

Doctrinal Statement

of

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Sources Consulted:

First Baptist Church (now GraceLife), Muscle Shoals, Alabama
Statement of Faith

Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, California
What We Teach

First Evangelical Church, Memphis, Tennessee
Articles of Belief

The Master's Seminary, Professor Alex Montoya
Syllabus for Pastoral Ministries

Grace Bible Church on the Parkway, Ridgeland, Mississippi
Articles of Faith

Scripture

- The Bible was verbally inspired and constitutes God's written revelation to mankind.
- The 66 books of the Bible are infallible (unable to lead men astray), completely inerrant in the original documents, and are the written truth which God desires to communicate.
- God used dual authorship to write His Word. Men wrote as they willed from their own hearts using their own words and styles of writing; yet God superintended, that is, He guided or led men to write what He would have them say.
- The Word of God or "Scripture" is clear in its meaning. It is we who are not clear. That being so, significant effort will be needed to understand difficult portions of Scripture. The literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation will aid the diligent student toward a correct understanding of all of Scripture (the Bible), including prophecy.
- The Bible is the final authority for all men whether they recognize it or not.
- Scripture not only claims that it is God's Word, it also states the Holy Spirit will work in the believer's heart to understand and trust God's Word.

God

- There is, has been, and will be only one God, the God of the Bible.
- He has existed eternally as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each deserving the worship and obedience of men and angels.

God the Father

- God the Father is also known as the first Person of the Trinity.
- He is the Creator of all things and is the absolute owner and ruler of all that is.
- He is sovereign. He established His will in eternity past.
- He is "Father" only to the Son, Jesus Christ, and to those who believe.
- He adopts all who come to Him by grace through faith, receiving them as His children.
- He loves all men temporarily; but His children have received His eternal, saving love.

God the Son, Jesus Christ

- The Son is also known as the second Person of the Trinity.
- He is the same essence and deity as the Father; He has never been subordinate to the Father, though He showed Himself submissive to the Father's will.
- He participated in Creation.
- He was incarnated, being fully man, yet sinless. He did not lay aside His deity but only the prerogatives which were His as God.
- He was born of a virgin, Mary, and became a servant to those whom He loved.
- He died a death which was voluntary, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive.
- The death of Christ is efficacious for believing sinners and will save them from the penalty of sin (God's wrath), the power of sin, and ultimately the presence of sin.
- In His bodily resurrection the believer has certainty that all Jesus said was true and in His ascension the believer has certainty that His sacrifice has been accepted by the Father.
- He mediates as our Advocate and High Priest before the Father in Heaven.
- He will come to take His Church with whom He will return to the earth and establish a literal kingdom reigning from Jerusalem for 1,000 years.
- He will be the judge of all men.

God the Holy Spirit

- He is the third person of the Trinity. He is a person, not a power or spiritual essence.
- He participated in Creation.
- He is the same essence and deity as the Father and Son.
- He executes God's will in relation to men; He baptizes men into the church.
- He indwells, sanctifies, instructs, illuminates, empowers, and seals believers.
- He enables believers to work for the edification of each other either by suddenly bestowed spiritual gifts (excluding the apostolic era sign gifts like tongues and healing) or possibly through his sovereign control of all things, through which He endows believers with abilities or instead hones their innate abilities to serve the Church.

Mankind

- All of Creation, including Man, took place in six literal days.
- Man was created by God to glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live in God's will, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world.
- Man was created male and female. A person's gender is either male or female. God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or knowingly presenting one's physical features or dress to be that of the opposite sex.
- "Same sex attraction" is in fact homosexual lust and is sinful.
- Marriage is defined by God and is only legitimate when one born male marries one born female.
- Adam, the first man, sinned along with Eve with the result that all men have come into this world as sinners who choose to sin themselves, with one exception, Jesus Christ.
- The soul of each man likely comes into existence at conception in like manner to the body (Traducianism). The soul does not come down from Heaven.
- Men are sinners by relation to Adam, by nature, and by choice.
- Because of Adam's sin of disobedience, man lost his innocence, incurred the wrath of God, experiences spiritual and physical death, and is utterly incapable of getting himself back into fellowship with God. He is spiritually dead.

Salvation

- Salvation is wholly a work of God. Each person who is given to Christ by the Father and for whom Christ has died, will be prepared and drawn by the Holy Spirit. No one is smart enough or wise enough to choose Christ as their Savior. Faith is not a meritorious work.
- Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of all who would repent and believe; His sacrifice is the only sacrifice acceptable to God for men's sins.
- Men are responsible to use the understanding they have (common grace) to pursue the truth of Christ. Those blessed to hear the gospel are obligated to obey it. Those whose end is in Hell are not there because they are non-elect nor because they didn't hear the gospel. They are there because they remained in their rebellion until death.
- Regeneration is more than renovation; it is transformation. It is more than behavior modification; it means a person has been given a new life of increasing obedience.

- The salvation which a believer experiences may be referred to in three stages: justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- Justification is the declaration by God that the repentant one's sins are forgiven because the sinner's sins are imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the sinner. Justification is "forensic." The sinner contributes nothing in justification.
- One who places his faith in Christ is set apart by God for good works. This is "positional" sanctification. The true believer becomes in practice evermore like the sinless position he holds in Christ. This is "progressive" sanctification.
- Progressive sanctification means there will be a battle within as the believer, who with effort, strives to put off sin. We do not "let go and let God" or "just let Jesus live through us." Monergistic sanctification is rejected.
- Glorification is the future state when the believer is free from sin altogether.
- Because salvation is the eternal work of God, one's salvation cannot be lost.
- Salvation is available only through Christ Jesus. Every other religion is demonic in origin. There really are only two religions: The true religion is one where we are justified by God's grace alone. The false religions insist that we assist in our justification. One's sincerity of heart in a false religion demonstrates a willful substitution for the true God. Therefore, one's sincere participation in false religion brings condemnation, not mercy.
- "Social Justice" is not part of the gospel. Those who say it is proclaim a false gospel.
- Salvation is not proven by or even evidenced by signs such as speaking in what is presumed to be "tongues" nor by working for social justice.

The Church

- Christ is the Head and supreme authority for His Church. There is no structure for Church government above the local church.
- The leaders of a local church are to shepherd (teach, counsel, love, and exhort) in obedience to Christ.
- All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed into the body of Christ (the Church universal) by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- The Church consists of all believers from the Church-Age and is distinct from the nation of Israel and has not finally taken Israel's place.
- The purpose of the Church is to bring glory to God, not to redeem or repair the culture.

- God is glorified as each church exalts God, edifies (builds up) each believer spiritually (not just emotionally), and evangelizes the lost.
- Each church is to practice Christ's two ordinances: Baptism and The Lord's Supper. They are ordinances not sacraments; they do not convey grace. They are not necessary for salvation. Churches must be careful not to allow traditions, like walking an aisle, to become equal in the minds of its members with the two ordinances Christ gave.
- There is no exact method for how to perform these two ordinances. However, based on language and example, baptism is best performed by immersion and is for believers only, since it represents a reality which has taken place in the believer's life.
- There are biblical standards for our worship behavior, but no Christ-given cultus (order).
- Worship is a continuous individual activity, not a Sunday-only practice.
- In the corporate worship service believers pray, sing, give financially, hear and apply the Word, fellowship, and practice the two ordinances. All of these are "worship;" therefore, the music leader is one of the Worship Leaders, not the only worship leader.
- Worship lyrics should reflect our God. Therefore, they should be rich and biblical.
- Believers should use their gifts, abilities, or strengths in their church to edify and serve each other.
- Membership and church discipline make up the wall which identify and protect believers.
- The Great Commission is the Church's mission statement. Christ is building His Church. We proclaim the simple gospel and teach obedience to all He has said.
- Churches should never adopt the world's crude concepts of success nor use worldly tactics to attract the lost. High standards should be maintained in a church's interaction with the world so as to honor the Lord and reflect the high calling of the Church.

Last Things

- The Church Age is within a gap between Daniel's 69th and 70th sevens (weeks).
- The Church is incapable of reviving, mending, or restoring this fallen world. Only the return of Jesus can do that.
- All men will die except those believers who will be taken in the Rapture. There are Old Testament examples of individuals taken without dying (Enoch and Elijah).

- All men will be bodily resurrected. Believers of all ages will rise in the first resurrection (in two parts) and unbelievers will rise in the second.
- The Church will be taken up alive and the deceased Church-Age believers will be resurrected at the Rapture.
- A seven-year Tribulation of God's wrath will begin on an Earth having no believers following the Rapture. (People will be saved in the Tribulation and Israel will repent.)
- The return of Jesus Christ will follow the Rapture and He will establish His one-thousand-year earthly Messianic Kingdom.
- The Judgment of all unbelievers will take place at the Great White Throne Judgment which follows the Millennial Kingdom and the resurrection of unbelievers.
- After their judgment has taken place and eternal punishment has begun for Satan and all other unrepentant rebels, the Eternal State will begin. The universe as we have known it will have been dissolved and there will be a New Heaven, New Earth, and a Heavenly City where saints will dwell, fellowship, and worship God forever.

Come Lord Jesus!