness.

We further believe and teach that electing grace includes both the gift of eternal life and the enabling capacity to receive it, Ephesians 2:8-9 and that such election guarantees the salvation and security of all the elect so that all that the Father has given to Christ will come to Him, John 6:36-40, John 6:44, Acts 13:48 and all who thus come to the Father will receive.

We further believe and teach that election in no way contradicts the responsibility for man to obediently believe in Christ, the Divinely appointed Saviour. Ezekiel 18:23, 32, John 3:16-19, 36, 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, James 4:8.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

We believe and teach that justification is an act of God, Romans 8:33, by which He declares righteous only those who trust in Christ, Romans 3:21-26, Romans 5:1-2 and that the believer can be declared righteous, Romans 3:20, 26, because his sins have been imputed to

Christ, Colossians 2:14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24, and Christ's perfect righteousness has been imputed to him, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:4-9.

This means that at the moment of faith the believer passes out of spiritual death into spiritual life, John 5:24 and is accepted by the Father as Christ Himself is accepted, being loved as Christ Himself is loved, John 17:23. This also means that at the moment of justification the believer receives every spiritual blessing as a possession, Ephesians 1:3, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 and is complete in Christ, Colossians 2:10 and that while the believer may progress in both the discovery and enjoyment of these blessings already in his possession, a second work or a second blessing is both irrelevant and unnecessary.

## **SECURITY**

We believe and teach that once saved, the believer is kept by God's power and grace, 1 Peter 1:3-5, John 17:11, 1 Corinthians 1:8-9 and that such a security is demanded by virtue of:

- a. The *intrinsic* value of eternal life John 10:27-30
- b. The intercessory ministry and advocacy of Christ for the believer, Hebrews 7:25, 1 John 2:1-2, Luke 22:32
- c. The *indwelling* ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer, John 14:15-17, Romans 8:1-11, Ephesians 4:30.

Thus the believer is secure in Christ forever, there being no condemnation, Romans 8:1 and no separation, Romans 8:39. Having saved the believer apart from human merit, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8-9, God will not reject those He has chosen, Ephesians 1:4, because of demerit in themselves, but He will present them faultless before the presence of His glory, Jude 24 conformed to the Image of Christ, Romans 8:29. He who is faithful in the calling will not fail in the consummation 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 13:5.

## **ASSURANCE**

We believe and teach that it is the privilege of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ, to experience the assurance of eternal salvation from the very moment of their faith in Christ as Saviour and that this assurance is based on the Word of God, 1 John 5:11-13, John 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-8, the personal witness of the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:14 and the ultimate perseverance of the believer in the faith, 1 John 2:19 depending only on an individuals relationship to Christ as Saviour.

## **THE RESPONSE OF FAITH**

We believe and teach that because of the saving mercies of God, it is only appropriate that each and every believer should gratefully respond in total consecration to God, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 2 Corinthians 7:1, pursuing the life of holiness, Hebrews 12:14, Titus 2:11-14, 1 John 3:1-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, 1 Peter 1:13-16, becoming gradually in practice, Philippians 3:12, what they have already and instantaneously become in position – set apart to God, Acts 20-32, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 10:10, 14, Hebrews 13:12. This progressive sanctification is effectual as the believer, empowered by God.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, Philippians 2:13, obeys the Word of God, Romans 6:1-22, John 17:17.

We further believe and teach that this will entail continual and unending conflict until we leave this life either through death or translation, because the believer has within both the old nature of the flesh and the new nature of the Spirit, Galatians 5:16-25, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:5-17.

We further believe and teach that the believer is not only called to personal holiness, but also to practical service for Christ, 1

Corinthians 15:58, Ephesians 4:12 and that even the most insignificant aspects of life should be seen as opportunities to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10:31, Colossians 3:17. Rewards are promised to believers for their service according to their faithfulness and those rewards will be awarded at the judgement seat of Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, 1 Corinthians 9:18-27, 2 Corinthians 5:10.

We believe and teach therefore, that salvation is a free gift, but that the inheritance of reward has to be earned. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:14, 2 Timothy 2:5, 11-13, Hebrews 6:9, Revelation 3:11.

## **THE CHURCH**

We believe and teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of their membership or non-membership of any denomination, are immediately identified with the one spiritual Church through the placing ministry of the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Ephesians 2:11, Ephesians 3:6. The spiritual Church is related to Christ both as His body, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 1:22-23 and as His Bride, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:23-32, Revelation 19:7-8 and to both He is Head, Ephesians 1:22, Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:18.

We believe and teach that the invisible church began on the day of Pentecost, Matthew 16:16-18, Acts 2: 1-21, 38-47 and that this body is different from Israel, Romans 9:11, 1 Corinthians 10:32, Galatians 6:16 and will be completed at the Coming of Christ for His Bride at the rapture, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

This being the case, we further believe and teach that there must be a fundamental unity between all Christians which rises above denominational distinctives, John 17: 20-23, since each believer is one with every other member of this great body, Romans 12:5 and is responsible to keep the unity the Spirit has made, 1 Corinthians

12:12-13, in the bond of peace, Ephesians 4:3-6, Colossians 3:14-15.

We believe and teach that local churches should be established, Acts 14:23, 27, Acts 20:17, 28, Galatians 1:2, Philipians 1:1 and that all true members of the universal spiritual church are responsible to associate themselves together in local churches, 1 Corinthians 11:18-20, Hebrews 10:25, under the authority of Elders, 1 Timothy 5:17-22, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5: 1-5.

We believe and teach the autonomy of the local church, Revelation 1:3, Titus 1:5, Acts 20:28, while at the same time there is to be a fellowship in the work of the Gospel, Acts 15:19-31, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.

We believe and teach that there are two ordinances for the Church:

a. Baptism – Matthew 28:19

We believe and teach baptism by immersion, Acts 8:36-39 believing it best symbolises:

1. The believers identity with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:1-11. 1.
2. The baptism in the Spirit, Romans 6:1-11, 1 Corinthians 12:13, each believer has experienced at the moment of faith.

Baptism is expected of all true believers. Matthew 28:19.

b. The Lord's Supper – Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. We believe and teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of the Lord's death until His return, 1 Corinthians 11:28-32, the elements of the Supper being only

representative of the body and blood of Christ.

We believe and teach the Lord's Supper should be held each Lord's day Acts 20:7, Acts 2:42.

We believe and teach that the Church exists to glorify God, Ephesians 3:21, by facilitating the maturing of the body through the teaching of the Word of God, Ephesians 4:13-16, 2 Timothy 2:2, 15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, through the keeping of the ordinances, Luke 22:19, Acts 2:38-42, through fellowship Acts 2:47, 1 John 1:3 and by a commitment to evangelism throughout the entire world. Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:42.

## **THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS**

We believe, teach and practice the priesthood of all believers, that every born again person stands as a holy priest before God and a royal priest before man, 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

The Apostle John states that Christ' has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father', Revelation 1:6.

Christianity does not recognise any special or distinctive priesthood – all Christians are priests.

All believers have free and ready access to God, in fact are encouraged to come and keep coming, Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 10:19-22 to the throne of Grace. There are many functions of this Christian priesthood, Romans 12:1-2, Romans 15:16, Hebrews 13:15, Philippians 4:18.

It is important to live in the good of the eternal work of Christ who by His death removed that which separated man from God and also removed the barrier which had previously divided man from one

another so that we can be 'all one in Christ Jesus' and equally stand before the throne of God as believer priests. Galatians 3:28, Hebrews 4:14-16, Hebrews 10:19-22.

It needs to be said that priesthood has nothing to do with gift or church office or spiritual ministry in the body. An elder, deacon, pastor, evangelist and recent new believer all stand equally before God for they stand together on Christ's merit alone. 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:1.

Priesthood and gift are not the same thing.

## **THE FUTURE**

### **DEATH**

We believe and teach that death is not annihilation, but the separation of man in his material and immaterial components, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:9, James 2:26.

- a. For the Believer, there is the immediate and conscious presence of Christ, Luke 16:19-26, Luke 23:42-43, Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:8 which state exists until the rapture, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, which initiates the first resurrection, Revelation 20:4-6, when there will be the reconstitution of the believer in joining of the immaterial identify with the material resurrection body, Philippians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 15:35-44, 50-54, John 6:39, Romans 8:10-11, 19-23, 2 Corinthians 4:14.
- b. For the Unbeliever, there is the immediate and conscious awareness of condemnation until the second resurrection, Luke 16:19-26, Revelation 20:13-15, when the unbeliever will be reconstituted, John 5:38-29, to appear at the Great White Throne judgement, Revelation 10:11-15 and from thence shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, Matthew 25:41-46, to suffer conscious torment day and night forever and ever, Revelation 20:5-15, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Revelation 14:9-11.

### **RAPTURE**

We believe and teach that Christ's imminent coming to the air to remove His Church and receive her into heaven, John 14:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Titus 2:1-14, will precede the Tribulation period, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Revelation 3:10 and that at this coming the living Christians will be changed, Philippians 3:21 and that the

already departed believers will return with Christ to the air to receive their resurrection bodies, 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

## **TRIBULATION**

We believe and teach that following the removal of the Church from the earth, John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, there will be the earthly judgements of Israel's seventieth week, Daniel 9:24, Daniel 12:1, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12, Revelation 6:1, Revelation 19:21, the later part of this period being specifically known as the time of Jacob's Trouble, Jeremiah 30:7, called by our Lord, "The Great Tribulation", Matthew 24:15-31. We believe and teach that the history of the nations of the earth are inextricably bound up with God's providential and particular dealings with the elect nation, Israel – both in blessing, Genesis 12:3, Isaiah 2:1-4, Isaiah 11:9, Micah 5:4-15 and in judgement, Genesis 12:3, Deuteronomy 30:7, Matthew 24:4-14, Revelation 6:1-19, 21:8.

We further believe and teach that these days will end in the personal return of Christ to earth, Matthew 24:27-31, Matthew 25:31-46, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12, when the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation martyrs will be raised and all the living judged, Daniel 12:2-3, Revelation 20:4-6, Joel 2:1-3.

## **SECOND COMING OF CHRIST**

We believe and teach that the Second Coming of Christ properly relates to the physical personal return of Christ to earth. Acts 1:9-11, Matthew 25:31, in order to:

- a. *Overthrow antiChrist and the False Prophets, Daniel 7:17-27*
- b. *Bind Satan in the Abyss, Revelation 20:1-3*

- c. *To Establish the Millennial Age*, Revelation 20:2-7, as Israel's Davidic King, Luke 1:31-33, Acts 2:29-30, 2 Samuel 7:8-16, ruling over a redeemed, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:22-32 and restored, Deuteronomy 28:1-30: 20, Romans 11:25-29, Israel in fulfilment of Israel's covenants, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 15:1-21, Deuteronomy 28:1-30: 20, 2 Samuel 7:8-16, Jeremiah 31:31-34 and the predictions of the prophets, Isaiah 65:17-25, Ezekiel 37:21-28, Zechariah 8:1-17. As with the judgements of the tribulation, so with the blessings of the Kingdom – all is mediated through the Jews, John 4:22 with whom the providential dealings of history are providentially bound.

With Israel's acceptance of her King there begins the Kingdom on earth, Acts 1:6, Acts 3:19-22, Isaiah 11:1-16, Isaiah 65:17-25, Ezekiel 36:33-38 and the resurrected saints will share in this rule, Ezekiel 37:21-28, Daniel 7:17-22, Matthew 19:28, 1 Corinthians 6:1-3, Romans 8:17-22, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 5:10, Revelation 19:11-16.

This Millennial Age will end with the release of Satan for a short time, Revelation 20:7, but he and his cohorts will be judged, Revelation 20:9 and thrown into the lake of fire, Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:10. Then shall be the judgement of the unsaved dead at the Great White Throne, John 5:22, Revelation 20:11-15.

Hereafter the current earth shall be dissolved, 2 Peter 3:10 and replaced by the new heavens and the new earth, Ephesians 5:5, Revelation 20:15, 21-22, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

## **STATEMENT OF PRACTICE**

We realise that it is very possible to know the text of the Bible without living the truth of the Bible. To know the theory but neglect the practice. To talk of love yet be unloving.

We see the basic message of the Bible to be a healing of relationships between God and mankind, and consequently between all humanity, especially by those who profess faith in Christ. Matthew 22:37-40.

Therefore, it is of primary importance that all learn the Biblical skill of relating in love to all the widely differing members of the body. Romans 14.

Fellowship is not based on all holding the same views but on learning to relate to the other members of Christ's body out of reverence for Him. Indeed the church's testimony depends on this. John 13:35, Ephesians 3:20, Ephesians 4:3.

When there is mutual love, acceptance and respect, Romans 15:7, a fellowship will strive on differentness, Ephesians 4:16. When there is pressure to conform to any particular person or group as spiritually superior, the body will be destroyed. We require that a path of reconciliation be followed in all areas of conflict. Matthew 18.

While we hold that the New Testament Apostles and Prophets were unique and that their ministry was uniquely attested to by special signs and wonders, nonetheless we believe that God still works miracles today and encourage believers to pray in faith. No miracle is to be insisted on as of right but is according to God's sovereign choice. We believe it often His purpose to deliver through hardship rather than from it.

So our ministry emphasis will be on commitment and faith rather than any attempts to 'produce' miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. When God's people set a priority on love, i.e. the fruit of the Spirit, then the gifts of the Spirit will accomplish what God intends for us. 1 Corinthians 13.

Having read this Statement of Faith, there may be certain aspects that you disagree with, however, we trust you will be able to respect our position and share in the spirit of these practical guidelines, for we would really covet and enjoy your involvement with us.

We also greatly desire that we as a congregation and as individuals reach out to other people in our community regardless of station, culture and nationality.

That we, both in our fellowship and community practically demonstrate the love of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit, John 13:35, Galatians 5:22, in honest, open and tangible ways.

That above all else we seek to glorify God and exalt the Lord Jesus in every aspect of our lives, honouring Him and fully owning His Lordship.

## **SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE AND TEACH**

The **Bible** is God's unique revelation to people. It is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and the supreme and final authority on all matters upon which it teaches. No other writings are vested with such divine authority.

There is only one **God**, creator of heaven and earth, who exists eternally as three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully God yet each personally distinct from the other.

All **people** are created in God's image and matter deeply to Him. Central to the message of the Bible is that God loves people, and invites them to live in communion with Himself and in community with each other.

Apart from **Jesus Christ**, all people are spiritually lost and, because of sin, deserve the judgment of God. However, God gives salvation and eternal life to anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ and in His sacrifice on his or her behalf. Salvation cannot be earned through personal goodness or human effort. It is a gift that must be received by humble repentance and faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross.

Jesus Christ, second Person of the Trinity, was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a sinless human life, willingly took upon Himself all of our sins, died and rose again bodily, and is at the right hand of the Father as our advocate and mediator. Some day, He will return to consummate history and to fulfil the eternal plan of God.

The **Holy Spirit**, third Person of the Trinity, convicts the world of sin

and draws people to Christ. He also indwells all believers. He is available to empower them to lead Christ-like lives, and gives them spiritual gifts with which to serve the church and reach out to a lost and needy world.

**Death** seals the eternal destiny of each person. At the final judgment, unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. Believers will be received into God's loving presence and rewarded for their faithfulness to Him in this life.

All believers are members of the body of Christ, the one true **church** universal. Spiritual unity is to be expressed among Christians by acceptance and love of one another across ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, national, generational, gender, and denominational lines.

The **local church** is a congregation of believers who gather for worship, prayer, instruction, encouragement, mutual accountability, and community with each other. Through it, believers invest time, energy, and resources to fulfil the Great Commission — reaching lost people and growing them into fully devoted followers of Christ.