

Statement of faith

Introduction

A doctrinal statement is, by nature, a concise expression of Christian belief. It cannot say everything that may be said, but it must state clearly what is essential.

We affirm the unity of the Church as expressed in Ephesians 4:1-7, recognising this sevenfold unity as the Holy Spirit's doctrinal foundation for the Church, the Body of Christ. While Scripture contains other expressions of unity within various divine administrations, we affirm that Ephesians 4 uniquely sets forth the doctrinal unity of the Church in the present age. This Church consists of all who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and saved by God's grace through faith, as taught in Ephesians 2:8-9.

1: Scriptures

We affirm the orthodox Christian doctrine of Scripture. The Bible, in its original languages, is without error, verbally inspired by God, and fully authoritative in all that it teaches. Scripture is God-breathed and therefore carries His own authority over doctrine, life, worship, and obedience (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21).

We receive the sixty-six books of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, as the complete written Word of God. We believe Scripture must be interpreted according to its plain meaning, its literary form, its historical setting, and the progressive unfolding of God's revelation. God's Word is settled forever (Psalm 119:89).

2: The Godhead

We believe there is one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4). He is infinite, intelligent, spiritual in nature, and perfect in every attribute (John 4:24). God is one in essence and eternally exists in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

God the Father

God the Father is the first person of the Trinity (1 John 5:7). He created all things by His will and power (Genesis 1:1-31). He rules over all things with sovereign wisdom, and His ways are beyond human searching (Romans 11:33).

The Fatherhood of God is first understood within the eternal relationship of the Trinity. It is also seen in His creative relationship to mankind, and, more specifically, in His spiritual relationship to all who believe.

God the Son

Jesus Christ, the Son, is the second person of the Trinity. He possesses all divine perfections and is co-equal, co-eternal, and co-creator with the Father (John 10:27-30).

In His incarnation, the Son did not surrender His divine essence. He laid aside the independent exercise of certain divine privileges, yet remained fully God. Taking true humanity to Himself, He became the God-man. His divine and human natures are united in one person without confusion, separation, or loss (Philippians 2:5-8).

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26). Through His person and saving work, redemption is made available to all who believe and receive God's grace through faith. His death was voluntary, vicarious, propitiatory, redemptive, and substitutionary (Romans 3:25; 5:8).

We believe that Jesus Christ rose bodily and literally from the dead. His resurrection confirms His deity and guarantees the future resurrection of those who belong to Him (Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23). He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now ministers as our Advocate.

Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and mankind (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the Head of the Body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22). He is also the coming universal King who will reign on David's throne (Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-32).

We believe that Christ will return to receive the Church, His Body, to Himself (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and that He will come again to judge all mankind.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal and fully God. He possesses every divine excellence and is co-equal with the Father and the Son (Acts 5:3-4).

The Holy Spirit carries out the divine will in relation to the world. His work includes convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement, revealing the need for salvation in Jesus Christ, glorifying the Lord Jesus, and transforming believers into Christlikeness (2 Corinthians 3:8; Ephesians 2:22).

The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration. He baptises all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). He indwells, empowers, and seals every believer until the day of redemption (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13).

Every believer receives the indwelling Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. It is therefore the responsibility of every believer to be continually filled, that is, controlled and directed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the Church for the maturing of the saints. We distinguish between sign gifts and spiritual gifts. Scripture shows that sign gifts were given to reveal and authenticate Christ as Messiah, both during His earthly ministry and through the

delegated authority of the apostles (Matthew 10:5-11; Mark 16; 1 Corinthians 12; 14; 1 Corinthians 1:22; Acts 28:26-28; 1 Timothy 5:23).

The sign gifts continued as a means of authenticating apostleship until the New Testament revelation was completed (2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 13:8-13). These passages indicate a change in the function and purpose of such gifts. We therefore believe that spiritual gifts continue for the Church today, but the sign gifts do not function in the same way or for the same purpose.

3: Mankind

We believe that mankind was created directly by God in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26; 2:15-25). God created man to glorify Him, enjoy fellowship with Him, live according to His will, and fulfil His purpose in the world (Isaiah 43:7; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11).

Through Adam's disobedience to the will and Word of God, mankind lost innocence and came under the penalty of both spiritual and physical death. Human nature became corrupt, and mankind became incapable of doing what is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Man has no power within himself to recover his lost condition.

Apart from the salvation accomplished in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ, mankind is hopelessly lost (Genesis 2:16-17; John 3:36; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8).

We believe that all humanity was represented in Adam and shares in the consequences of his sin. Sin has been transmitted to the whole human race, Jesus Christ alone excepted. Therefore, all people are sinners by nature and by choice (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; 5:12).

4: Salvation

We believe that salvation is entirely by the grace of God, grounded in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and the merit of His shed blood. It is not earned, achieved, or sustained by human works (Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; Titus 3:5).

We believe that the saving work of Christ on the cross is complete and sufficient. By His atoning sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ provided salvation for the sins of mankind (1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

5: Regeneration

We believe that regeneration is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. It is immediate, inward, and accomplished by the power of the Spirit through the Word of God, resulting in a willing response to the gospel.

This regenerating work is manifested by God's grace through faith and produces a life marked by obedience and belonging to God (Titus 2:11-12; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Regeneration brings the human spirit to life and joins the believer to the Holy Spirit, who seals the believer in salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

6: Election

We believe that election is an act of God and is inseparably related to the response of faith to the gospel. It is consistent with human responsibility, because God's saving purpose includes both the end He appoints and the means by which that end is reached.

Election must not be understood as an abstract decree detached from human responsibility. Men and women are responsible to receive, through faith, the free and unmerited grace of God. God's sovereignty always acts in harmony with His character and with all His other attributes. The will of God must never be set against the nature of God.

Our salvation and election are in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:4-11).

7: Justification

We believe that justification is an immediate and complete act of God. In justification, God declares righteous all who personally believe in Jesus Christ for salvation (Romans 5:1; 8:33).

8: Sanctification

We believe that every believer is sanctified, that is, set apart for God through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every believer is declared holy and identified with the Body of Christ. This positional sanctification concerns the believer's standing before God, not the present condition of his daily life (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

We also believe in experiential sanctification. By this work, the believer's actual life is progressively brought into closer conformity with his standing in Christ. As the believer obeys the Word of God and is empowered by the Holy Spirit, he grows in holiness and lives increasingly according to the will of God (Romans 6:1-22; Ephesians 5:26; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Titus 2:12).

We do not accept the doctrine of subsequence. The practical outworking of the believer's standing in Christ flows from the finished work of Christ at Calvary. Since we are in Christ, we have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3).

9: Security

We believe in the eternal security of the believer. This does not give anyone permission to live recklessly, irresponsibly, or immorally. Those who are redeemed are kept by the power of God and are secure in Christ forever (Romans 5:9-10; 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30).

It is therefore impossible for a true believer to lose his or her salvation.

At the same time, there is reason to question the profession of anyone who treats Christian liberty as an excuse for sinful living and persistent carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-15).

10: Separation

In a permissive and corrupt generation, believers must avoid compromise with the world. All who are saved should live in a way that does not bring reproach upon their Saviour.

Believers are called to separate themselves from religious apostasy, worldly values, and sinful practices. They are to walk carefully and wisely before God and others (Ephesians 5:5-16; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 2:12-14).

Every believer is an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

11: Gospel

We believe that the gospel of grace, as revealed in the New Testament, is distinct from human works and rests solely on the person, merit, and completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In other biblical administrations, faith was expressed through works appointed by God. Under the present administration, faith is the means by which we receive the gift of salvation, already accomplished by God through the cross of Christ.

The distinctiveness of this gospel is especially taught in the writings of Paul. In every biblical age, salvation has been by grace through faith, yet in previous administrations faith was expressed through works that pointed forward to the completed work of Christ.

When Paul says there is only one gospel (Galatians 1:6-8), he is referring to the gospel of grace in contrast to other messages associated with earlier biblical programmes. The good news of the Kingdom was primarily directed to Israel (Matthew 10:5-8).

Through the change in programme and the calling of Paul as apostle, Christ is revealed to the Gentiles with a clear emphasis on salvation as a gift of grace, not by the works of the law. This is the gospel we preach (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 16:25).

12: Mystery

We believe that the mystery of the Body of Christ is revealed through the writings of the apostle Paul. This mystery had been hidden from previous generations and ages (Colossians 1:26; Ephesians 3:9) but was revealed to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 16:25).

Paul received this revelation directly from the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven (Galatians 1:11-12). He was appointed as the steward and minister of this revelation to the Church (Colossians 1:25; Ephesians 3:2; Galatians 1:11).

Much of what Paul taught was difficult for the other apostles to receive, because their ministry had been primarily Jewish in context and content (2 Peter 3:15-16). The preaching of the

Kingdom included the Gentile world (Matthew 28:19), yet the apostles understood their primary ministry as directed first to Israel, and then to the ends of the earth with the message of the Messiah.

The New Testament, especially the book of Acts, shows that Peter was surprised when God called him to minister to a Gentile. This indicates that Peter needed to recognise that a change in programme was taking place (Acts 10). In Acts 15, Peter acknowledged that God had revealed a new work among the Gentiles.

Paul was raised up to carry out this new programme (Acts 9:15). As the apostles came to terms with the revelation given particularly to Paul, controversy and dispute arose. This is clearly seen in Galatians 2:2-16.

13: Church

We believe that all who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are baptised by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of that Body (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; Colossians 1:18).

The word “church” comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning “called-out ones”. Stephen refers to Israel as the congregation called out of Egypt (Acts 7:38). The disciples and followers of Christ were called out as a remnant from Israel, forming the Messianic Church.

The Body of Christ is not made up of one national group. In Christ, Jew and Gentile have been made one Church, called out from the pagan world and from unbelieving Israel (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:11-14).

The Church is a living organism of people called out and placed into the living Body of Christ. We also affirm that the autonomy of the local church is a biblical principle (Titus 1:5).

The Church is the recipient of the spiritual promises made to Abraham through his Seed, Jesus Christ. The physical promises given to believing Israel will be fulfilled in the future after the Rapture of the Body of Christ. Israel, as a distinct nation, will yet be honoured by God above the nations. Revelation 21 testifies to this future reality.

14: Communion

We believe that Communion is not an ordinance, but an act of remembrance. In it, believers proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

Communion is not a continuation of the Passover meal. It is a commemoration of the New Testament reality made available to believers through the death and life of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

15: Angels

We believe that angels are created beings and must not be worshipped. They are ministering spirits created to serve God and minister according to His purposes for His people (Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7; 2:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Lucifer was a created angel who fell through pride and became the originator of sin (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Genesis 3:1-5). His final judgement is declared in Revelation 20:10.

16: Future

We believe that physical death does not destroy personal consciousness (Revelation 6:9-11; Luke 16:19-31). At death, the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of God (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people. The saved will be raised to eternal life (Romans 8:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:14). The unsaved will be raised to judgement and eternal punishment (Revelation 20:6, 13-15; John 5:29).

17: Consummation

We believe in the personal and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Titus 2:11-13). He will translate His Church, the Body of Christ, from this earth (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

All believers will appear before Christ and receive rewards according to their works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

18: Tribulation

We believe that the righteous judgement of God will be poured out upon unbelievers throughout the world (Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16:1-21; Matthew 24:15-31).

This period of tribulation will last for seven years.

19: Second coming

We believe that after the great tribulation, the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth and occupy the throne of David (Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30). He will establish His messianic Kingdom on earth for one thousand years (Revelation 20:1-7).

Before this reign, Christ will overthrow the false system of the antichrist and the false prophet. He will also remove Satan from the world (Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 20:1-7).

The Kingdom will fulfil God's promises to national Israel (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Ezekiel 37:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-8). Israel has been temporarily set aside (Romans 11:1-26), but will again be awakened through repentance and brought into the Kingdom and the land of blessing.

We therefore pray for the peace of Jerusalem. God's covenant purposes for Israel will be fulfilled (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-32).

The reign of Christ will be marked by harmony, equity, peace, justice, righteousness, and long life (Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38).

20: Judgement

We believe that after the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released for a short time and will deceive the nations of the earth. He will gather them to attack the beloved city, but Satan and his armies will be consumed by fire (Revelation 20:7-9).

Satan will then be cast finally into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

At this time, the Lord will judge all unbelievers (Romans 14:10-11; Revelation 20:11-15).

21: Eternity

We believe that after the Millennium, the brief release of Satan, and the judgement of all unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Revelation 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God.

The present elements of the earth will be dissolved (2 Peter 3:10) and replaced by a new earth and a new atmospheric heaven (Revelation 21). The heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, will come down out of heaven and become the dwelling place of the saints (Revelation 21-22).

Believing Israel will have a significant role upon the earth, while believers who make up the Body of Christ will fulfil their purpose in the heavenlies (Revelation 5:10; Philippians 3:20).

The Lord Jesus Christ, having completed His redemptive mission, will deliver the Kingdom to God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-28), so that in every sphere, physical and spiritual, the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

22: Marriage

We believe that marriage is a covenant union established by God between one man and one woman. From the beginning, God created mankind as male and female and ordained marriage as the lifelong union in which a man leaves his father and mother, is joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-24).

The Lord Jesus Christ affirmed this created order when He taught that marriage is grounded in God's original design, not in human preference or cultural change. He said:

"Haven't you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?' So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don't let man tear apart." Matthew 19:4-6, WEB

We believe that marriage is to reflect faithfulness, purity, mutual love, and covenantal commitment before God. Scripture teaches that sexual intimacy belongs within the marriage covenant and that all sexual conduct outside that covenant is contrary to God's will (Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 5:15-23; Matthew 5:27-28; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 7:2-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that the marriage relationship is also used in Scripture to display the covenant love of Christ for His Church. Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, and wives are called to honour the order God has established within the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

We therefore affirm that, according to Scripture, marriage is the exclusive covenantal union of one biological man and one biological woman, entered into before God, intended for companionship, holiness, family life, and faithful service to Him (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11).