

Statement of Faith

First, I am a Christian. I adhere to the Apostle's, Nicene, Athanasian and Chalcedonian Creeds and the first 4 Ecumenical Councils.

Second, I am evangelical and in agreement with the doctrinal statement of the National Association of Evangelicals:

- I believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- I believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- I believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- I believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- I believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. I believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- I believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, I am a Missional. I believe:

- Local churches and Christians must be faithful to the content of unchanging Biblical doctrine (Jd. 3).
- That local churches and Christians must be faithful to the continually changing context of the culture in which they minister (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).
- That our mission is to bring people into church so that they can be trained and then sent out into the local culture as effective ambassadors of Christ.
- Leadership development (2 Timothy 2:2) and church planting are necessary goals of local churches in response to the Great Commission to reach every town for Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).

Fourth, I believe that:

- We can't embrace any culture without discernment and compromise the distinctives of the gospel, but rather we should be Christians who believe the truths of the Bible are eternal and therefore fitting for every time, place, and people.
- We can't be fundamentalists who retreat from cultural engagement and transformation despite how corrupt it is, but rather we should be missionaries faithful both to the content of Scripture and the local context of ministry walking in all purity, holiness, faith and love.
- We can't be isolationists who avoid partnering with like-minded Christians from various churches and organizations in fulfilling the Great Commission.
- We can't be hyper-Calvinists who get mired down in theological hair splitting or secondary matters, such as the extreme view that God decrees the damnation of some sinners. Rather we should pray, evangelize, do good works and live obediently in faith and love because the sovereign plan of God is accomplished through His people, the Church.

- We can't be Arminians who emphasize the freewill of people and personal responsibility to such an extent that it excludes or diminishes God's grace and sovereignty in the world, history, suffering and salvation.

Fifth, with regard to salvation and its effects, I believe:

- That God created the heavens, the earth. That God created man and woman in a state of sinless perfection with particular dignity as His image bearers on the earth.
- That our first parents sinned against God and that everyone since is a sinner by nature and choice. Sin has totally affected all of creation including marring human image and likeness so that all of our being is stained by sin (e.g. reasoning, desires, and emotions).
- That because all people have sinned and separated themselves from a Holy God, that he is obligated to save no one from the just and deserved punishments of hell, but that God in His unparalleled love and mercy has chosen to send His only Son to die for the sins of all mankind.
- That Jesus Christ is the gospel. The good news is revealed in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, his resurrection is the power of the gospel, and his ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is an all sufficient, substitutionary, satisfactory, and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases his holy wrath. It expiates sin, demonstrates his love and reveals his amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men must be saved.
- The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith; and calling upon God.
- That man's response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional grace of God, but that God's free grace alone also miraculously incorporates, quickens and/or enables a free will response to the Gospel. The Gospel is only appropriated to those who repent of their sins and trust in Christ alone by His grace alone.
- That genuine conversion shows forth in the ongoing repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ that leads to a lifestyle of fellowship with God, good works, love for all, and obedience to the scriptures.
- That good works, which are the fruits of saving faith, are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ. They spring out necessarily of a true and living faith. Good works neither justify a sinner nor save one from the guilt, penalty, or power of sin (Rom 3:20; Gal 2:16; 3:2). However, because we are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, God inseparably links good works to our relationship with Him and others. A true and living faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit (Mark 4:1-20; Luke 6:43-46). Good works are specially prepared beforehand by God himself that we should walk in them as the normal Christian lifestyle (Eph. 2:10). These good works increase heavenly rewards (Matt 6:19-21, 16:27, 25:21; Luke 6:23,35). They enhance societal good, bring comfort and encouragement to our neighbors, adorn the Gospel, and accelerate personal sanctification and growth in grace. They bring glory to God and teach us to rely on God's strength, understanding resources and love rather than on our own. Christians are to be urgently exhorted to be zealous in good deeds.
- That the gospel should be passionately and urgently proclaimed to all people so that all who believe may be saved through the preaching of God's Word by the power of God's Spirit. It is the

duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church to make disciples of all nations starting locally. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by demonstrating, declaring and defending the gospel.

- That God is Lord over all of life and that there is nothing in life that is to be separated from God.
- That the worship of God is the end for which people were created and that sustained joy is only to be found by delighting in God through all of life, including hardship and death, which is gain.
- That Jesus Christ has also been made unto us sanctification. The Holy Spirit seeks to produce his fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. We are led by the Spirit to grow in the knowledge of the Lord, endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. We will have to give an account to God for every thought, word, and deed. Therefore, the spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship, evangelism, confession and service, are vital means of grace in this regard.
- That the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are regenerated, sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion (John 3:7, Eph. 1:13-14; Rom. 8:9), the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion also (Acts 2:4, 4:31, 8:14-17, 9:17; 19:1-6). Being regenerated, sealed, and indwelt by the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences from being filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit desires to help believers become and remain fully and joyfully submitted to all of God's will as empty vessels so that He can fill them continually with His ever-increasing life and power for Christian life, witness, and impartation of his gifts for the edification of the Body and various works of ministry.
- That the Holy Spirit sovereignly gives gifts to whom He wills (1 Cor 12:11), which are all still valid for today until Jesus returns (1 Cor. 13:9-10), and ought to be exercised carefully within scriptural guidelines. We as believers are to earnestly desire the best gifts (1 Cor 14:1), seeking to exercise them in love that the whole Body of Christ might be built up (1 Cor 14:12) and that God alone might be glorified (1 Cor.10:31). Since these gifts are commonly abused, misused, and counterfeited, it is necessary to be both discerning of excesses and careful not to "quench the Spirit." (1 Thess. 5:19). Rather we should "test everything" (1 Thess. 5:21) and do all things "decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40). under the supervision of qualified leaders within the Church.
- That love is more important than the most spectacular gifts, and without this love all exercise of spiritual gifts is worthless (1 Corinthians 13; 14:1). Furthermore, human "prophecy" that supersedes or is contrary to Scripture should be rejected along with the overemphasis of spiritual gifts or experiential signs and wonders to the exclusion of biblical teaching.
- That Jesus Christ still heals today, *sometimes*. God uses physical healing to get people's attention, impart saving and sanctifying faith, show his compassionate mercy and power, and to validate the person and work of the gospel message. However, healing does not always occur for various reasons. The scriptures teach that in the current age, sin, unbelief, and especially God using sickness for His own sovereign purposes are some of the reasons that God does not heal every person every time they are prayed for. Ultimately, in the age to come, as far as the physical body is concerned, those who have been born again will receive the full benefits of eternal life in Christ, which includes restored new bodies and all sickness will be eradicated.

Sixth, regarding the sacraments of the church, I believe that:

- Water baptism has been ordained as a means of grace when practiced as an expression of saving faith. Water baptism is commanded and exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a vivid symbol of the Gospel while being a sign and seal of the New Covenant (Romans 4:9-12) as circumcision was of the Old Covenant. It does not replace the need for personal faith in the atoning work of Christ or repentance toward God. Baptism signifies acceptance and application of the benefits of the sufficient and substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. Water baptism is to be performed in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, to the Church, to oneself, and to the world of a life in union with Christ and His Church. Water baptism serves as a visual depiction of the Gospel, namely how the Gospel enacts a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death, burial, and resurrection. It signifies that one's former way of life has been put to death, and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin to newness of life.
- The Lord's Supper is to be observed by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. It is a special time when, by faith, believers remember, celebrate and participate in Christ's body and shed blood on our behalf (1 Corinthians 10:16). It is to be observed repeatedly and regularly throughout the Christian life as a continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death for ongoing covenant renewal. As we partake of the Lord's Supper with an attitude of faith, self-examination and repentance, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls, and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body.

Seventh, regarding the end times, I believe:

- The Consummation of all things includes the visible, personal, premillennial glorious second coming of Jesus Christ.
- That despite a future plan for Israel, classical dispensationalism is in error as a hermeneutical system by going too far in some ways. For example, it affirms God's love for ethnic Israel to the extent that the system creates two distinct peoples of God, namely the Jews and the Church. This undermines and counters the New Covenant of grace and the breaking down of the dividing wall between ethnicities which occurs by the application of the finished work of Christ.
- There will be a literal tribulation period and a person, the man of sin/son of perdition called the Antichrist (2 Thessalonian 2:2-9) and a future conversion/restoration of national Israel (Romans 11:25-29). Christ will come back to physically occupy His throne in Jerusalem and establish His kingdom for a thousand years on the earth. (Revelation 20:1-6, Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:4-9)

This is commonly known as the millennium and was the position held by some notable 1st-3rd century church fathers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Papias, Lactantius, Hippolytus, and Justin Martyr. During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Christ over the nations of the earth. This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world. The kingdom will itself be a literal fulfillment of God's promise. (Is. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-7; Ezek. 36:22; Rom. 11:25-29).

- In the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. This

motivates us to evangelism, holy living, heart-felt worship, committed service, diligent study of and obedience to God's Word, and regular fellowship.

- In the Consummation, Satan with his hosts and all those outside Christ are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, (Revelation 20:7-15), but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with Him forever Married to Christ as His Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. (Revelation 21:1-22:5).

Eighth, regarding gender and human sexuality, I believe:

- God has created only two genders, male and female, and blessed them (Genesis 5:2).
- God created humankind as male and female, and that He created them different in order to complement and complete each other. God instituted monogamous, exclusive, faithful marriage between male and female as the foundation of the family and the basic structure of human society.
- Marriage is exclusively the union of one genetic male and one genetic female, sanctioned by the state and evidenced by a marriage ceremony and that biblical marriage, thus defined, is the only legitimate and acceptable context for sexual relations. Hence, all other sexual activities such as, but not limited to, adultery, fornication, pre-marital sex, incest, polygamy, homosexuality, transgenderism, bisexuality, cross-dressing, pedophilia and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible. Further, lascivious behavior, the creation, viewing and/or distribution of pornography are incompatible with a true biblical witness.
- Christians cannot condone or recognize same-sex marriages, civil unions, or domestic partnerships, and nor can we affirm the resolution of tension between one's biological sex and one's experience of gender by adopting a psychological identity discordant with one's birth sex.

Ninth, regarding certain modern activities, theologies and philosophies, I reject:

- The belief that true Christians can be demon possessed and are helpless against the craft and wiles of the Devil.
- Any philosophy or theology that denies that human free will is somehow miraculously incorporated, awakened or enabled by God's grace alone unto the receiving of Christ's free gift of salvation by faith. (Council of Orange 529 A. D.)
- The assertion God has elected some people to go to hell. Despite various level of acceptance and differing understanding and interpretations of the doctrine of election, this assertion of double predestination goes beyond the biblical text and is the mere product of human reasoning.
- "Positive confession," (e.g., the view that faith is a force that can create one's own reality, or that God can be commanded to heal or work miracles according to man's will and faith).
- Any introduction of psychology and philosophy that is contrary to Scripture and is in substance "according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" into biblical teaching.
- "Open Theism" which reduces God's timeless, unchanging, dynamic nature, and exhaustive foreknowledge of future free decisions, to creaturely modes of being and operation.
- Membership in secret oath-bound societies because it is not compatible with Christian teaching and practice.

- “Critical Race Theory” because it affirms a non-biblical category of race, promotes ethnic discrimination, frames race and racial issues primarily in a Marxist oppressor vs oppressed paradigm, and promotes a false religion opposed to biblical Christianity
- Excessive commitment to politics as the primary means of transforming society as a replacement to or a distraction from seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
- Ecumenicism that is based in a desire for unity at the expense of biblical truth, the content of the gospel, the great Commandment and the Great Commission.