

CREDAL STATEMENT

WE BELIEVE:

In the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

In the one, living, and true God as eternally being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ who, as very God and very man, yet one Christ, was:

conceived by the Holy Spirit

born of the Virgin Mary

sinless in nature and life

full of the Holy Spirit without measure

authoritative in teaching and preaching

mighty and miraculous in ministry

crucified, dead, and buried

resurrected in power

and who

ascended into heaven

intercedes before the Father on our behalf

In the forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus alone

In eternal life and salvation by grace through faith in Christ

In the deity of the Holy Spirit who

indwells/fills us with the presence of God

anoints us unto fruit and good works

joins us together with all saints as Christ's body, the church

equips us in power and spiritual gifts

leads us in our Christian walk

In the commissioning of the church to carry Christ's gospel – by Word, deed, and power – into all the world.

In the resurrection of the dead and in the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall come to judge the living and the dead

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that the Bible, canonized as the sixty-six books of Scripture, is the Word of God. Holy men of God wrote the Word of God under the guidance, influence, and inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26; II Peter 1:20,21). The holy Scriptures, every word of which is pure (see Psalms 19:7,8 with Proverbs 30:5), are the righteous standard for instructing us in all matters pertaining to our faith, life, doctrine, and practice (II Timothy 3:16,17).

The best interpreters of Scripture are (1) the Holy Spirit who inspired it and (2) Scripture itself.

Scripture is the supreme standard by which all doctrinal/religious controversies are to be determined, and all decrees of councils and teachings of men are to be examined. It is also the supreme standard by which we judge any other word or concept perceived in the Spirit or by means of spiritual experiences – i.e. prophecies, visions, dreams, etc– which, from a scriptural perspective, are known to have been experienced by many biblical characters and are even suggested by Scripture (note Romans 12:6; I Cor. 12:7-11; 14:1-5; I Thes. 5:20; I Tim. 1:18; 4:14...also Acts 2:17,18; 10:9-17; 16:6-10; 23:11) to normally occur in

the lives of the followers/believers of its precepts.

Finally, we include an appropriate passage from the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter I, Article VII:

All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

We believe in the one true God whose mysterious nature, as revealed in Scripture, is expressed in His eternally being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; John 14:16,17; II Cor. 13:14; Rev. 5:1,6).

God is Father, Creator, Redeemer, and Sovereign Ruler. He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He alone is the source of all truth, love, life, and power. He is immutable, infallible, and all sufficient. He is gracious, merciful, and longsuffering without subverting justice. He is a most pure spirit who is infinite and holy in being and perfection. He is to be honored, adored, worshipped, loved, and obeyed.

We believe that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27; James 3:9).

Through disobedience resulting in sin mankind, in Adam (Romans 5:12-21), fell

from its/his original righteousness and communion with God and became separated (Is. 59:2; Romans 3:10-12,23; Eph. 4:18) from Him. Sin, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, brings guilt and a curse (see James 2:10 with Gal. 3:10) upon the sinner which justly subjects him to this separation and ultimately to death and to the eternal judgment of God (Matt. 7:23; 25:41; Romans 6:23; 7:5; II Thes. 1:9; Heb. 9:27; James 1:14,15).

Justice demands that sin must not dwell in the presence of a righteous and holy God (note Hebrews 12:14 with Exodus 33:20). All sinners fall short of the glorious presence of God. Those separated from God are without God, and those without God are without hope for this life and for the life to come.

But, thanks be to God for His indescribable gift (II Cor. 9:15), Jesus Christ His Son, by means of whom we have hope restored (Titus 3:4-7)!

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the incarnate Son of God (John 1:1-4; 14), who being very God and very man (Romans 1:3,4), is one Christ. God sent and ordained Him to be the mediator between God and fallen mankind (I Tim. 2:5 with Jon 3:17), and as such. He has become the hope of eternal salvation to those without hope, lost in sin (Luke 19:10). By Him reconciliatory peace (Romans 5:1) between God and man has come to all who repent for their sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; I John 1:9), confess Jesus Christ to be Savior and Lord, believe that God raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9,10), and follow Him in life and practice (John 8:31,32; Ephesians 2:10; II Peter 1:10,11). Those separated from God are now invited in Christ to draw near to God (James 4:8) and to live eternally

with Him (John 3:16).

Christ, who knew no sin and deserved neither death nor judgment, became the mediating Savior and Redeemer by becoming sin for us and dying substitutionally on our behalf (II Cor. 5:21). While men were yet sinners He died for them (Romans 5:8), reconciling them to God (II Cor. 5:18,19). He bore in His body, through the shedding of His own blood on Calvary's cross, God's just punishment for mankind's sin (Colossians 1:19,20; I Peter 3:18).

To complete our reconciliation He not only took upon Himself our sins, but He also imputed to us His righteousness (Romans 3:21,22; 4:3-12, 22_25). His shed blood cleansed us and made us fit to enter into God's presence (Heb. 10:19-22), both in this life and in the life to come.

Jesus Christ is the looked-for Prophet (Acts 3:19-24), the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:5,6), the King of the lineage of David (Luke 1:32,33), the Head of His Church (Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23), the Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2), and the soon coming, reigning LORD of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16; 22:20).

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, sinless in nature and life, full of the Holy Spirit without measure, authoritative in teaching and preaching, mighty and miraculous in ministry, crucified...dead...buried, and gloriously resurrected in power. He then ascended into heaven where He intercedes in behalf of the saints and from where He shall return to judge the living and the

dead.

The plight of man is that he is a sinner and separated from the righteous and holy God who loves him.

Man is saved from this plight through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who gave His life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28). By grace one is saved through faith (i.e. believing in and accepting the redemptive work of Christ)...he is not saved on the basis of his own works, but on the basis of the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the sins of the world... salvation is therefore a gift freely given from God lest man should boast in his own fleshly prowess (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Those who are saved are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that they should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).

The scriptural evidence that one has repented/turned away from his sin and put his faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord includes public confession of Christ and baptism in water (see Romans 10:9,10 and Acts 2:38).

We believe in the deity of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter/Helper/Counselor sent from God (John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7). God sent and ordained Him to apply Christ's redemptive work to those who believe (Note Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 8:1-13; 10:14-18), to powerfully equip them to

effectively carry out the Father's redemptive plan in the earth (Acts 1:8), and to be the means by which God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, might indwell all believers (John 14:16-21 with I John 4:12-16).

The Holy Spirit has come to convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin because they do not believe in Jesus Christ, of righteousness because Christ has gone to His Father and is seen no more, of judgment because the ruler of this world is judged (John 16:-11).

The Holy Spirit is manifest in and through the church by means of His indwelling the individual members; for, by Him believers are baptized into one Body, the church, and they are made to drink into one Spirit (I Cor. 12:13). His presence is seen in the powerful gifts and ministries that are expressed through Spirit-filled believers (Romans 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:3-11; Ephesians 4:11; I Peter 4:10,11) as they reach inside the church to touch one another and as they reach outside the church to embrace the world. He is also seen where His fruit (Gal. 5:22,23), the greatest of which is love (I Cor. 13:13), is found indwelling the believers and their church life (I John 4:12,13).

We believe there are many valid encounters with God the Holy Spirit. Baptism, filling, and anointing are among those scriptural terms used to describe such encounters with the Holy Spirit. These experiences should produce greater commitment to God's will, greater realization of His power, greater edification of His church, and greater outreach to the lost world.

We further believe that the gifts and abilities imparted by the Spirit to members of the church ought to be operative in the church, supervised by mature Christian leaders, and ministered in love by Christians whose lives reflect godly character. We believe that the wisdom and purpose of God is revealed in His church (Eph. 3:9,10). The Bible reveals the church to be the assembly of people “called out” from the world to worship the Father God in spirit and in truth, to submit with one accord to the supreme Lordship and Headship of His Son Jesus Christ, and to carry out His new covenant Word and work in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. The church is Christ’s Body in the earth (Eph. 1:22,23), and as such “they” are to proclaim His gospel to all the world (Matt. 24:14; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47). The church universal consists of all believers in the earth, while the church local is a body of believers baptized, joined together, and practicing the new covenant in a specific geographic locality. Since the church is one as God is one, the church local must seek to walk in harmony with the church universal.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has ordained government and ministry in the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are set in the church universal to establish, lead, teach, inspire, and mature it to do His work in the earth (Ephesians 4:11-13). The scriptural norm calls for each church local to have a college of elders/overseers – most of whom may also be apostles or prophets or evangelists or pastors or teachers – who are vertically accountable to Christ to pastorally administrate the church’s life and ministry as well as a college of deacons who are horizontally accountable to the Body to guide its members in their serving of one another and in their meeting the need of one another (see Phil. 1:1 with Acts 6:1-7; 14:23; and I Tim. 3:1-13).

We recognize, however, that “government by college” can be expressed by a number of different forms, models, or constructs...e.g. one elder may preside as primus inter pares (“first among equals”) over the college, or the college can endeavor to function according to consensus alone, or...et cetera.

The saints are enjoined to not neglect assembling with the church (Heb. 10:25). They are to regularly celebrate the communion Table of the Lord by partaking of the one loaf and the covenant cup (I Cor. 10:16,17; 11:23-26). And, they are to set themselves under the authority of pastoral care and government (see Hebrews 13:17) for the purpose of maturing their character and developing their gifts and ministries.

Finally, members of the church should live in covenant loyalty with one another. This means that they should be willing to lay down their lives for one another as Christ, their Head, was willing to lay down His life for them (I John 3:16). On a daily basis, this means that they should learn to love one another in practical ways through forgiving, serving, and correcting one another in a kind, brotherly fashion (Col. 3:12-17). This they should do faithfully unto the great day of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when they, together with the resurrected saints of the ages, will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air and to always be with Him (I Thes. 4:16,17).

CHRIST’S RETURN, RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, AND JUDGMENT

We believe in the visible return of Jesus Christ to manifest His kingdom

government in the earth (Matt. 24:27, 36-44); I Thes. 4:16 with 5:1-5; II Tim. 4:1; Rev. 19:11-20; 3). We believe Christians should lovingly look for His appearing and give full attention to obedience while He tarries (I Thes. 5:5-10; Hebrews 9:27,28; II Peter 3:10-14).

We believe that the dead in Christ will be resurrected when He comes; and they, together with the saints who are alive at His appearing, will be caught up in the air to meet Him (I Thes. 4:14-17). They will rule and reign with Him in His Kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6), and they will ever be with Him (I Thes. 4:17).

We believe in a final judgment at the end of the age when all the dead shall be resurrected to stand before the Lord and be judged (John 5:28,29; Acts 24:15; II Tim. 4:1,8; Rev. 20:11-15). The wicked will be eternally punished (Matt. 13:41,42; 25:45,46; II Thes. 1:7-9). The righteous will be rewarded and will enjoy the blessings of eternally living with the Lord (Matt. 13:42; 25:34; John 3:16; II Thes. 1:7,10).

CONCLUSION:

These principles of our faith are foundations for God's continuing leadership in our lives. We realize that our statement of faith does not relieve us of the responsibility to live by faith. We gratefully acknowledge those who have served Him in ages past, and we bless them in their eternal state for their faithfulness. We acknowledge those who serve Jesus Christ now, whose doctrinal expressions may be different from our own. We desire to walk with them as brothers and sisters. Our statements are not to be construed as walls, but as doors through which others may communicate with us and we with them.