

# Bethany Bible Church of LeRoy, MN

## Statement of Faith

Adopted 4-15-12

### Scripture

All Scripture (the 66 book canon) is given by inspiration of God, by which we mean that God superintended human authors so that using their individual human personalities they composed and recorded without error His message to man in the words of the original autographs (**1 Cor 2.12-13; 2 Tim 3.16-17**).

The Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice, being fully sufficient for every human need and all that pertains to life and godliness. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right must be assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture (**Matt 5.18; 24.35; Heb 4.12**).

Whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true contextual and/or prophetic interpretation. The precise meaning is to be found as one diligently applies the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is the responsibility of all believers to give themselves to the diligent study of the word of God in order to be able to ascertain the true intent and meaning of the Scripture, recognizing that proper, accurate application is binding on all generations. However, this personal responsibility does not change the fact that the truth of Scripture always stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it (**John 16.12-15; 1 Cor 2.7-16; 2 Tim 2.15; Heb 6.1-2**).

### The Trinity

There is one living, sovereign, all-glorious God who is an infinite, all knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes and substance, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; all of whom are one God deserving precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience (**Deut 6.4; 1 Cor 8.4; Matt 28.19; 2 Cor 13.14; Acts 5.3-4; John 14.26; 15.26**).

### God the Father

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and directs all things according to His own purpose and grace. By His will all things were created and they continue to exist according to His good pleasure (**Gen 1.1; Isa 46.9-11; Eph 1.11; Rev 4.11**).

God the Father upholds and sustains all things in accord with His eternal, all-wise purposes to glorify Himself, yet in such a way that He never sins, nor ever condemns a person unjustly; but that His ordaining and governing all things is not incompatible with the moral accountability of all persons created in His image (**Psa 33.10-11; 147.15-18; Pro 16.9; 20.24; Matt 10.29-30; Rev 17.16-17**).

His Fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with

His redeemed. As Creator, He is the God of all men, but He is spiritual Father only to believers. He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own. He saves from sin and adopts as His own all who come to Him through Jesus Christ and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (**John 1.12-13; Rom 1.18-25; 8.14; Eph 1.4-6; Heb 12.3-9**).

## God the Son

In the fullness of time God sent forth His eternal Son, the second person of the Godhead, Jesus the Messiah, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. When the eternal Son became flesh, He took on a fully human nature, so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one Person, without confusion or mixture. Therefore the Person, Jesus Christ, was and is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ and the only Mediator between God and man (**Luke 1.34-35; John 3.16-17; Gal 4.4; Heb 2.14-17**).

Jesus Christ lived without sin, though He endured the common infirmities and temptations of human life. Throughout His ministry He preached and taught with truth and authority unparalleled in human history. He also worked miracles, demonstrating His divine right and power over all creation (**Matt 11.4-6; Mark 1.27; John 7.46; Heb 4.15**).

Jesus Christ suffered voluntarily in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, died, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead to vindicate the saving work of His life and death and to take His place as the invincible, everlasting Lord of glory, guaranteeing the future resurrection to life for all believers. He gave many compelling evidences of His bodily resurrection and then ascended bodily into heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding for His people on the basis of His all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. He will one day return judging all men, both the saved and unsaved in every generation (**Matt 25.31-32; 28.6; John 10.18; 19.30,40-42; Acts 1.3,9-11; 2.23,33; 17.31; 1 Cor 15.3; 1 John 2.1; Rev 20.11-15**).

## God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of deity. In all the divine attributes He is co-equal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit has always been at work in the world, sharing in the work of creation, awakening faith in the remnant of God's people, performing signs and wonders, giving triumphs in battle, empowering the preaching of prophets, and inspiring the writing of Scripture (**Gen 1.2; Psa 139.7-10; Isa 40.13-14; John 16.13; 2 Pet 1.21**).

Yet, when Christ had made atonement for sin, and ascended to the right hand of the Father, He inaugurated a new era of the Spirit by pouring out the promise of the Father on His Church. We teach that the present ministry of the Holy Spirit inaugurated at Pentecost consists of restraining sin in the world and convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He also, in the present age, regenerates believers in Christ, baptizes them into the church, the body of Christ, indwells them permanently, illuminates them in their study of Scripture, seals them unto the day of redemption, and bestows spiritual gifts upon each one

**(Luke 24.49; John 3.3-5; 14.16-17; 16.7-11; Rom 8.9-11; 1 Cor 12.7-13).**

## Man

Man was created in the image and likeness of God, apart from any evolutionary process. Although God created man morally upright, he was led astray from God's Word and wisdom by the subtlety of Satan's deceit, and chose to take what was forbidden, and thus declared his independence from, distrust for, and disobedience toward his all-good and gracious Creator. Therefore, our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original innocence and communion with God. God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify Him, enjoy fellowship with Him, live his life according to His will, and by this accomplish His purpose for man in the world (**Gen 1.26-27; 2.7; 3.1-13; Isa 43.7; Rom 5.12**).

In Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God, man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Man possesses no ability to recover himself and therefore is hopelessly lost. Man will never seek after God on his own, he is enslaved to sin, spiritual things are complete foolishness to him, his heart is deceitful and desperately sick and will only do evil continually. Therefore, man's salvation is nothing of himself, but wholly by the sovereign act of God through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Jer 13.23; 17.9; John 1.13; 6.44-45; 8.34; Rom 3.10-11; 5.12,19; 6.23; 8.6-8; 1 Cor 1.18; 2.14; Eph 2.3; Jam 1.15; Rev 21.8**).

Because all men were in Adam, his guilt was justly imputed to every man, and a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. Therefore all men are sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration. Although man is radically and pervasively depraved, he, by the common grace of God, does not always fulfill his full potential to sin (**Psa 14.1-3; Rom 1.26-27; 5.10-12; 18-19; Heb 4.15**).

## Salvation

Salvation is the free gift of God brought to men by His grace and received by faith alone in Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. Salvation is apart from any sacraments, good works or human merit (**John 3.16; Acts 4.12; 13.38-39; 16.31; Rom 4.4-5; 5.1; Eph 2.8-9**).

## Atonement

The ultimate moving cause of the atonement is found in the good pleasure of God. God's good pleasure to save sinners by a substitutionary atonement served to express His love and justice. It was the justice of God that required the demands of the law to be met and His love that provided a way of escape for lost sinners. Considering the extent of the sacrifice which Christ paid, the atonement is the only possible means to the salvation of sinful man. If there were any other way to satisfy the justice of God, it would have been rendered. The atonement made propitiation (a wrath satisfying payment) to God, reconciling elect sinners

to Himself who were the objects of His judicial wrath. This was accomplished by the sacrificial covering of their sin in satisfaction of God's justice and the righteous demands of His law. The Scripture sets forth the atoning work of Christ as being fully sufficient to accomplish its eternal purpose. Scripture affirms the comprehensive atoning work of Christ as fully accomplishing all that was necessary for the wrath of God to be satisfied, our sins to be removed, our souls to be declared righteous, our relationship with God restored, and our person to be redeemed. Understanding its purpose and effect, the atonement cannot be universal (or 'automatic') with regard to its redemptive design, but has as its objects only those who are brought into the saving grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ according to the kind intention of His will (**Isa 53.4-6; 10; Rom 3.21-26; 5.8-10; 2 Cor 5.18-19; Eph 1.3-14; Heb 9.11-14; 1 Pet 1.18-19; 3.18**).

## Regeneration

Regeneration is that supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is born again and divine life is imparted. Apart from the effectual work of the Spirit, no one would come to faith, because all are dead in trespasses and sins. Man is hostile to God, morally unable to submit to God or please Him, because the pleasures of sin appear greater than the pleasures of God. So in regeneration, the Spirit triumphs over all resistance, awakens the dead, removes the blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compellingly beautiful way through the Gospel that He becomes irresistibly attractive to the regenerate heart. The Holy Spirit does this saving work in connection with the presentation of the Gospel of the glory of Christ. Genuine regeneration will manifest itself in fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct as the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (**John 3.3-7; 6.44; Acts 11.18; Rom 8.7-8; 1 Cor 6.18-20; 2 Cor 4.4-6; Eph 2.4-10; Phil 1.29; Titus 3.5; 1 Pet 1.3; 1 John 2.29, 3.9, 4.4,7, 5.3-4**).

## Justification

The justification of sinners is an act of God by which He legally declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins and confess Him as Sovereign Lord. This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man, and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. By this means God is enabled to be "just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (**Rom 2.4; 3.21-26, 28; 4.5; 8.33; 10.9-10**).

## Sanctification

Every believer is promised positional, progressive, and ultimate eternal sanctification. Every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous, having to do with the believer's standing before God, not his present walk or condition, and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. Progressive sanctification begins at the point of conversion by which the practice of the believer is continually brought closer to the position he enjoys through justification. Through the empowering of the Spirit and the grace of God the believer is both enabled and compelled to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. In this

respect, every saved person is involved in a daily conflict--the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—yet adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That being so, we cannot expect a sinless perfection on this earth, but the believer's life will necessarily be characterized by the pursuit of holiness. There is an ultimate eternal sanctification wherein the believer will experience complete freedom from sin, being transformed in all ways into what he has been declared by God to be positionally (**John 17.14-19; Rom 6.1-13; 8.29; 1 Cor 1.2, 30; 6.11; Gal 5.16-25; Eph 5.26; 1 Thes 4.3-4; Titus 1.16; Heb 10.10; 1 Pet 1.2; 1 John 2.3-6; Rev 21.27**).

## Assurance

All who are born of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ can have assurance of salvation and are eternally secure in Christ. All who are justified will win the lifelong fight of faith. They will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls. This perseverance is the promise of the New Covenant, obtained by the blood of Christ, and worked in us by God Himself. This God-worked perseverance does not serve to diminish our vigilance but only to empower and encourage it (**Mark 13.22; John 6.37; 10.27-29; 17.12; Rom 8.29-30; Phil 2.12-13; 2 Tim 1.12; 1 Pet 1.5; 1 John 5.12-13**).

## The Church

All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one universal Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, with Christ Himself as the all supplying, all-sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head (**2 Cor 11.2; Eph 1.22; 4.15; 5.23-32; Col 1.18**).

It is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches in which believers agree together to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to engage in corporate worship, to practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to build each other's faith through ministries of love and fellowship, to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline, and to engage in local and world evangelization. The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry for His gifts; it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells; it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world; and it is a city set on a hill so that men may see the light of its good deeds and give glory to the Father in heaven (**Matt 5.14-16; Acts 8.1; 1 Cor 12.4-7, 13-19; 16.19; Eph 4.11-12; 5.18-20; Col 3.15-16; 1 Tim 3.15; 4.1-2**).

Each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of pastor and/or elder in the ministry of the Word and prayer. Additionally, God has also appointed deacons and deaconesses to the operational and administrative responsibilities of the body. Women are not to fill the role of pastor-elder nor are they to teach or exercise authority over a man in the local church, but are encouraged to use their gifts in appropriate roles that edify the body of Christ and spread the gospel (**Acts 6.2-4; 9.36, 39; 14.23; 1 Cor 14.34; Eph 4.11-13; Phil 1.1; 1 Tim 2.12; 3.8-13; 5.17; Titus 1.5; 2.3-5**).

According to clear biblical instruction unrepentant habitual sin should not be tolerated

within God's church. Every believer is subject to the body of Christ and every believer is to strive to turn a sinner from the error of his ways. If a person does not repent, upon following the biblical pattern, they are to be treated as an unbeliever. Nevertheless the goal of church discipline is to seek the repentance and restoration of the sinning brother (**Matt 18.15-20; 1 Cor 5.1-2, 11-13; Gal 6.1; Jam 5.19-20**).

The mission of the Church is threefold:

1. Exalting the Lord:

It is the primary mission of the church to bring glory to God consistent with His ultimate purpose for all of the created order. The corporate gathering of the Church is primarily and ultimately the exaltation of God in worship, prayer, and the preaching of His Word (**Isa 43.7; Rom 11.36; 1 Cor 14.23-25; Eph 3.21**).

2. Building up the Body:

The saints are edified (built up) through the means of grace by the instruction of the Word, by biblical fellowship, and by the corporate observance of the ordinances (**Matt 28.19-20; Luke 22.19-20; Acts 2.41-42, 46-47; Eph 4.13-16; 2 Tim 2.2; Heb 10.23-25; 1 John 1.3**).

3. Evangelizing the Lost:

Jesus Christ has given the church an enduring commission to evangelize the lost, with this responsibility extending to every believer. Biblical evangelism must involve both the spoken word and the unspoken testimony of a life transformed by the grace of God in Christ (**Matt 9.37-38; 28.19-20**).

## The Ordinances

Christian baptism by immersion is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to new life. It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ, and is a pledge in the presence of God and His saints to live a life of good conscience before Him. Baptism has absolutely no saving merit or regenerative power; salvation is entirely the work of Almighty God as accomplished on the cross by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2.41-42; 8.36-39; Rom 6.1-11; Col 2.12**).

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes as the elements are a representation of the flesh and blood of Christ. The Lord's Supper is reserved for those who have been born of the Spirit of God and must always be preceded by sober self-examination (**1 Cor 10.16; 11.23-32**).

## Social Issues

We believe that the institution of marriage was given by God in the beginning and that in accordance with the creation account and the whole of Scripture shall be the union of one man and one woman as husband and wife. (**Gen. 1:27, 2:24, Mal. 2:14, Mk. 10:7-8, Eph.**

5:31-32)

We believe that Almighty God is the creator and sustainer of all life and for this reason believe that every human life, which begins at conception, has value and worth and shall be treated as such regardless of age, race, or disability. (**Gen. 1:26-27, Ps. 139:16, Mic. 6:8, Lk. 1:44, Acts 17:25-28**)

## The Christian Life

Believers should be set apart unto the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a continual pursuit of holiness. This pursuit of holiness is awakened and sustained by God's Spirit through His Word and prayer. The pursuit of holiness is seen not only in obedience to God but also in such practices as prayer, evangelism, fasting, and Bible study. In this pursuit of holiness the believer is not to withdraw in isolation from the world; rather the world is his God-ordained place of ministry as he exposes the deeds of darkness and brings the gospel message to the whole world (**Matt 5.2-12; Rom 6.1-14; 12.1-2; 2 Cor 7.1; Col 3.16; Titus 2.11-14; Heb 12.14; 1 Pet 2.12; 3.15-16**).

## Death and Last Things

Physical death involves a separation of soul and body with no loss of immaterial consciousness. The souls of the unsaved are held in torment awaiting final judgment, while the souls of the redeemed are made perfect in holiness, are received into paradise, and are taken consciously into the presence of Christ. At the end of the age Jesus Christ will return to this earth personally, visibly, physically, and suddenly in power and great glory to translate His Church from this earth and so the saints shall always be with the Lord. We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to an eternal life in God's presence, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment cut off from the life of God forever (**Luke 16.19-26; 21.27; 23.43; John 14.1-2; Acts 1.9-11; Rom 8.10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor 5.6-8; Phil 1.23; 3.20-21; 1 Thes 4.14-17; 5.11; Heb 12.22-23; Rev 20.11-15**).