

A silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings, positioned behind a dark, textured stone wall. The background is a solid yellow color.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

Changed Lives Changing Lives

LOVE GOD. LOVE PEOPLE. PURSUE EXCELLENCE. CHOOSE JOY.

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

THE BIBLE

We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the only standard against which all things - books, prophecies, and sermons etc. - must be compared.

2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

GOD

There is only one true God, who has revealed himself as the eternally, self-existent "I Am", the creator of heaven and earth and the redeemer of mankind. God is revealed as a 'Godhead', which is eternally co-equal and co-existent in three persons, not three Gods but one, not one person but three. They are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1:26; Mark 12:29; Matthew 28:19

THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. We uphold His absolute deity as well as His complete humanity. That is, in one person Jesus was fully God and fully man.

Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1; Hebrews 2:9-16; Hebrews 1:5-12; Philippians 2:5-8

THE RESURRECTION

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead and then ascended into heaven where he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. He holds the position of absolute power and authority.

Romans 8:34; Mark 12:36; Mark 14:62; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 20; Luke 22:69; Hebrews 8:1

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the human dead.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 35-49; Revelation 20:11-15

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the lord of everything and has been appointed as the head of the Church.

Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18, 24

THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will re-appear on earth in physical form in all his glory, majesty and power. This will be the Second Coming of Christ and is the "blessed hope" of the Church.

Matthew 24:30; Luke 21:27; 1 Corinthians 15:15-53; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 22:7; 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

THE FALL OF MAN

Every living individual has sinned and is guilty before God. Mankind, by nature, is depraved and incapable of saving his soul through efforts of his own.

Romans 3:10; Ephesians 2:8-10

REDEMPTION

Through Jesus Christ mankind receives forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

It must be noted that salvation is only found in Jesus. **John 14:6; Acts 4:12**

Salvation is obtained because God loved us so much that He gave His only Son to die for us. **John 3:16**

Christ's death on the Cross has achieved the following:

- Reconciliation to God **Romans 5:10**
- Redemption through Christ's blood **Ephesians 1:7**
- Justification i.e. 'being declared innocent' **Romans 3:24**

Salvation is received by us:

- Repentance which means turning from sin to God, a change of heart, attitude, thinking and lifestyle **Acts 2:38; 17:30**
- The exercise of faith, which is trusting in Jesus alone for salvation. Without faith it is impossible to please God! **Hebrews 11:6; John 5:24; Romans 5:1**
- Accepting it as a free gift from God – Salvation is never deserved or earned. **Titus 3:4-7; Ephesians 2:8-9**

THE NEW BIRTH

We cannot enter God's kingdom or receive eternal life without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit who "creates us anew" and "baptizes" or places us into the Body of Christ.

John 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Peter 1:22-25

THE CHURCH

We believe that the true Church consists of the whole community of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who by faith have had their sins forgiven and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We recognize that the true Church is not confined to any one local church or denomination.

Hebrews 12:22-24; 1 John 1:7; Ephesians 3:3-10; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:32

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION

We believe in the baptism by full immersion of all believers. We do not baptize infants but only people old enough to understand repentance and the implications of making Jesus Saviour and Lord. Baptism follows repentance and new birth.

Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:13-17; Acts 2:38-41; Acts 10:47; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21

THE BREAKING OF BREAD - HOLY COMMUNION

We believe in the regular Breaking of Bread as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ and as practiced by the early church.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Acts 20:7

TITHING

When you tithe, you are trusting God with your finances. Tithing is a biblical principle. God calls us to give the first 10% of our income back to Him. We've seen God provide abundantly in our church, and we know He will provide abundantly for you and your family when you put Him first in your finances. In fact,

it's the one area in the Bible where God tells you to test Him.

Malachi 3:10-11; Leviticus 27:30; 1 Corinthians 16:2

We believe that the tithe belongs to the Lord and therefore we **BRING** back what belongs to Him, however offering is giving above our tithes and therefore we **GIVE** our offering.

All of the above, like every other aspect of our Christian journey, is an act of faith and obedience. It is not a requirement for salvation, but we do believe it is a key ingredient to be blessed.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

Justification is a gracious act of God whereby He declares that a person is no longer guilty of sin, and thus condemned, but instead is righteous before Him. It is entirely an act of God and takes place at the time of repentance/regeneration. Based not on our actions, but on our new standing with God, He declares every new Christian to be righteous in His sight.

Romans 3: 21-26

Sanctification - To "sanctify" means to "make holy or sacred". It refers to the believer's progressive separation from sin and dedication to God and a holy lifestyle. Every Christian experiences the on-going process of becoming Christ-like, which begins at the new birth and continues until death.

Hebrews 12:14; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:16; Philippians 3:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY LIVING

For many modern Christians the topic of holy living is not the most popular doctrine in the Bible. They love to hear of God's grace, mercy and great power to perform miracles but shy away from the instructions to live a righteous and holy life. The reason being that it is difficult to live a holy life! We struggle to overcome sin throughout our lives on earth. **Romans 7:7-25**. It is, however, very important that we understand God's balance on this subject.

First we should know that, by character, God is righteous and holy. It is therefore not surprising that God instructed Moses to tell the nation of Israel, "Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy." **Leviticus 19: 2** The apostle Paul said that we are "called" to be holy **1 Corinthians 1: 2**. On the other hand the Scripture also emphasizes that no human being can ever be perfect and if we insist that we don't sin then we make God out to be a liar. How can we balance God's requirement that we be holy with the reality that we can never be perfect? We must regularly examine our hearts and lives and confess our sins, on the understanding that God completely forgives us. **1 John 1:8-10**

Our part doesn't end there because the power of the Cross of Jesus enables us to break the power of sin and strive to live victorious lives. We are expected to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" **Matthew 5:6** and to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness before anything else in life. **Matthew 6:33** We are required to "flee" from sinful activities and to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness." **1 Timothy 6:11** Paul describes righteous and holy living as a deliberate "putting off" of the old nature and a "putting on" of the new spiritual nature. **Colossians 3:1-17**

We, therefore, have an expectation that our members will do their best to live holy lives that are separate from the evil that is prevalent in the world. We would like to emphasize the Biblical requirement to live sexually pure lives. In **1 Corinthians 6:13-20** Paul informs the church that all sexual immorality is sin against the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word porneia is used in the New Testament to describe sexual immorality. (The King James Version uses the old English word "fornication.")

This word porneia is used in the New Testament to describe four situations:

1. Voluntary sexual intercourse of an unmarried person with someone of the opposite sex.
2. Adultery – the involvement of a married person in sexual intercourse outside of the marriage.
3. Prostitution
4. Various forms of sexual deviancy or sinfulness.

In **1 Corinthians 5** Paul instructed the church to excommunicate a man who refused to repent and abandon an immoral sexual relationship. He explained that it is an expectation of the church to "judge" such a person and then to have nothing to do with him – unless or until there is a change of heart and repentance.

It is therefore a Biblical role of our local church leadership to investigate allegations of sexual immorality amongst members, to counsel the guilty and assist them to confess the sin and repent. A steadfast refusal to co-operate in this regard will lead to the revoking of that person's membership of the local assembly.

UNMARRIED PEOPLE LIVING TOGETHER

It is important to also discuss the difficult issue of an unmarried couple living together in the same home. Our leadership team has given close attention to this matter because it is so prevalent in our community. We recognize that it can be a very sensitive issue because many unmarried couples have bought homes together before their salvation and may not be ready or willing to commit to marriage. This problem is compounded when only one of the couple has made a commitment to Christ. Nevertheless, we have made what some may believe to be a hard decision concerning couples living together. (Here we are not referring to unattached men and women boarding in the same house or establishment.) We have decided not take unmarried people into membership whilst they are living together and will expect all existing members to refrain from entering into such an arrangement whilst they are members of this church.

Some folk feel insulted and take exception to this requirement. They believe that it is none of our business, that we have no right or reason to think the worst of them as they are now Christians and we should have the love and grace to accept an undertaking that they will abstain from sexual relations and will sleep in separate bedrooms. Certainly, these contentions have a plausible ring to them as no one likes to feel that the church is condemning them, especially if they are doing their best to live a holy life. Nevertheless, it is not sound practice for unmarried Christians in love with each other to live together. I will mention three reasons:

1. It makes it difficult, if not almost impossible, to resist temptation on a consistent basis, especially if the couple has already had sexual relations. It is, in fact, the exact opposite of the Scriptural instruction to "flee" from sexual immorality. **1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22**

2. No matter how we might argue otherwise, it creates an appearance or suspicion of evil. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 in the King James Version says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." The Message version puts it this way, "Throw out anything tainted with evil." In a world of increasing spiritual darkness, where every element of Biblical truth has been abandoned, the church, as never before, has to be the light and salt of the world **Matthew 5:13-16**. In this symbolism "salt" represents the ability and function of the church to preserve the community from surrendering to corruption and destruction. Jesus bluntly states that if salt loses its saltiness it is useless and must be thrown away, thus confirming that the church has no option but to be proper salt in every community in which a local assembly has been established. Jesus ended this discussion by commanding us to make sure that the world sees our good deeds so that God may be praised! All of this is difficult if Christian, unmarried couples compromise their testimony by living together.

3. Thirdly, even if a couple living together is actually abstaining from sexual immorality, the fact of them living together will probably cause other Christians with a weak conscience to stumble in their faith and maybe fall away from Christianity. This aspect of Christian responsibility is discussed by Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:23-33**. Even if what we do is not actually sinful, Paul correctly says that, "not everything is constructive" (verse 23). God expects us to seek the good of others instead of always our own good (verse 24).

HOMOSEXUALITY

The issue of homosexuality is another sensitive matter that has been hotly debated for some time in various church circles so we need to clarify our standpoint on the subject. We believe that Scripture forbids homosexual relations. It is a sexual perversion and is therefore sinful in the sight of God. In **1 Corinthians 6: 9-10** those who practice homosexuality are referred to as "the wicked" and "homosexual offenders." Paul made a clear statement that they "will not inherit the kingdom of God." Also, in speaking of homosexuality in **Romans 1:26-27** he described it as "indecent acts" and refers to homosexuals as receiving "the due penalty for their perversion." In **Leviticus 18:22** the Old Testament described sexual intercourse with someone of the same gender as "detestable."

Whilst we regard homosexual activity in the same light as other sexual immorality, it does not mean that homosexuals should be rejected and vilified by the church. The church must love them, pray for them and encourage them to give their lives to Christ. We must offer all the help that they need to deal with life's issues, resist temptation and overcome this problem in God's strength.

MARRIAGE

The biblical doctrine of marriage has become increasingly important in the Twenty First century because of the sharp increase in dysfunctional families and divorce. What is marriage?

- Marriage is the union of a man and a woman in which God mysteriously makes two different people one flesh. **Ephesians 5:31-32**
- Marriage is ordained by God and is not a secular, social institution of man's creation and is therefore subject to God's requirements and standards. **Genesis 2:22-24**

- Marriage is not just a contract but is an unconditional covenant of God's design and therefore should last until the spouses are separated by death. I.e. This covenant is more solemn, more binding and more permanent than any legal contract.
- Marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman intended by God to be a monogamous relationship therefore adultery is a sin **Exodus 20:14**. Members are expected to avoid all relationships, activities and situations that might place the purity of the marriage at risk or give their spouses reason to believe that the sanctity of the marriage has been or might be destroyed. **1 Thessalonians 5:22**
- Marriage is mankind's primary human relationship and takes precedence over church relationships, ministry and work expectations. God created marriage long before he created tribes, nations or the church. There is a logical expectation that each married member will live a life and adopt a lifestyle that will protect the honour, dignity, purpose and soundness of the marriage.
- Marriage is intended for the procreation of children and is the foundation on which godly children should be nurtured and raised into stable adulthood. Both parents have the responsibility to meet the primary needs of their children. The church will do its best to support families where the breadwinners are unemployed and will assist them to find employment. However, the deliberate refusal or neglect to provide for one's family is a denial of faith. **Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 4:9; Ephesians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:8**
- Marriage is governed and maintained by mutual love, respect and submission as is intended to satisfy the needs to love and be loved, for deep friendship, sharing, companionship, protection, support and for spiritual and emotional development. **Ephesians 5: 21-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7**.

DIVORCE

Divorce is a complex issue because of the various factors involved in each divorce but there are basic principles in Scripture that govern the church's approach to divorce.

The key principle is that once a couple marry they are bound together until death and should not be separated by a divorce. In **Mark 10:9** Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let man not separate."

God opposes divorce because it is a breach of the marriage covenant. In fact, God hates divorce. Whilst God may allow divorce in certain circumstances, he will never encourage or promote it. **Malachi 2:14-16**

God opposes divorce because of the devastating, long-term effect it has on the spouses and particularly the children of the union. Jesus strongly cautioned adults not to do anything that may cause a child to sin! Parents cannot avoid accountability for what happens to their children during and after the divorce. **Malachi 2:15; Matthew 18: 2-6**

If a couple divorces, the duty to provide and care for children of the marriage remains as strong as it was during the marriage, notwithstanding a further marriage. The statement in **1 Timothy 5:8** that a person who does not provide for his immediate family has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever holds true for all divorcees. There is a serious expectation that all members will provide for their children from previous marriages to the very best of their ability and to actively care for them as best as the divorce conditions allow.

God accepts that governments and authorities have provided mechanisms for divorce and, in fact, allowed Moses to grant certificates of divorce **Mark 10:4**. That is, God does not force people to continue to love each other and stay married if they are determined to obtain a divorce. Similarly, this assembly leadership has no jurisdiction to compel its members to remain in a marriage. We can only offer advice, encouragement and support. However, the church leadership may, after discussion, consultation and prayer, impose Biblical discipline if the circumstances warrant or necessitate it.

Jesus made the point that divorce is the result of the "hardening of hearts" **Mark 10:5**. That is, divorce is caused by sinfulness. The primary sins that cause divorce are a failure to obey the second most important commandment in Scripture to love your neighbour as yourself and the failure to apply God's standard of love found in **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**.

The only Biblical ground for divorce is marital unfaithfulness. **Matthew 5:32**

The church concedes that in certain circumstances, severe abuse and extreme sinfulness can make it dangerous or impossible for a spouse to remain in a marriage. Furthermore, circumstances in a marriage may also render it dangerous or totally inappropriate for children to continue to be raised in that marriage. The offended spouse should proceed with a divorce only after exhausting all reasonable remedies available to solve the marriage problems.

The approach of the assembly leadership to marriage breakdown:

1. Because of the priority and importance of marriage, the church leadership accepts responsibility to do all within its power to preserve and invigorate marriages through teaching, counsel and encouragement.
2. We strongly recommend that our members seek help and counsel before their marriage problems become severe or irreparable. If the members do not have someone to assist in sorting out marriage problems, we are prepared to arrange for counselling either within or without the local church, all of which will be confidential.
3. If a crisis occurs in a marriage and a spouse expresses an intention to get divorced, we will require the couple to first seek help, prayer and counsel before proceeding to end the marriage.
4. In the event of a divorce, the church leadership expects to be allowed to monitor and assist with the dissolution of the marriage to make sure that the interests of the children are protected and the break-up is affected in a fair and godly manner.

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that Jesus Christ baptizes Christians with the Holy Spirit, and that this baptism, which is a distinct experience from the new birth, is promised to every believer.

Matthew 3:11; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 8:14-17; Acts 11:14-16; Acts 2:32-33; Acts 15:7-9

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that God never removed the gifts of the Spirit, referred to in 1 Corinthians chapters 12 to 14, and that whenever the Holy Spirit moves upon the Church in power, He gives spiritual gifts to everyone as He chooses. **1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:4-12**

DIVINE HEALING AND MIRACLES

We believe that today God still performs miracles of the nature that is recorded in the Scriptures. He heals the sick just as He did in the days of the early church and Christians are still given the gift of healing and the gift of working miracles in order to impact the lives of people and bring glory to God. **John 14:12; Mark 16:16-18; Matthew 8:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:9-10; James 5:14-15**

PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

Each individual believer has full and equal access to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as a believer-priest and can freely communicate with God as he pleases without having to go through the medium of another person. **1 Peter 2:1-9; Revelation 5:9-10; 1:6**

THE MINISTRIES

The ascended Christ has given various ministries to the church, and each of these exists for the strengthening of and building up of the body of believers. These ministry gifts are described in **Ephesians 4:1 and 1 Corinthians 12:28**.

JUDGMENT

We believe that God will judge both the living and the dead. The believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, not for condemnation but for the testing of their works and the receiving of rewards. The unbelievers and those who professed Christianity but rebelled against the will of God shall appear before the final "White Throne" judgment and thereafter will be consigned to the Lake of Fire forever. **Matthew 7:21-23; John 5:24, 28-29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15**

ISRAEL

We do not hold to a "replacement theology" which argues that the church has replaced the nation of Israel in God's plan for mankind.

God has not rejected the Jewish people despite the fact that they rejected Jesus as their Messiah and were punished for this decision. God will not go back on the promises He made to the patriarchs of old to restore the nation of Israel in great glory.

There is still a small remnant of Jewish people who serve Jesus as their Messiah and Scripture promises that God will dramatically save the nation of Israel.

God forbids the gentile church to be arrogant towards the Jews and encourages all gentile Christians to pray for Israel and believe that this nation will turn to Jesus and accept him as their Saviour and Lord.

Romans 11:1-32; Isaiah 59:20-21; Ezekiel 36:24-32