

G.A.P. Statement of Faith

We believe that the Bible is the final standard of faith and practice for the believer in Jesus Christ and for his church. While recognizing the historical, interpretive and guiding value of creeds and statements of faith made throughout the history of the Church, we affirm the Bible alone as the infallible and final authority.

CONCERNING THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that God has revealed himself and his truth by both general and special revelation. General revelation displays his existence, power, providence, moral standard, goodness and glory; special revelation manifests his triune nature and his program of redemption through Messiah for humanity. This special revelation has been given in various ways, preeminently in the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ, and in the inscripturated Word of God, the Bible.

We affirm that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the written Word of God given by the Holy Spirit and are the complete and final canonical revelation of God for this age.

(Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-16; Psa. 19; Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31; John 1:1-18; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12)

These books, constituting the written Word of God, convey objective truth and are the believer's only infallible rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-20; John 10:35; 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13)

The Holy Spirit illumines the text, enabling the reader to embrace that which God has communicated and to see the glory of Christ in the Word of God.

(Jn. 7:17; 16:12, 13; 1 Cor. 2:14, 15; 1 Jn. 2:20)

CONCERNING GOD

The Triune God

We believe there is only one true God who describes himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, full of lovingkindness and faithfulness who forgives sin but does not leave the guilty unpunished. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, knowledge, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, faithfulness, love and truth. He is absolutely separate, exalted above the world as its creator, yet everywhere present and involved in the world as the sustainer of all things. This God is one in essence and eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each equal in nature and attributes and equally worthy of worship, trust, and obedience.

(Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Ps. 100:5; 139:8; Isa. 45:5 7; Matt. 28:19; Mk. 10:18; Jn. 4:24; Acts 17:24, 29; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:6)

God the Father

God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, decrees and works all things according to his own purpose and for his own glory, being sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. He created the universe out of nothing. He continually sustains, directs and governs all creatures and events, accomplishing this without being the author or approver of sin nor minimizing human responsibility. He has graciously chosen the elect from all eternity, he saves from sin all who come to him through Jesus Christ, and he personally relates to his children as their Father.

(Ps. 145:8, 9; 1 Chr. 29:11; Ps. 103:19; Jn. 1:18; Rom. 11:33; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 1:3 6; Heb. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1:17)

God the Son

Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the eternal second person of the Trinity. He is the Son of God and the virgin-born Son of Man. He came as the God-Man to reveal God, redeem human beings, and will as Messiah rule over God's kingdom.

(Ps. 2:7 9; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Jn. 1:1, 3, 18, 29; 10:36; 1 Jn. 1:3)

In the incarnation he is both fully God and fully human without sin, possessing two natures in one person. By his obedient life, miraculous ministry, and substitutionary death, he brings salvation to humanity. He rose bodily from the dead on the third day, the resurrection confirming the Father's acceptance of his atoning work on the cross and bringing resurrection to eternal life to all believers. He ascended into heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand, and he now performs the intercessory aspect of his high priestly work for believers.

(Jn. 1:14, 29; Rom. 3:24 26; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3; 4:15; 7:26; 10:5-10; 1 Pet. 2:21 24; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10)

Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity, the head of his Body the Church, the coming Messiah and king, and the final judge of both believers and unbelievers.

(Isaiah. 53:10; Lk. 1:31 33; Jn. 5:27 29; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; Rev. 20:11-15)

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the eternal third person of the Trinity, is active in creation, the incarnation, the writing of Scripture, and the work of salvation. (Gen. 1:2; Matt. 1:18; Jn. 3:5-7; 2 Pet. 1:20, 21)

Coming from the Father and the Son at Pentecost, he initiated the Church. He convicts unbelievers of sin. He indwells all believers, regenerating them, and exercises his ministries of sealing, sanctification, instructing, transforming into the likeness of Christ, and empowering for service. He gives spiritual gifts which are to be used according to biblical guidelines to build up the Church and to glorify Christ. He is the agent of Spirit baptism which incorporates believers into the Church at their conversion. This fact will be made evident by the outward appearance of the fruits of the Spirit in love. (Jn. 14:16, 17; 15:26; 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor.

3:18; Eph. 2:22)

CONCERNING HUMANITY AND SIN

We believe God created Adam and Eve and all humanity in his image with the intention that they should glorify God, enjoy his fellowship, and fulfill his purpose on the earth. Created with integrity and without sin, our first parents fell into sin by disobeying the will of God. As a result of identification in Adamic sin and individual acts of sinning the human race is dead in sin, separated from God and subject to his wrath. While all people have dignity as the image of God, they are inherently sinful and hopelessly lost apart from divine grace and salvation in Jesus Christ. (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:23; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; 1 Jn. 1:8)

CONCERNING SALVATION

We believe that the death of Jesus on the cross is the perfect sacrifice for sin. His substitutionary work satisfied divine justice and is the propitiation of, or appeasement for, the wrath of God for the sins of the whole world. (Isa. 53:1-13; Jn. 10:27-29; Rom. 3:24; 5:8, 9; 8:38, 39; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:3; 1 Jn. 4:10) Through his death and resurrection, we are redeemed from sin, reconciled to God, justified by grace alone through faith alone, adopted into the family of God, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is appropriated by personal conversion, consisting of repentance from sin and trust in God's provision in Christ, resulting in full forgiveness of sin and new life with Christ. (Jn. 1:12; 3:5, 7, 16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 8:1-4, 29, 30; 10:8-13; Eph. 1:4, 5; 2:8-10; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; Heb. 11:6)

Salvation results in righteous living. Believers will grow in Christ-likeness as they keep in step with the Holy Spirit and live in obedience to the Word of God. They are kept by the power of God through faith and will persevere to the end, culminating in their glorification at Christ's coming. (Jn. 5:24; 10:28; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:10; 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12, 13; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:3-10; 1 Jn. 3:2, 3) {updated February 2, 2010}

CONCERNING THE CHURCH

The Church is the people of God, initiated at Pentecost and completed at the return of Christ who is its head. The mission of the Church is to glorify God by worshiping corporately, building itself up as a loving, faithful community by instruction of the Word, observing the biblical sacraments, communicating the gospel and making disciples of all peoples. (Matt. 16:18; Acts 1:4, 5; 11:15; 2:46, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 12:4-21; Eph. 1:22, 23; 2:19-22; 3:4-6; 5:25-27; Col. 1:18; Rev. 5:9) Believers should gather together in local assemblies. They are priests before God and to one another, responsible to serve God and minister to each other. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and leading the assembly are elders and deacons. Two ordinances have been committed to the local church and are to be administered to believers. Baptism is the immersion in water into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a biblically ordained confession of personal faith, portraying death to sin and resurrection to new life. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ in remembrance of him. This portrays his death, unites believers

in fellowship, and anticipates their participation in the marriage supper of the Lamb. These two ordinances are to be observed until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Matt. 28:16-20; Luke 22:19, 20; Acts 2:41; 10:47, 48; Rom. 6:1-6; 1Cor. 11:23-29)

Also, having faith in the great commission we are to reach the entire world with the message of the Gospel of our Lord. (Matt.28:19 & Acts 1:8)

Having faith in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life, whose divine power is with us today providing individual gifts which operate in His will through those He selects, who have received Him. We have faith in the gifts of ministry (Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists and so forth) divinely given to expand, develop and grow the Kingdom ministries. (Acts 2:38 – 15:8,9; Romans 12:4-8; Eph.4:11,12)

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord, Christ Jesus; that there is but one true Church in the Body of Christ of which the Lord Jesus is the head; that we, His servants, fit jointly together for the service of His continuing ministry. We firmly hold that His true Church is without divisions of any kind. (Ephesians 3:20,21—4:1-16)

CONCERNING LAST THINGS

We believe that at death, the spirits of believers pass immediately into the presence of Christ and there remain in joyful fellowship awaiting their bodily resurrection. The spirits of unbelievers are in misery and torment as punishment for sin awaiting their bodily resurrection.

(Dan. 12:2; Lk. 16:22, 23; 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-26; 3:10, 11, 21; Rev. 20:11-15)

{From Western Theological Seminary}

This age will culminate in the rapture of believers and the tribulation, followed by the return of Christ in glory with his saints to the earth to destroy his enemies, to initiate the millennium, and to restore Israel as a nation in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:1-16; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:22-38; 37:21-28; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; Jn. 14:2, 3; Acts 1:4-8; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 15:51-53; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Tit. 2:11-13; Rev. 3:10; 16:1-21; 19:1-21; 20:1-6)

At the close of Messiah's millennial reign, the devil, his demons, and the unbelieving dead will be judged and committed to eternal conscious punishment in hell. God will create a new heaven and new earth where all his people will dwell eternally in his presence, giving worship and service to him to whom belongs all glory.

(Mk. 9:43-48; Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; 2 Thess. 1:9; 2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:1-4; 22:5, 11)

The Final Judgment (motivation & justification for G.A.P. Ministry)

Matthew 25: 31-46

“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.

All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.

I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me.
I was in prison, and you visited me.’

“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink?

Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?

When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’

“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’

“Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink.

I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and **in prison,** and you didn’t visit me.’

“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’

“And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’

“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

JOHN 3:16

For God so Loved

THE WORLD

that he gave his only

begotten

SON

THAT WHOEVER

believeth in him

SHOULD NOT PERISH

but have

EVERLASTING LIFE