

**The Personal Doctrinal Statement of David Wears  
Presented to the Ordination Counsel  
Called by Calvary Baptist Church**

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## My Personal Testimony

**Regarding My Salvation** When I was around the age of seven I made a false profession of salvation and likewise was falsely baptized as an unbeliever. I lived an unrepentant life over the next nine years proving to the world, my family and myself of my utter depravity. While I had been influenced by many Christian men and women it was not until I began to attend Calvary Baptist Church of Charlotte, Michigan that I began to understand my need of salvation. The Holy Spirit began to work in my heart through the friendships of David Booth and Jeremy Fahrni and the preaching of my pastors, Brad Anderson and Mark Booth. During a Sunday Morning Worship Service in which Pastor Booth was preaching I understood the need for placing my faith in Christ' death, burial and resurrection and repenting toward Christ. I went forward and prayed to God for forgiveness of my sins. I was baptized a month later by Pastor Mark Booth.

**Regarding My Call to Ministry** My call to ministry was nearly synonymous with my salvation. I believe ministry is not a call to a few but to all believers. However it is necessary for some believers to be willing to submit their lives totally to the service of God and the church. It was at a missionary conference that I felt compelled to be involved in full time Christian service, specifically missions. In 2013 God confirmed this call. My wife and I began to pray about planting churches in Portugal and after much prayer and through a series of sermons that John MacArthur preached on I Timothy 3:1-7 I was confident that God would have us serve Him in Portugal.

## I. The Holy Scriptures

I believe the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of both the Old and New Testament canon, is God's written revelation about himself to mankind. God has communicated to mankind through his written Word by a process of dual authorship, that is by men who were "carried along" (2 Pet 1:21) by the Holy Spirit so that the autographs were verbally and plenarily inspired and thus without error. By verbal inspiration I mean that every word of Scripture is inspired (Matt 5:18; 1 Cor 2:13), not just its thoughts or ideas. By plenary inspiration I mean that the entirety of Scripture is inspired (2 Tim 3:16), not just certain themes or parts. The Bible does not merely contain or reflect God's Word; it is God's Word in its entirety.

**Revelation** While God has revealed himself through general revelation, that is all men know God because of creation (Ps 8:1-3 ; Rom 1:18-20) and conscience (Rom 1:18-21, 2:14-15), general revelation is not sufficient for salvation. However special revelation such as the Bible is sufficient for the individual's condemnation (Rom 3:10-12), salvation (Rom 10:17, 2 Tim 3:15) and sanctification (2 Tim 3:17). It is the only infallible rule for faith and practice in this dispensation. (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; John 10:35; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

**Inspiration** The Holy Spirit caused men, using their individual personalities, stylistic differences and historical context to compose and record without error the very words of God's choosing as found in the original manuscripts (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21). This process is called inspiration. Inspiration technically applies only to the autographs (1 Cor 14:37). Copies and translations are inspired in a derivative sense that is to the degree that they accurately reflect the autographs. Inspiration also necessitates preservation. God has preserved special revelation in the Bible so that it has not been garbled, lost, or destroyed (Matt 5:18). We possess the very Word of God in the totality of the manuscript evidence.

**Interpretation** It is imperative that scripture be interpreted (the process of arriving at the correct understanding of Scripture) according to its grammatical, historical, literary, and theological context. The central message of the Bible is essentially clear (Ps 119:105, 130). Anyone can determine the basic meaning of Scripture through proper interpretation. However, only saved individuals can grasp the significance of Scripture (1 Cor 2:14) through illumination of the Holy Spirit; that is the act of the Holy Spirit whereby He enables regenerate men to understand the true significance of the Word of God (John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:616; 1 John 2:20-21, 27). The illumination of the Holy Spirit is not for the gaining of knowledge which makes one arrogant (I Cor 8:1), but is intended to change the life of the very individual who understands the Scripture (I Cor 4:19).

## II. The God-Head

I believe there is only one living and true God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (John 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14)—each equally deserving worship and obedience and yet differing in function, God the Son being subordinate to God the Father (John 14:28; 1 Cor 11:3) and God the Holy Spirit being subordinate to both God the Father and God the Son (John 14:26, 15:26). All three persons of the God-Head are involved with the salvation of an individual. (Eph. 1:4-6,

John 6:37; Ro 5:11, 1 John 2:2; I Cor 12:3). God is Spirit (John 4:24). Each member of the Trinity is a person, not merely a force or energy. Each possesses all the characteristics of personality, including thought, feeling, and self-determination.

God is uncreated and separate from His creation (Isa 55:8-9). Everything that exists has been created by Him and for Him (Col 1:16). He created all things out of nothing (Heb 11:3) in six, literal twenty-four days (cf. Gen 1 with Exod 20:8-11). Everything which He created was originally good (Gen 1:31). Though God's work of creation has ceased (Gen 2:2), He continues to sustain that which He has created (Col 1:17). God ordained in eternity past everything that has happened or will happen in conformity with His will (Eph 1:11) and according to His own good pleasure (Ps 115:3; Isa 46:10). Nothing happens apart from His decree. Nothing can thwart His purposes (Isa 46:11).

An attribute is an essential quality inherent in something. God is identical with and reveals Himself through His attributes. One can categorize God's attributes into two sets: those relative to His greatness and those relative to His goodness. God's attributes of greatness are incommunicable; they are true only of God. God's attributes of goodness are communicable to man to some degree; man can emulate them.

*Attributes of Greatness:* God is

1. Eternal – without beginning or end; not bound by time (Gen 21:33, Is 40:28).
2. Immutable – changeless (Num 23:19, Mal 3:6).
3. Incomprehensible – beyond full human understanding (Ps 145:3; Rom 11:33-34).
4. Infinite – having no limitations or bounds; unrestricted (1 Kings 8:27)
5. Omnipotent – all powerful (Gen 17:1; 18:14).
6. Omnipresent – present everywhere (1 Kings 8:27, Ps 139:8, 1 Chron 28:9).
7. Omniscient – knows all things (Ps 139:16, 23-24).
8. Perfect – no flaws or error in Him; complete (Deut 32:4, Matt. 5:48).
9. Selfexistent – existing in and of Himself without dependence with anything else (Ex 3:14).
10. Sovereign – supreme in power and authority over the universe in all things (Eph 1:11).

*Attributes of Goodness:* God is

1. Faithful – trustworthy, reliable (1 Cor 10:13; Ps 36:5).
2. Gracious – extending unmerited, undeserved, and unwanted favor (Eph 2:5, 8).
3. Holy – morally pure, separate, upright (1 Pet 1:15-16).
4. Loving – desiring the good of those loved (1 John 4:8, 16).
5. Merciful – compassionate, kind, withholding deserved punishment from those He forgives (Ps 103:5, 17).
6. Righteous – being right, having rectitude, conforming to His character, just (Ps 145:17).
7. True – genuine, honest, truthful (John 14:6).

## A. God the Father

I believe God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity and orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6). He is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Psalm 103:19; Romans

11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Ephesians 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Ephesians 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chronicles 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (Habakkuk 1:13; John 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (1 Peter 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Ephesians 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (John 1:12; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9).

### B. God the Son

I believe that God the Son, the second person of the Trinity is Jesus Christ and equal in essence with God the Father (John 1:1, 10:30; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3). The Son of God is fully human and fully divine without any confusion of the two natures (Rom 9:5). As the eternal Logos, He was active in creation (John 1:1-3, Col 1:16) and appeared throughout the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord (Exodus 3:1-6.). In the incarnation, He took upon Himself the nature of humanity (John 1:14), thus becoming the God-man, both fully God (Col 1:19, 2:9) and fully man (Rom 1:3, Phil 2:7-8) at the same time, one person with two natures. This union is permanent (1 Tim 2:5).

Jesus' birth was the result of a miraculous conception by the power of the Holy Spirit through the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25). In the kenosis, Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind, submitting Himself voluntarily to the will of God the Father (Matthew 26:39; John 8:28-29). Because He was a man, Christ could be tempted with evil (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15). But because He was God, He did not, indeed could not, sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22).

Jesus Christ voluntarily gave Himself as a vicarious atonement on the cross, bearing the sin of the world and suffering God's complete wrath against sin (1 John 2:2). His death was genuine (Matthew 27:50), was in God's eternal plan (Acts 2:23), was substitutionary (2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13), expiated man's guilt (Hebrews 9:26), redeemed man from bondage (Matthew 20:28), propitiated God's wrath (1 John 2:2), and reconciled man to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). While the death of Christ is sufficient for all men (Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2), it is efficient only for those who exercise faith in Him (1 Timothy 4:10; James 2:14-19). I believe in an unlimited atonement (1 John 2:2).

Christ physically rose from the dead three days after His death (1 Corinthians 15:4) and ascended into heaven forty days later (Acts 1:1-9). He will one day return to establish His kingdom (Acts 1:10-11; Revelation 19:11-20:6). He is currently at the right hand of God the Father interceding for believers (Romans 8:34) as their Advocate (1 John 2:1) and High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16).

### C. God the Holy Spirit

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and as such is equal in essence with both God the Father and God the Son (2 Samuel 23:2-3; Acts 5:3-5), though subordinate to both in function (John 14:26, 15:26). Like the Father and the Son, He displays the same divine attributes, such as eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipotence (Luke 1:35), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), and omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). He is a person (John 16:13) who exhibits

intelligence (Rom 8:26-27), purpose (1 Cor 12:11), and emotion (Eph 4:30). The Holy Spirit is not a mystical force, but a person.

The Holy Spirit was active in creation (Gen 1:2); revelation (Num 24:2; 2 Pet 1:21); and in the conception (Matt 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35), ministry (Matt 3:16, Luke 4:1), and resurrection of Christ (Rom 8:11; 1 Pet 3:18). The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11) and restrains evil (2 Thes 2:6-7). He regenerates believers (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5), permanently indwells them (Rom 8:9-10; 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19), seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 1:13-14), baptizes them into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), sanctifies them (2 Cor 3:18; 2 Thes 2:13), illuminates their minds to perceive the Scripture's significance (1 Cor 2:14), fills them (Eph 5:18), guides them (Rom 8:14), intercedes on their behalf (Rom 8:26-27), and bestows gifts upon them (1 Cor 12:7-11). Those filled by the Holy Spirit will display the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

Spiritual gifts are visible, Holy Spirit-energized abilities, sovereignly bestowed upon believers (1 Cor 12:11; Heb 2:4) at the moment of salvation given for service within the context of the local church (1 Cor 12:7, 14:12; Eph 4:12). A gift may be a natural ability or one miraculously endowed, temporary or permanent. Every believer has one or more spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7). A unique ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was theocratic anointing--a temporary, Spirit-given ability to lead the theocratic kingdom (1 Sam 10:6, 16:13-14; Ps 51:11).

### III. Angels

I believe in the existence of angels, finite (Matt 24:36) spirit beings (Heb 1:14) created by God (Ps 148:2, 5; Col 1:16) prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth (Job 38:4-7) for the purpose of glorifying Him (Isa 6:1-3; Rev 4:6-11) and ministering for Him (Ps 103:20). Angels are spirit beings (Heb 1:14) but have occasionally taken on the appearance of humans (Gen 18:2; Luke 24:4) or other creatures (Isa 6:1-3; Ezek 1; Gen 3). They do not procreate (Matt 22:30). Holy or elect angels (Mark 8:38; 1 Tim 5:21) serve believers (Heb 1:14) and will judge unbelievers (Matt 13:37-43). Angels possess great power (Ps 103:20), are superior in some respects to man (2 Pet 2:11), and differ in rank or authority (Dan 10:13; Eph 6:12).

Like the other angels, Satan was holy when originally created (Ezek 28:12, 15) and even enjoyed a position of prominence among the angels (Ezek 28:14). However, being lifted up in pride (Isa 14:13-14; Ezek 28:17; 1 Tim 3:6), he rebelled against his Creator and became the chief enemy of both God and God's people (1 Peter 5:8), ruler over all those angels who rebelled with him (Matt 12:24), and both "god" of this age (2 Cor 4:4) and prince of the cosmos (John 12:31, 16:11). Satan accuses believers before God (Rev 12:10), tempts them to sin (1 Cor 7:5; 1 Thes 3:5), and oppresses them (2 Cor 12:7; Eph 6:11-12; Rev 2:10). Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers to the significance of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4) and controls them (Eph 2:1-2) even to the point of possessing some of them (Luke 22:3).

Satan is a defeated foe (John 16:11) because of the cross-work of Christ. However, God does allow him some measure of freedom to do his worst (Job 2:6). At the second coming of Christ, Satan will be imprisoned in the Abyss for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3) after which time he will be loosed for a brief period (Rev 20:3, 7-8), only to be cast into the lake of fire where he will spend eternity (Rev 20:10).

All of the angels were holy when originally created (Gen 1:31). Sometime between the

conclusion of the creation week and the Fall, one-third of the angels followed Satan in rebelling against God (Rev 12:4) and were thus confirmed in wickedness, with the remaining two-thirds being confirmed in holiness. Some of the wicked angels (or demons) have been permanently confined (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6), while others have been given a measure of freedom to carry out Satan's bidding.

#### **IV. Man**

I believe that God, with purpose, supernaturally created man the sixth day of the creation week (Gen 1:26-27). Man was created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27). The image was marred by the Fall, but not lost (Gen 9:6; Jam 3:9).

Man's nature is composed of both a material aspect (body) and an immaterial aspect (soul/spirit) (Matt 10:28, 26:41; 1 Cor 7:34; Jam 2:26). God made Adam's body from the dust of the ground and imparted life to it via a divine inbreathing (Gen 2:7). God created the first woman, Eve, using one of Adam's ribs (Gen 2:21-22). Both the material and immaterial aspects of man are passed on to succeeding generations via the natural procreation process (Gen 5:1-3; Heb 7:9-10).

Adam was created in a state of unconfirmed holiness (Gen 1:31; Eccl 7:29), but fell from this state through one act of disobedience to the revealed will of God (Gen 2:17, 3:6). As a result of Adam's original sin, both he and the entire human race were plunged into sin (Rom 5:19) and became subject to its effects, including death (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12; 6:23). Thus, in his natural state, man is alienated from God (Isa 59:2), stands condemned before Him (Rom 5:16), is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1-3), is totally depraved (Rom 1:28-32; Eph 4:17-19), and is completely unable to extricate himself from his condition apart from God's enablement (Eph 2:4-5).

#### **V. Sin**

I believe that sin is any lack of conformity to the moral law of God. One sins by being or doing evil (Rom 7:19) or by not being or doing right (Jam 4:17). Sin is described as missing the mark (Rom 3:12), transgression (Ps 17:3), crookedness (1 John 5:17), disobedience (Rom 5:12), rebellion (Ezek 2:3) and lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Sin entered the world via the fall of Satan and entered the human race via the fall of Adam. Because Adam was the divinely-appointed representative of the human race, his sin was imputed to all his descendants, resulting in the immediate condemnation of the entire race (Rom 5:12-19). Adam's sin nature has been passed on to his descendants via procreation (Ps 51:5). Thus, all men are sinners by birth and by choice (1 Kgs 8:46; Rom 3:10-12). Sin permeates the entirety of man's being (Isa 1:6), penetrating his mind (Rom 8:5-8; Eph 4:17-18; Titus 1:15), will (John 8:34), and emotions (Jer 17:9). Consequently, everything unsaved man does is sinful in God's sight (Ps 143:2; Isa 64:6). Man is destitute of any moral good and unable to merit God's favor or contribute to his own salvation (Rom 7:18; Eph 2:8-9).

The primary consequence of sin is death (Rom 5:12, 6:23; Jam 1:15). This includes physical death, the separation of the body from the soul/spirit (Jam 2:26); spiritual death, the separation of the individual from God (Eph 2:1-5, 12-13); and eternal death, the permanent separation of the individual from God in hell (Rev 20:11-15).

Man, not God, is responsible for sin (Jam 1:13-14). Although God did permit sin's entrance into

both the world and the human race, He has not revealed why He did so, other than for his own good pleasure (Rom 11:33; Eph 1:11).

## VI. Salvation

I believe that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

**Regeneration.** I believe that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (John 5:24) when the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works are the proper evidence and fruit of regeneration (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Ephesians 5:17-21; Philippians 2:12b; Colossians 3:16; 2 Peter 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Such a conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Romans 8:17; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:2-3).

**Election.** I believe that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

I believe that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Romans 9:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith, and all who come in faith the Father will receive (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; James 4:8).

I believe that the unmerited favor that God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part or to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy (Ephesians 1:4-7; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:2).

I believe that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Romans 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:25-28; 2 Timothy 1:9). God does not elect men to hell (cf. Matt 25:34 with v. 41, Revelation 20:12-13).

**Justification.** I believe that justification before God is an act of God (Romans 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 7:10; Isaiah 55:6-7) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Romans 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's

righteousness to us (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). By this means God is enabled to “be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 3:26).

**Sanctification.** I believe that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer’s standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 1:2).

I believe that there is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:1-22; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9).

**Security.** I believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 7:25; 13:5; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24).

I believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God’s Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Romans 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13, 25-26; Titus 2:11-14).

**Separation.** I believe that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

I believe that, out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us, and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. I believe in the biblical mandate for the believer to separate from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

I believe that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness that reflects the teaching of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:14; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 3:1-10).

**Human Responsibility.** I believe that while God is fully active in salvation, man is fully responsible for the consequences of his sin (Ro 3:23, Ro 6:23). For salvation to occur the individual must believe that Jesus Christ literally died, was buried, and was resurrected for the

forgiveness of sins against the Holy God of all (1 Cor 15:1-8) and repent from sin toward Christ. I believe the individual is responsible for his own salvation, thus I do not believe in collective salvation (Ro 9:2-3). The individual will be judged by his own works (Rev 20:12-13), unless the work of Christ has been “imputed to him for righteousness” (Ro 4:20-25).

**Evangelism.** I believe it is both the privilege (I Thes. 2:4,8) and obligation of the believer to proclaim the Gospel to the unsaved, seeing them baptized, and discipled (Matt 28:19-20). I firmly believe that no individual every has, nor ever will, nor is capable of saving the unsaved except God Himself (I Cor 1:13, Ro ). God uses Christians in different capacities to reach the lost, that is, some “plant” and some “water”, but ultimately it is God that gives the “increase” (I Cor 3:6).

## VII. The Church

I believe that the Church is composed of all those who have been or will be saved during the "church age" or the "age of grace," that period between Pentecost and the Rapture. Such individuals comprise what is commonly referred to as the Body of Christ or the universal church (Eph 1:22-23, 3:2-11; Col 1:18, 24). The building agent of the Church is the Holy Spirit. Spirit baptism is the judicial placement of the believer by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The Church has been given a place of special prominence among the redeemed of all ages (Heb 12:23) and will be Christ's co-regent in His Kingdom (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21). The Church is distinct from Israel, the Old Testament people of God (1 Cor 10:32), in origin, purpose, and destiny.

The visible manifestation of the universal church on earth is the local church. A local church is a group of water-baptized believers (Acts 2:41) organized with the offices of pastor and deacon (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-13), sharing a common faith or body of truth (Acts 2:42; Jude 3), observing the ordinances of water baptism (Matt 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42), carrying out the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20), and meeting regularly (Heb 10:25; Acts 20:7). The local church is the vehicle God has chosen to accomplish His purposes in this dispensation (1 Tim 3:15). Therefore, all ministry should be carried out under its auspices.

Initial qualifications for membership in a local church include conversion and water baptism (Acts 2:41). The only continuing qualification is an orderly walk. Those who persist in open sin are to be excommunicated from the assembly (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:1-13).

The two ordinances of the local church are water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Water baptism was authorized by Christ (Matt 28:19), symbolizes a saving truth (Rom 6:4), was given a command for perpetuation (Matt 28:19), and was practiced by the early church (Acts 2:41). The only mode of water baptism which adequately symbolizes the truth behind it is immersion. Likewise, the Lord's Supper was authorized by Christ (Matt 26:26-29), symbolizes a saving truth (1 Cor 11:26), was given a command for perpetuation (Luke 22:19), and was practiced by the early church (Acts 2:42). Neither water baptism nor the Lord's Supper contribute in any way to the salvation of those who participate in them. They are memorials or symbols designed to commemorate the work of Christ at the cross (Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 11:23-26).

I adhere to those tenets which have historically distinguished Baptists from other groups: 1) the

Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice (2 Tim 3:16-17), 2) the autonomy of the local church (1 Cor 5:4-5, 12-13, 6:1-5), 3) the priesthood of the believer (Heb 4:16; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6), 4) two ordinances: water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42), 5) soul liberty (Rom 14:5, 12; 1 John 2:27), 6) regenerate church membership (Acts 2:41, 47), 7) two offices: pastor and deacon (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-13), 8) separation of church and state (Matt 22:21).

I believe that the primary focus of a local church should be the edification of believers (Eph 4:11-16). Edification takes place by means of biblical education, worship and fellowship. A church is also responsible to evangelize in its community and throughout the world (Acts 1:8).

The local church is responsible for maintaining its doctrinal purity by separating from those individuals and/or groups who walk disorderly (Eph 4:15, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 2 John 9-11; 2 Thes 3:6, 14).

## VIII. End Times

I believe that the next event on God's prophetic calendar is the Second Coming of Christ, the first phase of which is the Rapture of the Church. At the Rapture, Christ will personally and visibly appear in the clouds to instantaneously resurrect all deceased church-age saints and translate all believers currently inhabiting the earth, taking both back to Heaven to dwell with Him (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thes 4:15-17). The Rapture is imminent, potentially occurring at any moment (Jam 5:8-9; Rev 22:10, 20). There are no other prophetic events which must take place first. It is also pretribulational (1 Thes 1:10, 5:9; Rev 3:10) and premillennial.

Shortly following the Rapture, the Antichrist will appear (2 Thes 2:7-8) as the leader of a revived Roman empire (Dan 7:19-25) and make a covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27), initiating a seven-year period known as the Tribulation during which God's wrath will be outpoured upon the earth's inhabitants (Rev 6-19). During the Tribulation, the Church will be in heaven with Christ where she will be judged according to her works at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 2 Cor 5:10) and will assume her role as the Bride of Christ at the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19:7). Meanwhile, at the mid-point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27) and will turn against her (Rev 12:13-17). The last half of the Tribulation will be a time of unprecedented wrath known as the "Great Tribulation" (Jer 30:7; Matt 24:15-28) and will conclude with the Battle of Armageddon. At this point the second phase of the Second Coming of Christ will occur, the Revelation or Second Coming in Glory. Christ will return to the earth accompanied by all church-age saints to defeat the Antichrist and his forces (Rev 19:11-21). The Antichrist and the false prophet will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 19:20) and Satan will be bound in the Abyss for a thousand years (Rev 20:1-3). This will be shortly followed by the resurrection of all Old Testament and Tribulation saints (Isa 26:19; Dan 12:1-2; Rev 20:4-5), the regathering and judgment of Israel (Ezek 20:33-38), and the judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-46).

The Marriage Supper (Matt 25:1-13; Rev 19:7, 9) will launch the Millennial Kingdom, the 1,000-year earthly reign of Christ with church-age saints as His co-regents (Rev 20:4-6). The millennial, messianic reign of Christ will be a time of great peace, blessing and prosperity (Isa 11:1-9). At the end of the millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time to lead one final revolt against Christ (Rev 20:7-8). God will destroy Satan's armies and will cast Satan into the

lake of fire for eternity (Rev 20:9-10). At this time, all the unsaved dead of all ages will be resurrected to face the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-13). After their works are examined and found wanting, they will join Satan in the lake of fire where they will spend eternity enduring suffering as a just retribution for their sin (Matt 25:41; Rev 20:14-15). God will destroy the present heavens and earth and will create a new heaven and earth where the redeemed of all ages will spend eternity with their Lord in unending fellowship and love (2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1-3).