

Sovereign Grace Church Pearland

New Member's Guide



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INTRODUCTION

1.1 OUR HISTORY

Sovereign Grace Church Pearland began in the spring of 1989 with four members from a university campus ministry. These young adults started meeting in a small apartment near the Astrodome in Houston Texas. They began with a vision to plant a dynamic local church for the glory of God. This little church began to grow and thrive in the grace of God and quickly transitioned into a rental facility and later a school.

In the fall of 1992, Sovereign Grace Church became part of a growing movement of churches called Sovereign Grace Ministries (Now Sovereign Grace Churches) and enjoyed rich relationships and oversight from the Sovereign Grace leadership team.

1.2 OUR DENOMINATION

Sovereign Grace Churches was founded in 1982; originally known as People of Destiny International. We changed our name to Sovereign Grace Ministries in 2003 and then to Sovereign Grace Churches in 2014 after adopting our polity. Sovereign Grace Churches includes over 70 churches located in countries throughout the world. SGC is a church-planting ministry with a family of churches currently in the U.S., Mexico, Canada, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Zambia, Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, South Korea, and the Philippines.

Sovereign Grace Church's primary purpose is to establish and nurture local churches to God's glory. Indeed, the ministries' greatest desire is that the members of these churches – both corporately and as individuals – would bring glory and honor to God in their public and private lives. Since its inception in 1982, Sovereign Grace Churches has been overseen by a team of men with extensive experience and proven ability in starting, pastoring, and overseeing churches.

1.3 OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to glorify God by growing together in the knowledge, image and ministry of Christ. To accomplish this, we will endeavor to be a church that believes the gospel, preaches the gospel, and lives in a manner worthy of the gospel.

2

OUR 7 CORE VALUES

We embrace seven biblical values that define what it means to be a Sovereign Grace church.

1. Reformed Theology
2. Gospel-Centered
3. Continuationist
4. Complementarian
5. Elder-governed
6. Interdependence
7. Missions

1. REFORMED THEOLOGY

Scripture presents the all-glorious, triune God as the source and end of all things (Romans 11:36), sovereignly working all things according to His will (Ephesians 1:11). At the center of God's purposes in the world is the exaltation of His glory through the redemption of sinners (John 17:1–26). To this end, we believe that God sovereignly chooses men and women to be saved in order to display His immeasurable grace and glory (Ephesians 1:3–6; Romans 9:11). God's sovereign grace in salvation humbles us, fills us with gratitude, and compels us to worship Him and share the message of His grace to all people.

2. GOSPEL-CENTERED DOCTRINE AND PREACHING

We believe that the gospel—the good news of God’s saving activity in Jesus Christ—is the pinnacle of His redemptive acts (Ephesians 1:9–12), the center of the Bible’s story (Luke 24:44–47), and the essential message for our faith, life, and witness (1 Corinthians 15:3–11). We are committed to preaching the gospel, singing the gospel, praying the gospel, and building our churches upon the gospel (2 Timothy 4:2; Colossians 3:16; Matthew 16:18). Our ultimate hope in all that we do is not our plans and labors, but the perfect life, substitutionary death, victorious resurrection, and glorious ascension of Jesus Christ.

3. CONTINUATIONIST PNEUMATOLOGY

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God’s purpose to dwell among His people entered a new era (Exodus 33:14–16; Leviticus 26:12; John 14:16–17; Acts 2:14–21). We believe the Holy Spirit desires to continually fill each believer with increased power for Christian life and witness, including the giving of His supernatural gifts for the building up of the church and for various works of ministry in the world (Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16–18; 1 Corinthians 12:4–7). We are eager to pursue God’s active presence in all its breadth, that Christ may be magnified in our lives, in the church, and among the nations (Psalm 105:4; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Ephesians 2:22).

4. COMPLEMENTARIAN LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

We believe it was God’s glorious plan to create men and women in His image, giving them equal dignity and value in His sight, while appointing differing and complementary roles for them within the home and the church (Genesis 1:26–28; Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Timothy 2:8–15). Because these roles give different expressions to God’s image in humanity, they should be valued and pursued in joy and faith. As the redeemed community of God, the church has a unique opportunity and responsibility to celebrate this complementarity, to contend for it against cultural hostility, and to protect it from sinful distortions.

5. ELDER-GOVERNED AND ELDER-LED CHURCHES

Jesus Christ reigns as head over His church, and He gives to His church elders (or pastors) to govern and lead local churches under His authority (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:5). We believe that men, qualified by both character and gifting, are to serve as elders, shepherding God's people as under-shepherds of Christ (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1–7; 1 Peter 5:1–3). A church's health is to a great degree dependent on the health of its elders, and so our aim is to strengthen the current elders in our churches while identifying and training new ones (Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 2:2).

6. CHURCH PLANTING, OUTREACH, AND GLOBAL MISSIONS

Our gospel-centrality entails not only treasuring the gospel personally but sharing it passionately. The risen Christ commissioned His church to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). We believe that commission falls to us and to all believers, and that it is fulfilled in a primary way through church planting, whereby the gospel is proclaimed and converts are formed into communities of disciples (Acts 2:21–47; 14:23). We are eager to pursue this mission, relying fully on the Holy Spirit, to see the gospel proclaimed and churches planted throughout the world, that God may be glorified among every tribe, language, people, and nation (Revelation 7:9–12).

7. UNITED IN FELLOWSHIP, MISSION, AND GOVERNANCE

We believe that the unity for which Jesus prayed among His people should find concrete expression among believers and churches. Indeed, the New Testament testifies to a vibrant interdependence among churches in the first century (John 17:20–21; Acts 16:4–5; 1 Corinthians 11:16; Galatians 2:7–10).

3

CHURCH COVENANT

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up children as may at any time be under our care, in the discipline and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, be certain to leave in good standing with pastors and members.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**

4

STATEMENTS:

4.1 ON OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH¹

Sovereign Grace Churches is a confessional family of churches. At the heart of our union is the truth of God’s Word that we believe, cherish, and proclaim together. While the Bible is our only infallible rule of faith and practice, we are also committed—and accountable—to a specific statement of faith that represents a summary of the teaching of Holy Scripture on key points of doctrine essential to the beliefs, conduct, and witness of our churches.

Our statement of faith stands firmly within historic Christian orthodoxy, confessing the great doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ as set forth in the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds. Our statement of faith also makes explicit what is foundational to our doctrinal commitments—the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the primary passion and the driving influence in our churches’ common life, worship, and outreach. Beyond this, our statement of faith affirms the glorious sovereignty of God over all things, including the redemption of sinners; our practice of credobaptism; our celebration of God’s distinct and complementary purposes for men and women; and our continuationist convictions regarding the Spirit’s ongoing ministry in the church.

As a confessional document, all SGC elders own it as a faithful expression of biblical doctrine and a guide for their preaching and teaching. In this way, it functions to nurture our churches on sound doctrine, protect our churches from false teaching, and lead our churches into faithful worship and witness. Our supreme prayer is that our statement will serve the doxological goal of all biblical truth—to lead our churches into a deeper knowledge of God that we might more deeply love him, more fully trust him, and more genuinely worship him, all to the praise of his glory.

¹ The full Statement of Faith is not included here, but is available in separate book or pdf.

4.2

ON CONFLICT, DISPUTES, AND LAWSUITS

The Church is populated by sinners who have received grace but continue to face challenges in working out their salvation, especially in relationships. As the people of God, we commit to overcome our offenses in a biblically prescribed manner leading to resolution and peace. Bitterness, resentment, and broken relationships are not acceptable for the people of God.

The church has adopted as its practice the principles taught in Ken Sande's book, *The Peacemaker*^b, which provides wise biblical counsel for resolving disputes.

When two church members cannot resolve a conflict privately, they should seek the help of other wise church members. The church's pastors also are trained and desire to assist members in mediating disputes. If a dispute becomes long-standing without successful conciliation, members should seek pastoral help.

According to 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Christians should never bring a dispute among believers before a civil law court. Instead they should seek the mediation of the church through pastors; if one or both parties prove to be refusing to turn from sin that produces the conflict, the pastors should seek to apply the steps of church discipline to restore peace and order in the church.

Church members agree to refrain from any law suits between Christians and to seek means of conciliation through the church.

If a church member has a dispute with a pastor that he does not believe has been successfully resolved after repeated attempts, he should seek the assistance of another pastor and if he deems necessary inform the Senior Pastor for evaluation by the pastoral team.

Church members agree to refrain from filing lawsuits against other Christians and to seek conciliation through the church, unless a minimum of two pastors review their situation and confirm that litigation is biblically legitimate.

a Philippians 2:12

b Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, 2nd Edition.

4.3

STATEMENT ON CHURCH DISCIPLINE

{PLEASE NOTE THIS SECTION IS BEING REVIEWED AND SHOULD BE GOVERNED BY THE MOST CURRENT EDITION OF THE SOVEREIGN GRACE CHURCHS BOOK OF CHURCH ORDER.}

THE ELDERS MAINTAIN the responsibility to exercise church discipline in order to preserve the church's integrity in theology and moral values. For most church members, the matter of discipline is not a direct concern, but when it is a concern, it is good to know how the discipline is administered. We always work toward reconciliation and redemption, and we are commanded to preserve the unity of the church. Discipline only becomes a factor when that unity with the Lord and the church is threatened or needs to be restored.

In order to be what God wants us to be, we must discipline ourselves to be obedient and holy in our lives.

When members of Christ's body fail to exercise sufficient personal discipline, then those who love them must perform the sometimes-unpleasant task of brotherly correction. Numerous biblical passages, such as Matthew 18, deal with this task.

Goals

In church discipline we have seven goals:

1. To obey the Lord and Holy Scriptures (see Matthew 18 and I Thessalonians 4-5);
2. To protect the church from having to be judged by God for condoning unholy or unjust situations;
3. To protect its members from a leader who has been unwise or unrighteous and to protect a leader from unwise or unrighteous constituents;
4. To preserve church unity and the Holy Spirit's blessing (see Psalm 133);
5. To maintain our testimony before our Christian friends as a people of a biblical lifestyle;
6. To work toward being a church that fulfills its mission and glorifies Jesus Christ;
7. To restore those disciplined to a right relationship with God and the church.

Procedures

1. If some error, abuse, or sin needs correcting in the life of a member, or a pastor, immediate steps should be taken. Unrepentant sin or divisive behavior cannot be ignored since it disrupts the life of the church in the Spirit.

a) If a member's behavior is in question, the individual's pastor will initiate a discussion between them first.

b) If a leader's behavior is in question it should be brought quickly to the leader.

c) In any serious matter, other elders should be informed immediately.

2. If satisfaction is not obtained after the above step is taken, then the matter may be brought to another pastor as well.

3. If that does not resolve the problem, other pastors, or the entire eldership, may be drawn into the matter and recommend a course of action. A member or leader should understand that even though an individual functions primarily under one pastor's care, he nevertheless belongs to the entire church, and all the elders have responsibility to that person.

4. If withdrawal or dismissal is indicated by the board of elders, the person's name will be deleted from church membership.

5. If it appears that a member has requested withdrawal from membership to avoid or abbreviate church discipline, that request will not be given effect until the scriptural steps of the disciplinary process have been completed. Hence, church discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member attempts to withdraw from membership.

4.4

ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Divorce is a sad fact in our society and in the church at large. While God has, from the beginning, intended that marriage be life long and glorify God by reflecting the relationship of Christ to his church, there are times when our Lord permits a believer to seek a divorce without sinning against God or a spouse. The conditions under which this may happen are only two:

- When a spouse commits sins that involve sexual contact with another person;
- When an unbelieving spouse abandons a marriage.

It is important to note that God permits divorce in such cases. Divorce is not required, nor will the church encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith toward God for the marriage to be restored—even when the situations listed above exist.

For the church to condone a divorce in these cases, the spouse must submit the facts of his or her marital situation to the pastors to determine before God in Scripture what He would permit. If a spouse who is a member of the church should seek a divorce from another member due to abandonment, he or she must first wait for the church to follow its practice of church discipline to the end of treating the sinning spouse as an unbeliever before divorce may become an option.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should thus conduct themselves in the church as a married person.

If a divorced person becomes a member of the church, he or she must understand that remarriage will only be condoned by the church when the circumstances prior to the divorce, or following after the divorce, fall under the two conditions listed above. If the circumstances of the divorce do not conform to what Scripture deems acceptable, the divorced person should consider before God whether he or she should seek reconciliation with their former spouse. He or she should also seek to confess to God and to his or her former spouse any sins committed in the seeking of a divorce that did not comply with the teaching of Scripture. He or she must recognize that apart from these conditions, remarriage is not an option.

4.5

On Counseling and Confidentiality

THOUGH EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT SHALL BE MADE to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context, there will be times when to fulfill properly their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, Sovereign Grace Church pastors may, as they deem necessary or appropriate, share confidential information with one another or church members or others they deem may be part of the church members' problem or the solution to that problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel, for the purpose of protecting others from the damaging effects of someone's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the church.

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationships (see Rom. 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the pastors, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Rom. 5:14; Gal. 6:1-2; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:16-4:2; Heb. 10:24-25; 13:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession and to seek counsel from each other and especially from its pastoral counselors.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the biblical counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as pastoral or biblical counselors within the church, they do not provide the same kind of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore, members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and biblical counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in light of relevant scriptural principles.

5

Creeds & Confessions

5.1 The Nicene Creed (A.D. 325; revised at Constantinople A.D. 381)

I believe in one God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.^c

5.2 The Apostles' Creed (third—fourth centuries A.D.)

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.^d

^cGrudem, W. A. (1994). Systematic theology : An introduction to biblical doctrine (1170). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

^dGrudem, W. A. (1994). Systematic theology : An introduction to biblical doctrine (1170). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

5.3

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

AN EVANGELICAL CELEBRATION

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. —John 3:16

SING TO THE LORD, FOR HE HAS DONE GLORIOUS THINGS;
LET THIS BE KNOWN TO ALL THE WORLD.
—Isaiah 12:5

PREAMBLE

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS NEWS, GOOD NEWS: THE BEST AND MOST IMPORTANT NEWS THAT ANY HUMAN BEING EVER HEARS.

This Gospel declares the only way to know God in peace, love, and joy is through the reconciling death of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. This Gospel is the central message of the Holy Scriptures, and is the true key to understanding them.

This Gospel identifies Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel, as the Son of God and God the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, whose incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension fulfilled the Father's saving will. His death for sins and his resurrection from the dead were promised beforehand by the prophets and attested by eyewitnesses. In God's own time and in God's own way, Jesus Christ shall return as glorious Lord and Judge of all (1Th 4:13 18; Mt 25:31 32). He is now giving the Holy Spirit from the Father to all those who are truly his. The three Persons of the Trinity thus combine in the work of saving sinners.

This Gospel sets forth Jesus Christ as the living Savior, Master, Life, and Hope of all who put their trust in him. It tells us that the eternal destiny of all people depends on whether they are savingly related to Jesus Christ.

This Gospel is the only Gospel: there is no other; and to change its substance is to pervert and indeed destroy it. This Gospel is so simple that small children can understand it, and it is so profound that studies by the wisest theologians will never exhaust its riches.

All Christians are called to unity in love and unity in truth. As evangelicals who derive our very name from the Gospel, we celebrate this great good news of God's saving work in Jesus Christ as the true bond of Christian unity, whether among organized churches and denominations or in the many transdenominational co-operative enterprises of Christians together.

The Bible declares that all who truly trust in Christ and his Gospel are sons and daughters of God through grace, and hence are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

All who are justified experience reconciliation with the Father, full remission of sins, transition from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, the reality of being a new creature²⁴ in Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They enjoy access to the Father with all the peace and joy that this brings.

The Gospel requires of all believers worship, which means constant praise and giving of thanks to God, submission to all that he has revealed in his written word, prayerful dependence on him, and vigilance lest his truth be even inadvertently compromised or obscured.

To share the joy and hope of this Gospel is a supreme privilege. It is also an abiding obligation, for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ still stands: proclaim the Gospel everywhere, he said, teaching, baptizing, and making disciples.

By embracing the following declaration we affirm our commitment to this task, and with it our allegiance to Christ himself, to the Gospel itself, and to each other as fellow evangelical believers.

THE GOSPEL

THIS GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST which God sets forth in the infallible Scriptures combines Jesus' own declaration of the present reality of the kingdom of God with the apostles' account of the person, place, and work of Christ, and how sinful humans benefit from it. The Patristic Rule of Faith, the historic creeds, the Reformation confessions, and the doctrinal bases of later evangelical bodies all witness to the substance of this biblical message.

The heart of the Gospel is that our holy, loving Creator, confronted with human hostility and rebellion, has chosen in his own freedom and faithfulness to become our holy, loving Redeemer and Restorer. The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1Jn 4:14): it is through his one and only Son that God's one and only plan of salvation is implemented. So Peter announced: "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Ac 4:12). And Christ himself taught: "I am the way, the

truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6).

Through the Gospel we learn that we human beings, who were made for fellowship with God, are by nature that is, “in Adam” (1Co 15:22) dead in sin, unresponsive to and separated from our Maker. We are constantly twisting his truth, breaking his law, belittling his goals and standards, and offending his holiness by our unholiness, so that we truly are “without hope and without God in the world” (Ro 1:18 32, 3:9 20; Eph 2:1 3, 12). Yet God in grace took the initiative to reconcile us to himself through the sinless life and vicarious death of his beloved Son (Eph 2:4 10; Ro 3:21 24).

The Father sent the Son to free us from the dominion of sin and Satan, and to make us God’s children and friends. Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Ro 3:25 26).

The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Mt 20:28; 2Co 5:18 21; Ro 3:23 25; Jn 12:31; Col 2:15). It secures for us a restored relationship with God that brings pardon and peace, acceptance and access, and adoption into God’s family (Col 1:20, 2:13 14; Ro 5:1 2; Gal 4:4 7; 1Pe 3:18). The faith in God and in Christ to which the²⁵Gospel calls us is a trustful outgoing of our hearts to lay hold of these promised and proffered benefits.

This Gospel further proclaims the bodily resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus as evidence of the efficacy of his once-for-all sacrifice for us, of the reality of his present personal ministry to us, and of the certainty of his future return to glorify us (1Co 15; Heb 1:1 4, 2:1 18, 4:14 16, 7:1 10:25). In the life of faith as the Gospel presents it, believers are united with their risen Lord, communing with him, and looking to him in repentance and hope for empowering through the Holy Spirit, so that henceforth they may not sin but serve him truly.

God’s justification of those who trust him, according to the Gospel, is a decisive transition, here and now, from a state of condemnation and wrath because of their sins to one of acceptance and favor by virtue of Jesus’ flawless obedience culminating in his voluntary sin-bearing death. God “justifies the wicked” (ungodly: Ro 4:5) by imputing (reckoning, crediting, counting, accounting) righteousness to them and ceasing to count their sins against them (Ro 4:1 8). Sinners receive through faith in Christ alone “the gift of righteousness” (Ro 1:17, 5:17; Php 3:9) and thus become “the righteousness of God” in him who was “made sin” for them (2Co 5:21).

As our sins were reckoned to Christ, so Christ’s righteousness is reckoned to us. This is justification by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness. All we bring to

the transaction is our need of it. Our faith in the God who bestows it, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is itself the fruit of God's grace. Faith links us savingly to Jesus, but inasmuch as it involves an acknowledgment that we have no merit of our own, it is confessedly not a meritorious work.

The Gospel assures us that all who have entrusted their lives to Jesus Christ are born-again children of God (Jn 1:12), indwelt, empowered, and assured of their status and hope by the Holy Spirit (Ro 7:6, 8:9-17). The moment we truly believe in Christ, the Father declares us righteous in him and begins conforming us to his likeness. Genuine faith acknowledges and depends upon Jesus as Lord and shows itself in growing obedience to the divine commands, though this contributes nothing to the ground of our justification (Jas 2:14-26; Heb 6:1-12).

By his sanctifying grace, Christ works within us through faith, renewing our fallen nature and leading us to real maturity, that measure of development which is meant by "the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). The Gospel calls us to live as obedient servants of Christ and as his emissaries in the world, doing justice, loving mercy, and helping all in need, thus seeking to bear witness to the kingdom of Christ. At death, Christ takes the believer to himself (Php 1:21) for unimaginable joy in the ceaseless worship of God (Rev 22:1-5).

Salvation in its full sense is from the guilt of sin in the past, the power of sin in the present, and the presence of sin in the future. Thus, while in foretaste believers enjoy salvation now, they still await its fullness (Mk 14:61-62; Heb 9:28). Salvation is a Trinitarian reality, initiated by the Father, implemented by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit. It has a global dimension, for God's plan is to save believers out of every tribe and tongue (Rev 5:9) to be his church, a new humanity, the people of God, the body and bride of Christ, and the community of the Holy Spirit. All the heirs of final salvation are called here and now to serve their Lord and each other in love,²⁶ to share in the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings, and to work together to make Christ known to the whole world.

We learn from the Gospel that, as all have sinned, so all who do not receive Christ will be judged according to their just deserts as measured by God's holy law, and face eternal retributive punishment.

UNITY IN THE GOSPEL

CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO LOVE EACH OTHER despite differences of race, gender, privilege, and social, political, and economic background (Jn 13:34 35; Gal 3:28 29), and to be of one mind wherever possible (Jn 17:20 21; Php 2:2; Ro 14:1 15:13). We know that divisions among Christians hinder our witness in the world, and we desire greater mutual understanding and truth-speaking in love. We know too that as trustees of God's revealed truth we cannot embrace any form of doctrinal indifferentism, or relativism, or pluralism by which God's truth is sacrificed for a false peace.

Doctrinal disagreements call for debate. Dialogue for mutual understanding and, if possible, narrowing of the differences is valuable, doubly so when the avowed goal is unity in primary things, with liberty in secondary things, and charity in all things.

In the foregoing paragraphs, an attempt has been made to state what is primary and essential in the Gospel as evangelicals understand it. Useful dialogue, however, requires not only charity in our attitudes, but also clarity in our utterances. Our extended analysis of justification by faith alone through Christ alone reflects our belief that Gospel truth is of crucial importance and is not always well understood and correctly affirmed. For added clarity, out of love for God's truth and Christ's church, we now cast the key points of what has been said into specific affirmations and denials regarding the Gospel and our unity in it and in Christ.

AFFIRMATIONS & DENIALS

1. WE AFFIRM that the Gospel entrusted to the church is, in the first instance, God's Gospel (Mk 1:14; Ro 1:1). God is its author, and he reveals it to us in and by his Word. Its authority and truth rest on him alone.

WE DENY that the truth or authority of the Gospel derives from any human insight or invention (Gal 1:1 11). We also deny that the truth or authority of the Gospel rests on the authority of any particular church or human institution.

2. WE AFFIRM that the Gospel is the saving power of God in that the Gospel effects salvation to everyone who believes, without distinction (Ro 1:16). This efficacy of the Gospel is by the power of God himself (1Co 1:18).

WE DENY that the power of the Gospel rests in the eloquence of the preacher,

the technique of the evangelist, or the persuasion of rational argument (1Co 1:21; 2:15).

3. WE AFFIRM that the Gospel diagnoses the universal human condition as one of sinful rebellion against God, which, if unchanged, will lead each person to eternal loss under God's condemnation.

WE DENY any rejection of the fallenness of human nature or any assertion of the natural goodness, or divinity, of the human race.

4. WE AFFIRM that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, the only mediator between God and humanity (Jn 14:6; 1Ti 2:5).

WE DENY that anyone is saved in any other way than by Jesus Christ and his Gospel. The Bible offers no hope that sincere worshipers of other religions will be saved without personal faith in Jesus Christ.

5. WE AFFIRM that the church is commanded by God and is therefore under divine obligation to preach the Gospel to every living person (Lk 24:47; Mt 28:18 19).

WE DENY that any particular class or group of persons, whatever their ethnic or cultural identity, may be ignored or passed over in the preaching of the Gospel (1Co 9:19 22). God purposes a global church made up from people of every tribe, language, and nation (Rev 7:9).

6. WE AFFIRM that faith in Jesus Christ as the divine Word (or Logos, Jn 1:1), the second Person of the Trinity, co-eternal and co-essential with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Heb 1:3), is foundational to faith in the Gospel.

WE DENY that any view of Jesus Christ which reduces or rejects his full deity is Gospel faith or will avail to salvation.

7. WE AFFIRM that Jesus Christ is God incarnate (Jn 1:14). The virgin-born descendant of David (Ro 1:3), he had a true human nature, was subject to the Law of God (Gal 4:5), and was like us at all points, except without sin (Heb 2:17, 7:26 28). We affirm that faith in the true humanity of Christ is essential to faith in the Gospel.

WE DENY that anyone who rejects the humanity of Christ, his incarnation, or his sinlessness, or who maintains that these truths are not essential to the Gospel, will be saved (1Jn 4:2 3).

8. WE AFFIRM that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.

WE DENY that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

9. WE AFFIRM that Christ's saving work included both his life and his death on our behalf (Gal 3:13). We declare that faith in the perfect obedience of Christ by which he fulfilled all the demands of the Law of God in our behalf is essential to the Gospel.

WE DENY that our salvation was achieved merely or exclusively by the death of Christ without reference to his life of perfect righteousness.

10. WE AFFIRM that the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead is essential to the biblical Gospel (1Co 15:14).

WE DENY the validity of any so-called gospel that denies the historical reality of the bodily resurrection of Christ.

11. WE AFFIRM that the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone is essential to the Gospel (Ro 3:28; 4:5; Gal 2:16).

WE DENY that any person can believe the biblical Gospel and at the same time reject the apostolic teaching of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. We also deny that there is more than one true Gospel (Gal 1:6-9).

12. WE AFFIRM that the doctrine of the imputation (reckoning or counting) both of our sins to Christ and of his righteousness to us, whereby our sins are fully forgiven and we are fully accepted, is essential to the biblical Gospel (2Co 5:19-21).

WE DENY that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ infused into us or by any righteousness that is thought to inhere within us.

13. WE AFFIRM that the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified is properly his own, which he achieved apart from us, in and by his perfect obedience. This righteousness is counted, reckoned, or imputed to us by the forensic (that is, legal) declaration of God, as the sole ground of our justification.

We deny that any works we perform at any stage of our existence add to the merit of Christ or earn for us any merit that contributes in any way to the ground of our

justification (Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8 9; Tit 3:5).

14. WE AFFIRM that, while all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are in the process of being made holy and conformed to the image of Christ, those consequences of justification are not its ground. God declares us just, remits our sins, and adopts us as his children, by his grace alone, and through faith alone, because of Christ alone, while we are still sinners (Ro 4:5).

WE DENY that believers must be inherently righteous by virtue of their cooperation with God's life-transforming grace before God will declare them justified in Christ. We are justified while we are still sinners.

15. WE AFFIRM that saving faith results in sanctification, the transformation of life in growing conformity to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification means ongoing repentance, a life of turning from sin to serve Jesus Christ in grateful reliance on him as one's Lord and Master (Gal 5:22 25; Ro 8:4, 13 14).

WE REJECT any view of justification which divorces it from our sanctifying union with Christ and our increasing conformity to his image through prayer, repentance, cross-bearing, and life in the Spirit.

16. WE AFFIRM that saving faith includes mental assent to the content of the Gospel, acknowledgment of our own sin and need, and personal trust and reliance upon Christ and his work.

WE DENY that saving faith includes only mental acceptance of the Gospel, and that justification is secured by a mere outward profession of faith. We further deny that any element of saving faith is a meritorious work or earns salvation for us.

17. WE AFFIRM that, although true doctrine is vital for spiritual health and well-being, we are not saved by doctrine. Doctrine is necessary to inform us how we may be saved by Christ, but it is Christ who saves.

WE DENY that the doctrines of the Gospel can be rejected without harm. Denial of the Gospel brings spiritual ruin and exposes us to God's judgment.

18. WE AFFIRM that Jesus Christ commands his followers to proclaim the Gospel to all living persons, evangelizing everyone everywhere, and discipling believers within the fellowship of the church. A full and faithful witness to Christ includes the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbor, without which the preaching of the Gospel appears

barren.

WE DENY that the witness of personal testimony, godly living, and acts of mercy and charity to our neighbors constitutes evangelism apart from the proclamation of the Gospel.

OUR COMMITMENT

AS EVANGELICALS UNITED IN THE GOSPEL, we promise to watch over and care for one another, to pray for and forgive one another, and to reach out in love and truth to God's people everywhere, for we are one family, one in the Holy Spirit, and one in Christ.

Centuries ago it was truly said that in things necessary there must be unity, in things less than necessary there must be liberty, and in all things there must be charity. We see all these Gospel truths as necessary.

Now to God, the Author of the truth and grace of this Gospel, through Jesus Christ, its subject and our Lord, be praise and glory forever and ever. Amen.

6

MORE RESOURCES & STATEMENTS

6.1 The Danvers Statement

WE HAVE BEEN moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;

The tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;

The increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;

The widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;

The growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;

The upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;

The emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness;

The increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts;

The consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;

And behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Purposes

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble Biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

- To study and set forth the Biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.
- To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.
- To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.
- To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this Biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.

And thereby

- To bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,
- To help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,
- And to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a Biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and was not a result of sin.
4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
5. In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
6. In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
7. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
8. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
9. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.
10. In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.

11. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.

12. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.

13. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.

We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

6.2

Nashville Statement Coalition for Biblical Sexuality

“Know that the LORD Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...” -Psalm 100:3

Preamble

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God's design for human life. Many deny that God created human

beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God's beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual's autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God's good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God's design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God's good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ's church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church. **WE DENY** that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or polyamorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

WE DENY that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female.

WE DENY that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.

WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.

WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.

WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life.

WE DENY that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality—a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality.

WE DENY that an enduring pattern of desire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.

WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female.

WE DENY any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self- conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female.

WE DENY that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure.

WE DENY that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

7

Catechism

7.1 A Puritan Catechism

“I AM PERSUADED THAT THE USE OF A GOOD CATECHISM in all our families will be a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times, and therefore I have compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly’s and Baptist Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation. Those who use it in their families or classes must labor to explain the sense; but the words should be carefully learned by heart, for they will be understood better as years pass. May the Lord bless my dear friends and their families evermore, is the prayer of their loving Pastor.”

-C. H. Spurgeon

7.2 Questions

1. What is the chief end of man?
2. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify him?
3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?
4. What is God?
5. Are there more Gods than one?
6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?
7. What are the decrees of God?
8. How does God execute his decrees?

9. What is the work of creation?
10. How did God create man?
11. What are God's works of providence?
12. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the state wherein he was created?
13. Did our parents continue in the state wherein they were created?
14. What is sin?
15. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?
16. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?
17. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell?
18. What is the misery of that state whereinto man fell?
19. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery? 20. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?
21. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?
22. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?
23. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?
24. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?
25. How does Christ execute the office of a king?
26. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?
27. Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?
28. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?
29. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?
30. What is effectual calling?
31. What benefits do they who are effectually called, partake of in this life?
32. What is justification?
33. What is adoption?
34. What is sanctification?
35. What are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?
36. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?
37. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?
38. What shall be done to the wicked at their death?
39. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?
40. What did God reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?
41. What is the sum of the ten commandments?
42. Which is the first commandment?
43. What is required in the first commandment?
44. Which is the second commandment?

45. What is required in the second commandment?
46. What is forbidden in the second commandment?
47. Which is the third commandment?
48. What is required in the third commandment?
49. Which is the fourth commandment?
50. What is required in the fourth commandment?
51. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?
52. Which is the fifth commandment?
53. What is required in the fifth commandment?
54. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?
55. Which is the sixth commandment?
56. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?
57. Which is the seventh commandment?
58. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?
59. Which is the eighth commandment?
60. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?
61. Which is the ninth commandment?
62. What is required in the ninth commandment?
63. Which is the tenth commandment?
64. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?
65. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?
66. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?
67. What does every sin deserve?
68. How may we escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?
69. What is faith in Jesus Christ?
70. What is repentance to life?
71. What are the outward means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?
72. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?
73. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?
74. How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?
75. What is baptism?
76. To whom is Baptism to be administered?
77. Are the infants of such as are professing believers to be baptized?
78. How is baptism rightly administered?
79. What is the duty of such as are rightly baptized?
80. What is the Lord's Supper?

81. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

82. What is meant by the words, "until he come," which are used by the apostle Paul in reference to the Lord's Supper?

7.3 Questions & Answers

1. Q. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, (1 Corinthians 10:31) and to enjoy him forever. (Psalm 73:25, 26)

2. Q. What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify him? A. The Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:16) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify God and enjoy him. (1 John 1:3)

3. Q. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. (2 Timothy 1:13; Ecclesiastes 12:13)

4. Q. What is God?

A. God is Spirit, (John 4:24) infinite, (Job 11:7) eternal, (Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17) and unchangeable (James 1:17) in his being, (Ezekiel 3:14) wisdom, power, (Psalms 147:5) holiness, (Revelation 4:8) justice, goodness and truth. (Ezekiel 34:6,7)

5. Q. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, (Deuteronomy 6:4) the living and true God. (Jeremiah 10:10)

6. Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory. (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19) 9

7. Q. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he has foreordained whatever comes to pass. (Ephesians 1:11,12)

8. Q. How does God execute his decrees?

A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation, (Revelation 4:11) and providence. (Daniel 4:35)

9. Q. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is God's making all things (Genesis 1:1) of nothing, by the

Word of his power, (Hebrews 11:3) in six normal consecutive days, (Ezekiel 20:11) and all very good. (Genesis 1:31)

10. Q. How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, after his own image, (Genesis 1:27) in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24) with dominion over the creatures. (Genesis 1:28)

11. Q. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, (<19E517>Psalm 145:17) wise, (Isaiah 28:29) and powerful, (Hebrews 1:3) preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions. (Psalm 103:19; Matthew 10:29)

12. Q. What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the state wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; (Galatians 3:12) forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death. (Genesis 2:17)

13. Q. Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God, (Ecclesiastes 7:29) by eating the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 3:6-8)

14. Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God. (1 John 3:4)

15. Q. Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. (1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 5:12)

16. Q. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery. (Romans 5:18)

17. Q. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state whereunto man fell? A. The sinfulness of that state whereunto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, (Romans 5:19) the want of original righteousness, (Romans 3:10) and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, (Ephesians 2:1; Psalm 51:5) together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it. (Matthew 15:19)

18. Q. What is the misery of that state whereunto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, (Genesis 3:8,24) are under his wrath and curse, (Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 3:10) and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever. (Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:41)

19. Q. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery? A. God having, out of his good pleasure from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, (2 Thessalonians 2:13) did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer. (Romans 5:21)

20. Q. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Timothy 2:5) who being the eternal Son of God, became man, (John 1:14) and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever. (1 Timothy 3:16; Colossians 2:9)

21. Q. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ, the son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body, (Hebrews 2:14) and a reasonable soul, (Matthew 26:38; Hebrews 4:15) being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, and born of her, (Luke 1:31,35) yet without sin. (Hebrews 7:26)

22. Q. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a prophet, (Acts 3:22) of a priest, (Hebrews 5:6) and of a king, (Psalm 2:6) both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

23. Q. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, (John 1:18) by his Word, (John 20:31) and Spirit, (<431426>John 14:26) the will of God for our salvation.

24. Q. How does Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executes the office of a priest, in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, (Hebrews 9:28) and to reconcile us to God, (Hebrews 2:17) and in making continual intercession for us. (Hebrews 7:25)

25. Q. How does Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself, (Psalm 110:3) in ruling and defending us, (Matthew 2:6; 1 Corinthians 15:25) and

in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

26. Q. Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, (Luke 2:7) made under the law, (Galatians 4:4) undergoing the miseries of this life, (Isaiah 53:3) the wrath of God, (Matthew 27:46) and the cursed death of the cross; (Philippians 2:8) in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time. (Matthew 12:40)

27. Q. Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, (1 Corinthians 15:4) in ascending up into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father, (Mark 16:19) and in coming to judge the world at the last day. (Acts 17:31)

28. Q. How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us (John 1:12) by his Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5,6)

29. Q. How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, (Ephesians 2:8) and by it uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. (Ephesians 3:17)

30. Q. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Timothy 1:9) whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, (Acts 2:37) enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, (Acts 26:18) and renewing our wills, (Ezekiel 36:26) he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel. (John 6:44,45)

31. Q. What benefits do they who are effectually called, partake of in this life?

A. They who are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification, (Romans 8:30) adoption, (Ephesians 1:5) sanctification, and the various benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from them. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

32. Q. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7) and accepts us as righteous in his sight (2 Corinthians 5:21) only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, (Romans 5:19) and received by faith alone. (Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9)

33. Q. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, (1 John 3:1) whereby

we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. (John 1:12; Romans 8:17)

34. Q. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, (2 Thessalonians 2:13) whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, (Ephesians 4:24) and are enabled more and more to die to sin, and live to righteousness. (Romans 6:11)

35. Q. What are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, (Romans 5:1,2,5) are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, (Romans 14:17) increase of grace, perseverance in it to the end. (Proverbs 4:18; 1 John 5:13; 1 Peter 1:5)

36. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death? A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, (Hebrews 12:23) and do immediately pass into glory, (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 23:43) and their bodies, being still united to Christ, (1 Thessalonians 4:14) do rest in their graves (Isaiah 57:2) till the resurrection. (Job 19:26)

37. Q. What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, (1 Corinthians 15:43) shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, (Matthew 10:32) and made perfectly blessed both in soul and body in the full enjoying of God (1 John 3:2) to all eternity. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

38. Q. What shall be done to the wicked at their death?

A. The souls of the wicked shall at their death be cast into the torments of hell, (Luke 16:22-24) and their bodies lie in their graves till the resurrection, and judgment of the great day. (Psalm 49:14)

39. Q. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?

A. At the day of judgment the bodies of the wicked being raised out of their graves, shall be sentenced, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever. (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28,29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 25:41)

40. Q. What did God reveal to man for the rule of his obedience? A. The rule which God first revealed to man for his obedience, is the moral law, (Deuteronomy 10:4; Matthew 19:17) which is summarized in the ten

commandments.

41. Q. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:37-40)

42. Q. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

43. Q. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requires us to know (1 Chronicles 28:9) and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, (Deuteronomy 26:17) and to worship and glorify him accordingly. (Matthew 4:10)

44. Q. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

45. Q. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, (Deuteronomy 32:46; Matthew 28:20) and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his Word. (Deuteronomy 12:32)

46. Q. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, (Deuteronomy 4:15,16) or any other way not appointed in his Word. (Colossians 2:18)

47. Q. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes his name in vain."

48. Q. What is required in the third commandment?

46

A. The third commandment requires the holy and reverent use of God's names, (Psalm 29:2) titles, attributes, (Revelation 15:3,4) ordinances, (Ecclesiastes 5:1) Word, (Psalm 138:2) and works. (Job 36:24; Deuteronomy 28:58,59)

49. Q. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

50. Q. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself. (Leviticus 19:30; Deuteronomy 5:12)

51. Q. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, (>Leviticus 23:3) and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, (Psalm 92:1,2; Isaiah 58:13,14) except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy. (Matthew 12:11,12)

52. Q. Which is the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment is, “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

53. Q. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the Honor, and performing the duties belonging to everyone in their various positions and relationships as superiors, (Ephesians 5:21,22, 6:1,5; Romans 13:1) inferiors, (Ephesians 6:9) or equals. (Romans 12:10)

54. Q. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment? A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity - as far as it shall serve for God’s glory, and their own good - to all such as keep this commandment. (Ephesians 6:2,3)

55. Q. Which is the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment is, “Thou shalt not kill.”

56. Q. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, (Acts 16:28) or the life of our neighbor unjustly, (Genesis 9:6) or whatever tends to it. (Proverbs 24:11,12)

57. Q. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” 58. Q. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, (Matthew 5:28; Colossians 4:6) words, (Ephesians 5:4; 2 Timothy 2:22) and actions. (Ephesians 5:3)

59. Q. Which is the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment is, “Thou shalt not steal.” 60. Q. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The eighth commandment forbids whatever does or may unjustly hinder our own, (1 Timothy 5:8; Proverbs 28:19, 21:6) or our neighbor’s wealth, or outward estate. (Ephesians 4:28)

61. Q. Which is the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment is, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

62. Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, (Zechariah 8:16) and of our own, (1 Peter 3:16; Acts 25:10) and our neighbor’s good name, (2 John 1:12) especially in witness-bearing. (Proverbs 14:5,25)

63. Q. What is the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, or his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.”

64. Q. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, (1 Corinthians 10:10) envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, (Galatians 5:26) and all inordinate emotions and affections to anything that is his. (Colossians 3:5)

65. Q. Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God? A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in his life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, (Ecclesiastes 7:20) but does daily break

them in thought, (Genesis 8:21) word, (James 3:8) and deed.

(James 3:2)

66. Q. Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of various aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others. (John 19:11; 1 John 5:15)

67. Q. What does every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come. (Ephesians 5:6; Psalm 11:6)

68. Q. How may we escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, (John 3:16) trusting alone to his blood and righteousness. This faith is attended by repentance for the past (Acts 20:21) and leads to holiness in the future.

69. Q. What is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, (Hebrews 10:39) whereby we receive, (John 1:12) and rest upon him alone for salvation, (Philippians 3:9) as he is set forth in the gospel. (Isaiah 33:22)

70. Q. What is repentance to life?

A. Repentance to life is a saving grace, (Acts 11:18) whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sins, (Acts 2:37) and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, (Joel 2:13) does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it to God, (Jeremiah 31:18,19) with full purpose to strive after new obedience. (Psalm 119:59)

71. Q. What are the outward means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of Christ's redemption, are the Word, by which souls are begotten to spiritual life; Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, by all which believers are further edified in their most holy faith. (Acts 2:41,42; James 1:18)

72. Q. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convicting and converting sinners, (Psalm 19:7) and of building them up in holiness and comfort, (1 Thessalonians 1:6) through faith to salvation. (Romans 1:16)

73. Q. How is the Word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend to it with diligence, (Proverbs 8:34) preparation, (1 Peter 2:1,2) and prayer, (Psalm 119:18) receive it with faith, (Hebrews 4:2) and love, (2 Thessalonians 2:10) lay it up into our hearts, (Psalm 119:11) and practice it in our lives. (James 1:25)

74. Q. How do Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful?

A. Baptism and the Lord's Supper become spiritually helpful, not from any virtue in them, or in him who does administer them, (1 Corinthians 3:7; 1 Peter 3:21) but only by the blessing of Christ, (1 Corinthians 3:6) and the working of the Spirit in

those who by faith receive them. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

75. Q. What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ, (Matthew 28:19) to be to the person baptized a sign of his fellowship with him, in his death, and burial, and resurrection, (>Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12) of his being engrafted into him, (Galatians 3:27) of remission of sins, (Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16) and of his giving up himself to God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4,5)

76. Q. To whom is Baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is to be administered to all those who actually profess repentance towards God, (Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:6; Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12,36,37, 10:47,48) and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to none other.

77. Q. Are the infants of such as are professing to be baptized? A. The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptized, because there is neither command nor example in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism. (Exodus 23:13; Proverbs 30:6)

78. Q. How is baptism rightly administered?

A. Baptism is rightly administered by immersion, or dipping the whole body of the person in water, (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution, and the practice of the apostles, (Matthew 28:19,20) and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men. (John 4:1,2; Acts 8:38,39)

79. Q. What is the duty of such as are rightly baptized?

A. It is the duty of such as are rightly baptized, to give up themselves to some particular and orderly Church of Jesus Christ, (Acts 2:47; Acts 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5) that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (Luke 1:6)

80. Q. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ; wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to his appointment, his death is shown forth, (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace. (1 Corinthians 10:16)

81. Q. What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper? A. It is required of them who would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they

examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, (1 Corinthians 11:28,29) of their faith to feed upon him, (2 Corinthians 13:5) of their repentance, (1 Corinthians 11:31) love, (1 Corinthians 11:18-20) and new obedience, (1 Corinthians 5:8) lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

82. Q. What is meant by the words, "until he come," which are used by the apostle Paul in reference to the Lord's Supper?

A. They plainly teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ will come a second time; which is the joy and hope of all believers. (Acts 1:11; 1Thessalonians 4:16)