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Statement of Faith

We believe that all Scripture is given for our benefit and understanding (Romans 15:4). We also acknowledge that the last words of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed to the Apostle Paul, have been given especially for the church, the body of Christ (Romans 16:25; Galatians 1:11—12). In this age of grace, we find our doctrine, position, walk and destiny exclusively within the thirteen books of Romans through Philemon as written by the Apostle Paul.

The following tenets are a summary of what we believe and are not meant to be complete or exhaustive.

THE BIBLE

We understand that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” written by holy men as they “were moved by the Holy Spirit.” We therefore believe that the whole Bible (66 books) is without error in the recording of this divine revelation and has absolute and complete authority (2 Timothy 3:16—17; 2 Peter 1:21).

THE GODHEAD

There is one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16—17; John 4:24; 10:30; Romans 1:1—4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4—6; Titus 3:4—6).

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:32—35; John 1:1—2, 14; Romans 1:3—4; 2 Corinthians 5:19—21; Galatians 4:4—5; Philippians 2:6—9; Colossians 1:15—19; Hebrews 4:15).

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person, who convicts the world of sin, and who regenerates, baptizes, seals, indwells, enlightens and empowers (John 16:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13, 17—18; 3:16; Titus 3:5).

MANKIND’S NATURAL CONDITION

We believe that man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26—27), but that in Adam’s sin, the race fell (Romans 3:23; 5:12), inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God (Ephesians 2:1—3, 12) and is totally unable to please God in this lost condition (Romans 3:9—12; 8:7—8). All men are thus, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and are therefore totally unable to do anything pleasing to God. Sin separates man from God (Ephesians 2:1—3).

SALVATION

God justifies (declares not guilty) ungodly sinners by His grace, upon the ground of the blood of Christ, through the means of faith. Complete salvation, forgiveness and

justification are given as an unconditional gift of God through our faith in Christ and not by any work of our own. This gift of salvation is given to us when we only believe in the Person of Jesus Christ and His completed work on the cross (Romans 3:20—28; 5:1—9; Ephesians 2:8—9; 1 Corinthians 15:1—4).

ETERNAL SECURITY

All believers are eternally secure in Christ. Eternal life begins at the point of believing (Romans 8:1—2, 29—39; Ephesians 1:13—14; 4:30; Colossians 3:1—4; Philippians 1:6).

BAPTISM

All saved persons have been made members of the Body of Christ by one spiritual baptism into Christ by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). By that one baptism every member of the body of Christ is identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3—6; Colossians 2:11—12). In light of the statement concerning one baptism in Ephesians 4:5 and the statement concerning baptism in Colossians 2:12, and Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel," we affirm that water baptism is not relevant in God's Spiritual program for the Body of Christ in this present dispensation of grace.

OUR WALK

By reason of Christ's victory over sin and of His indwelling Spirit, all the saved may and should experience deliverance from the power of sin by obedience to Ephesians 4:23. When we live in the state of renewing the mind we have put off the old nature and we have put on the new (Ephesians 4:22—24). However, we deny that man's nature of sin is ever eradicated during his life (Romans 6:6—14; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 10:2—5; Galatians 5:16—25).

As saints (literally "set-apart ones") and members of the true church (literally "called-out ones") we are to maintain a Christ-honoring testimony, separate from all forms of worldliness and apostasy, and to demonstrate obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and love to all men (Romans 12:1—2, 9; 2 Corinthians 6:14—18; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 6:20—21).

FAMILY

We believe that God created and blessed the family as the foundation of society. Marriage unites one genetically defined naturally born male (man) and one genetically defined naturally born female (woman) in a lifetime commitment to each other (Genesis 2:23—24; Matthew 19:4—6; Romans 7:1—3). We believe civil unions and domestic partnerships do not constitute a biblical marriage nor do we acknowledge them as such. The marriage relationship is biblically the only legitimate and accepted sexual relationship (Hebrews 13:4). A husband is commanded to love and provide for his wife, as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). A wife is commanded to respect and submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:22—33). Marriage is designed by God to be a monogamous lifelong commitment between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4—6; Romans 7:1—3; 1 Corinthians 7:10—11). Children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception (Psalm 127:3; 139:13—16; Luke 1:41, 44; Exodus 21:22—25). Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching

them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel (Deuteronomy 6:4—7; Proverbs 1:8—9; 13:24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

DISPENSATIONS

We believe that God has dispensed His dealing with mankind in different ways throughout history. Those who are chosen to announce these changes of dispensations are called stewards. We are currently living in the dispensation of grace, the steward of which is the Apostle Paul (Ephesians 3:2; Colossians 1:25; 1 Corinthians 4:1). This current dispensation of grace was a mystery that was hid in God from the beginning of the world until revealed to the Apostle Paul (Romans 16:25—26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 3:2—9; Colossians 1:25—26).

THE CHURCH

The church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:4—5; Ephesians 1:22—23) and functions to carry out His work, ministry and mission while here on earth. Its power, commissioning and authority come from the ministry of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. By God's grace the Apostle Paul received the revelation of the mystery that every individual (Jew or Gentile) can receive salvation through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection (Ephesians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12—13). We look to the Pauline epistles for guidance on church conduct, doctrine and practice (Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2).

MISSION

The mission and commission of the church, the body of Christ, is to build up and edify believers (Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:32; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:16), proclaim the message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:14—21) and to teach and preach sound doctrine given to us through the Apostle Paul according to the revelation of the mystery (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:8—9; 1 Timothy 1:3, 1 Timothy 4:6, Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:11), with all boldness but in gentleness (2 Timothy 2:25; Ephesians 4:1—3), in accordance with rightly dividing the word of truth (Scripture) (2 Timothy 2:15). In this we should follow the example of the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Timothy 1:11—16). That distinctive message which the Apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; 15:16) calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25) is also called "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) which embraces Jew and Gentile together in the church, the body of Christ (Romans 10:12—13; Ephesians 2:14—16; Galatians 3:28). We, like Paul, must preach the entire Word of God in the light of Paul's gospel (Galatians 1:8—9; 2 Timothy 3:16—17; 4:2), and strive to reach those in the regions beyond where Christ is not yet named (Romans 10:14—15; 15:20; 2 Corinthians 10:16).

GIFTS

The spiritual gifts necessary for the ministry of the body of Christ in Paul's day are those enumerated in Ephesians 4:7—16, Romans 12:6—8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7—10. Of these, only the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers are in operation today. The gifts of ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving and showing of mercy as listed in Romans 12:7—8 may also be considered operational today. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and the gift of healing, were

temporary because they were related to God's reaching out to the nation of Israel (1 Corinthians 1:22; 12:8—11; 28—31). These sign gifts have ceased since God has temporarily set Israel aside (1 Corinthians 13:8—11; Romans 11:1—11, 25).

RESURRECTION

Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead (Luke 24:39), and He will raise all of the saved to everlasting glory and, at the end of the age, He will raise all of the lost to everlasting condemnation (Acts 24:15). The church, the body of Christ, will be the first to be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:22—24). Then, according to Israel's prophetic program, there will be a resurrection unto life for those who have believed outside this special dispensation of grace (Revelation 20:5—6) and finally a resurrection unto death for all unbelievers since creation (Revelation 20:11—15; Daniel 12:2).

FUTURE EVENTS

The rapture of the Church "which is His body," and the second coming of Christ are two distinct events, both pre-millennial and unrelated to each other. He will come first to receive the members of His body to Himself "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:13—18; Philippians 3:20—21; Titus 2:13—14; 1 Corinthians 15:51—53), and later to receive His millennial kingdom on this earth, over which He will reign (Zechariah 14:4, 9; Acts 1:10—11; Revelation 19:11—16; 20:4—6). Because of the distinctive nature of the body of Christ, the resurrection and rapture of the Church, which is His body, will take place before the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9). The tribulation (the time of Jacob's trouble) will be a purging and a cleansing of the nation of Israel (Malachi 3:2—3; Zechariah 13:8—9; Jeremiah 30:7; Psalm 2:5; Matthew 24:15—31). The resurrection of believers who are not a part of the church, the body of Christ, will occur after the tribulation (Revelation 20:4—6).

STATE OF THE UNSAVED DEAD

The Scripture in no place extends the hope of salvation to the unsaved dead, but instead reveals that they will ever continue to exist in a state of conscious suffering. The teachings of universalism, probation after death, and annihilation of the unsaved dead are opposed by us as being thoroughly unscriptural and dangerous doctrines (Luke. 13:23—28; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 3:19; Colossians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11; 20:14—15).