

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH OF PIERZ MINNESOTA

(A brief summary of the key doctrines of the Bible as we understand them to apply to the church and its people.)

AS MEMBERS OF THIS CHURCH, WE AFFIRM THE FOLLOWING:

GOD

God is a Spirit, who, existing from all eternity, is one God. He is unchangeable, everywhere-present at all times, is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-wise. He is just, holy, and is love itself. He is the creator, sustainer, and sovereign of all things; and is due the worship of all persons.

John 4:24; Deuteronomy 5:6-10; 6:1; Isaiah 57:15; Psalm 139:7-10; Malachi 3:6; Job 34:12, 37:23; 40:8; 41:34; 42:2; 1 John 4:8; Genesis 1:1ff; Romans 11:33; Jeremiah 23:23.

God is one Being in essence, but exists in three distinct Persons: **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, who are equal in their essential Godhood, but, in perfect love and harmony, fulfill different roles in their relationships with each other, man, and the creation.

Luke 3:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Acts 13:2; Colossians 1:15-20; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-14; 20:28.

God loves man in such a way that He commissioned the Son to give Himself as a substitute for sinners, bearing God's wrath against sin. The Son did so willingly, by taking upon Himself full and true humanity (including a human body, but free of

sin) through birth to a virgin, suffering an unjust death, and rising again bodily on the third day. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for His people. The Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration (through the Word of God), and makes the work of the Son real in the believer's experience. He is the Person in the Godhead who convicts of sin, leads believers in the daily practice of godliness, and also intercedes for them.

John 3:3-8; 16; 16:7, 8; Romans 3:21-25; 8:4-17; 26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Hebrews 1:1-3; 7:23-25; 1 Timothy 4:10; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; James 1:18.

MAN

All men and women are one with the first man, Adam, who was created in innocence, but who sinned as mankind's head. Each human is a sinner by birth and by choice, and apart from the sovereign grace of God, stands under His wrath. Man is still in the image of God, but that likeness has been tainted, damaged, and ruined by sin and disobedience, which bring weakness, sickness, pain, suffering, and death. Unconverted man is unable to relate positively to God, and is unwilling to receive either His natural revelation in creation, or His mercy as revealed through the Gospel.

Genesis 3:1-7; 6:5; Romans 3:9-21; 5:12, 16-19; John 3:18-20; 36; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:14; John 6:44.

SALVATION

Man's only way to be reconciled to God is by becoming one with the Christ. The one who believes the Gospel partakes of God's very nature, being born of His Spirit, at the moment of faith in Christ. He has Christ's righteousness placed to his account, Christ's Spirit given to him as a pledge of full and final redemption, is made a new creation, and is baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, the Church. He is given eternal life, and is forgiven all his sins. God is sovereign in salvation: All whom God has chosen to salvation are given grace to believe, and will be kept by the power of God until death or Christ's return.

Romans 5:15-21; 8:9, 14, 23, 35-39; John 3:6; 6:37; 15:1-10;
1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:3-7, 13, 14; 2:8-10; Colossians 1:22,
23; Titus 3:5, 6; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:9-12; Philippians 1:6; Revelation
5:9.

THE SCRIPTURES AND REVELATION

All that now needs to be known of God, Man, and salvation has been revealed in God's Word, the Scriptures: the sixty-six books of the Bible. These documents have come to us preserved by the Spirit as fully faithful representations of the original manuscripts, which are God-breathed, and although penned by human authors, are without error in all areas they address.

These Scriptures are self-authenticating, and not dependent upon men or tradition for their authority. Rather, they are authored by God, who is Himself Truth, and are to be received because they are His Word. They are known as Truth by those

who know God, by the testimony of the Spirit of Truth, who indwells all believers, and who leads them into all Truth.

2 Peter 1:3, 4, 19-21; 2 Timothy 3:5-17; Matthew 5:18; Psalm 138:2;
John 16:12-15; Romans 3:4; Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Thessalonians
2:13; 1 John 5:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16.

FAITH AND GOOD WORKS

Nothing in man naturally will bring him to do any "good work" that delights God and accompanies salvation. Saving faith, however, once alive in the heart of the believer, produces works appropriate to that faith. Believers are said to be justified by faith alone. However, the faith that justifies the sinner is never alone, accompanied as it is by works of love. This love, far from being opposed to God's moral law, fulfills it. The very grace of God that teaches us the Gospel message, also teaches and guides us into godly living. The very Spirit of liberty that sets believers free from the curse of the Law, indwells believers to the end that the righteous requirement of the Law may be fulfilled in them.

Galatians 5:4-6, 19-24; Romans 8:1-4; Romans 12:1, 2; 13:8-10;
Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 12:14; James 2:14-25; 1 Peter 2:21, 22; Titus
2:11-14; 3:8; 1 John 2:3-6, 4:19-21; 5:2, 3.

THE CHURCH

All of the redeemed since Pentecost constitute the Church, the Body of Christ, which is the present expression of God's Kingdom program, and is to be distinguished from the nation Israel. This Church is reflected in local assemblies of believers, who voluntarily have banded together for the purposes of baptizing, observing the Lord's Supper,

edification, evangelism, worship, fellowship, prayer, and equipping for service to one another. These churches are served by elders, deacons, pastors, evangelists, and teachers, who have been gifted by Christ, and are to be recognized (affirmed) by the members of the churches.

Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:5; 2:42; 11:16; 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Timothy 3:1-14; Titus 1:5; Rom. 12:3-12.

Only two ordinances for the church were established by Jesus Christ, and followed by the Apostles and the early church: baptism of believers (by immersion in water) and the Lord's Supper. Both are to be practiced today.

Matthew 26:26-29; 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:13; 11:17-34.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Because Christ's Church is a body, its various parts minister to each other through the power, graces, and gifts given by the Spirit of God, each believer gifted for ministry to others.

Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-13; Heb. 2:3, 4; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.

WE AFFIRM SIX THINGS:

1. Further revelation, whether through prophecy, tongues, or interpretation, is unnecessary in the church today, and such claims to revelation tend not only to undermine the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, but lead many into instability, heresy, and division, often elevating experience over the Word of God.

Jeremiah 23:16-32; 2 Timothy 3:5-17; Matthew 5:18

2. Today's "speaking in tongues" (ecstatic utterance) is not to be identified with the first century gift of interpreted languages, either in essence, practice, purpose, or effects.

Acts 2:1-13.

3. While God can and does heal, such healings must be judged on their own merit, and much of what passes for healing today bears little resemblance to the healings recorded in the Gospels and the book of Acts, which also included raising the dead.

Matthew 9:18-34; John 11:43, 44; Acts 3:6-9; James 5:14-16.

4. The Holy Spirit, the giver of gifts, has given warnings of charismatic excess, proper guidelines for the use of the gifts, and clear statements of the priority of the proclaimed Word as the key means instruction.

1 Corinthians 1, 2, 12, 13, and 14.

5. Sickness and poverty both were present in the lives of the apostles, their associates, and the early church, and should not be judged abnormal, as or signs of unbelief.

John 9:3; Phil. 2:26, 27; 2 Cor. 8:2; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Timothy 4:20.

6. Since miracles of all sorts can be performed by Satan, and will be signs of the end-times and of Antichrist, the believer must be most cautious in endorsing a given manifestation as from God.

Matthew 24:11, 23-25; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 13:13-15.

LAST THINGS

In what the Bible calls "the last days," Jesus will return to receive His people, and to establish His kingdom upon the earth. The events of those last days include the rapture of the Church, the resurrection of the just and the unjust, the final rebellion of Satan, and the judgment of all men according to their deeds.

All of those who have opposed God will be cast, with Satan (God's fallen arch-rival and author of evil) and his demons, into the lake of fire (also known as Hell) to be tormented forever apart from God. This is "the second death."

Believers, in contrast, will be raised to eternal life, and will enjoy the unbroken fellowship of God forever, in the new heaven and new earth. They will be conformed spiritually and bodily to the image of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and will remain forever in His likeness, and in fellowship with Him, the Father, and the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2:1-12; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 5:1ff; 20:1-22:21; Romans 8:21-30; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57.

SANCTIFICATION

Knowledge of all the above gives the believer encouragement and reason to be faithful to his Lord, for whose return he looks, and whose will he has the heart to obey, even in the face of opposition. In this life, the believer must be ever watchful in prayer, and active in resisting Satan. Fleeing temptations, and "putting to death" the deeds of the flesh.

Ample provisions of grace and wisdom are granted the believer for the purpose of living skillfully and successfully in

this present age--including the promises and precepts of Scripture, the power of the Spirit, and the fellowship of the church. Although perfection is not possible in this life, the power of sin over the believer has been broken by the death of Christ, so that it no longer "reigns over" him. This fact allows the believer to find freedom from habitual sin and addictive behaviors. The normal Christian life is one of obedience, peace, and joy.

2 Peter 1:3-11; 3:11-13; 1 John 2:3-6; 3:2, 3; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Romans 6:1-23; 8:1-17; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:58; Acts 14:22; Matthew 13:19-23; Philippians 2:12, 13; 4:4-8; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 John 2:14-17; 2 Timothy 3:16.