

# What We Believe

*"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:1-6).*

Desiring to be in full accord with the mind of the Spirit for this present dispensation, we hold and require the following doctrinal beliefs:

## The Bible

The entire Bible in its original writings is verbally inspired of God and is of plenary authority (2Ti 3:16,17; 2Pe 1:21).

## The Godhead

There is one God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deu 6:4; 1Ti 2:5; Eph. 4:4-6; Mat 28:19; 2Co 13:14).

## The Person of Christ

Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary, and is true God and true man (Luk 1:35; Php 2:6-9; Rom 1:3,4).

## Personality and Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a Person Who convicts the world of sin and regenerates, baptizes, identifies, indwells, enlightens, seals, and empowers believers (Jhn 16:8; Tit 3:5; 1Co 12:13; Eph 1:13,17,18; 3:16).

## Total Depravity

All men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins and are, therefore, totally unable by their own wisdom or strength to do anything pleasing to God (Eph 2:1-3; Rom 3:9-12; 1Co 1:18-31).

## Salvation (Redemption)

God justifies ungodly sinners by His grace upon the ground of the shed blood of Christ through the means of faith. This complete salvation is bestowed as a free gift of God apart from man's works. It is a personal matter, leaving no room for the so-called "social gospel" (Rom 3:24-28; 5:1,9; Eph 2:8,9).

## Eternal Security

All the saved are eternally secure in Christ (Col 3:1-4; Php 1:6; Rom 8:1; 8:29-34,38,39; Jhn 10:27-29; Eph 1:13,14).

## The Church

In the present dispensation there is only one true Church, which is called the Body of Christ (1Co 12:13; Eph 1:22,23; 3:1-6) separate and distinct from the prophesied, earthly kingdom of Christ. The historical manifestation of the Body of Christ began with the Apostle Paul before he wrote his first epistle (1Th 2:14-16 cf Act 13:45,46; Php 1:5,6 cf Act 16; 1Co 12:13,27 cf Act 18).

## Gifts

The gifts necessary for the ministry of the Body of Christ are those enumerated in Romans 12:3-9 and Ephesians 4:7-16. All the miraculous sign gifts of the Acts period, such as tongues, prophecy and healing (1Co 12:13, being temporary in character, have ceased (1Co 13:8-13).

## Walk

By reason of Christ's victory over sin and of His indwelling Spirit, all of the saved may and should experience deliverance from the power of sin by obedience to Romans 6:11; but, we deny that man's nature of sin is ever eradicated during this life (Rom 6:6-14; Gal 5:16-25; Rom 8:37; 2Co 2:14; 10:2-5). As saints (Lit., "set-apart ones") and members of the true Church (Lit., "called-out ones") we are to maintain a Christ-honoring testimony, separate from all forms of worldliness and apostasy, demonstrating obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and love to all men (Rom 12:1,2,9; 2Co 6:14-18; Eph 5:11; 1Ti 6:20,21; 1Jo 4:19).

## **Baptism**

All saved persons have been made members of the Body of Christ by one divine baptism (1Co 12:13). By this one baptism every member of the Body of Christ is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. In the light of the statement concerning the one baptism in Ephesians 4:5, the statements concerning baptism in Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:3,4, and Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:17 that "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," we affirm that water baptism has no place in God's spiritual program for the Body of Christ in this day of grace.

## **The Lord's Supper**

The communion of the Lord's Supper as revealed through the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 11:23-26 is for members of the Body of Christ to observe "until He comes." It is a memorial of Christ's death.

## **Resurrection**

Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead (Luk 24:39-43). Therefore (1Co 15:21), all men will have a bodily resurrection (Act 24:15): the saved to everlasting glory and the unsaved to everlasting punishment (Jhn 5:29; Rev 20:11-15).

## **The Rapture and Second Coming of Christ**

The rapture of the Church "which is His Body," and the second coming of Christ will be pre-millennial. He will come first to receive the members of His Body to Himself (1Th 4:13-18; Php 3:20,21), and later to receive His millennial kingdom, over which He will reign (Zec 14:4,9; Act 1:10,11; Rev 19:11-16; 20:4-6). Because of the distinctive nature of the Body of Christ, the resurrection and rapture of the Church, which is His Body, will take place before the great tribulation (Jer 30:7; Mat 24:15- 31) at His appearing in the air (1Th 4:13-18; Php 3:20,21; Tit 2:13,14; 1Co 15:51-53). The resurrection of the other saved dead will occur after the tribulation (Rev 20:4-6).

## **State of the Dead**

Nowhere does Scripture extend the hope of salvation to the unsaved dead but instead reveals that they will ever continue to exist in a state of conscious suffering (Luk 16:23-28; Rev 14:11; 20:14-15; Col 3:6; Rom 1:21-32; Jhn 3:36; Php 3:19; 2Th 1:9) The teachings of universalism, of probation after death, of annihilation of the unsaved dead, and of the unconscious state of the dead, saved or unsaved (Luk 16:23-28; Php 1:23; 2Co 5:6-8), are opposed by us as being thoroughly unscriptural and dangerous doctrines.

## **Mission**

The mission and commission of the Church which is His Body is to proclaim the message of reconciliation (2Co 5:14-21) and to preach Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:8,9) with all boldness. In this we should follow the Apostle Paul (1Co 4:16; 11:1; Php 3:17; 4:9; 1Ti 1:11-16). That distinctive message which the Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom 11:13; 15:16) calls "my gospel" (Rom 2:16; 16:25) is also called "the gospel of the grace of God" (Act 20:24). We, like Paul, must preach the entire Word of God in the light of this gospel (2Ti 4:2; Gal 1:8,9) and strive to reach those in the regions beyond where Christ is not yet named (Rom 15:20; 2Co 10:16).