

## I. Bibliology

### A. Preparation of the Human Authors

I believe God has spoken to us in His written Word by a process of dual authorship (2 Pet. 1:20-21). God, the primary author of Scripture, prepared the human authors in their disposition, training, and experience long before the writing began (Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15).

### B. Revelation

#### 1. General Revelation

I believe general revelation is “the knowledge of God’s existence, character, and moral law that comes through God’s creation to all humanity” (Grudem 1242). Although general revelation is a universal witness to God’s existence and something of His character, there is nothing in it about the love of God, the need for faith and repentance, Jesus, or the promise of forgiveness. Consequently, general revelation serves as a condemnation to man for perverting it, a prerequisite to special revelation, and in no way is salvific (Rom. 1:19-20; Ps. 19:1-3).

I believe the unreached person will go to hell if he does not believe on the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). This is not unjust on God’s part because He has given general revelation to everyone on earth leaving them without excuse (Rom. 1:18-23). I believe that general revelation cannot save anyone (Acts 4:12); instead only the special revelation of God’s Word, the Bible, can save someone (Rom. 10:17). The unreached must have the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His saving work on the cross to trust in Him and be saved (Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:6-17).

#### 2. Special Revelation

I believe special revelation is the objective, propositional material that God gave to the prepared human authors of Scripture so that they could record it for all time in the Bible. “Special” in contrast to “general” is particular in its reception and was sometimes even limited to one man (Gen. 12:1; 2 Cor. 12:1-4). Special revelation is the only means of knowing God and His requirements (Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:17).

#### 3. Necessity of Scripture

I believe that a corollary of special revelation is the attribute of Scripture known as necessity. The Bible is necessary for justification (Rom. 10:13-17) and sanctification (Matt. 4:4).

### C. Inspiration

#### 1. The Definition of Inspiration

I believe that inspiration is “a term referring to the fact that the words of Scripture are spoken by God” (Grudem 1245). I believe that since general revelation is inadequate for salvation, God inspired a permanent record of special revelation in the Bible by guiding the human authors in

such a way that the writings they produced were also the very words of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

## 2. The Scope of Inspiration

I believe that inspiration was an unrepeatable event that took place when the Holy Spirit breathed out the words of Scripture through the human authors of Scripture and that this event of inspiration does not continue in either the copying of manuscripts by scribes or the translation work of translators.

## 3. The Nature of Inspiration

I believe in the verbal (the words of Scripture—*graphe*), plenary (all the words of Scripture—*pasa*) inspiration of the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16).

## 4. The Proof of Inspiration

I believe the best proof of inspiration is the Bible's claim to be inspired; and therefore, it is self-attesting (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible needs no external evidences to bolster its status as the written Word of the Supreme Being of the universe (Heb. 4:12).

## 5. The Corollaries of Inspiration

### a. Authority

I believe that "...all the words in Scripture are God's Words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God" (Grudem 73). The Bible derives its attribute of authority from the fact that it is the inspired record of God's special revelation to man. Consequently, since it is the sole record of special revelation, the Bible is also the sole authority for faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

### b. Inerrancy

I believe that since God is truth and cannot lie (Num. 23:19; 1 John 5:20) and since the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16), Scripture has the attribute of inerrancy (Ps. 12:6; John 17:17). This means "that Scripture in the original manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact" (Grudem 1245).

### c. Canonicity

I believe that since the giving of special revelation has ceased, the Bible consists of a total of sixty-six books in the Old and New Testaments, and that these sixty-six books make up the completed canon of Scripture so that no further revelation is needed (Prov. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).

## D. Preservation

### 1. The Method of Preservation of the Text

I believe the writings of the Old and New Testaments have been carefully preserved by God providentially working through scribes, copyists, and printers over the ages so that we have the authentic Word of God today (Ps. 119:152, 160).

### 2. The Location of the Text

I deny all forms of Higher Textual Criticism when unbelieving scholars seek to undermine the authority of Scripture by denying the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy. I endorse Lower Textual Criticism when believing scholars endeavor to fully recover the original words of Scripture by comparing variants among the available manuscripts.

I believe the Old Testament Scriptures have been providentially preserved through an eclectic textual critical method utilizing the totality of the Masoretic family of texts with the comparison, input, and evaluation of other ancient Old Testament versions.

I believe the New Testament Scriptures have been providentially preserved in the totality of Greek manuscripts as opposed to preservation in only one Greek manuscript (eg. Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, etc.), Greek text type/family (eg. Textus Receptus, Majority Text, etc.), or translation (eg. King James Version of the Bible, etc.). This is also known as an eclectic view of preservation/textual criticism.

## E. Translation

### 1. General Statement

I agree with Section 1, Article 8 of the Westminster Confession which states,

...because these original tongues [Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek] are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner.

I wholeheartedly endorse the ongoing work of conservative Bible translation, both to English speaking people as well as to every other language on earth (Rom. 10:14-17), because of the inevitable change in spoken language over time, continual new developments in the understanding of the original languages of the Bible, new discoveries of manuscripts and manuscript fragments, and the absence of either parts or the entire Bible in spoken languages of various people groups throughout the world.

### 2. Specific Statement

I believe in the value and use of conservative translations of the Bible. I have personally read through the entirety of, studied, and benefited from the NASB, KJV, NKJV, ESV, NET, NIV, NLT, CSB, and the Geneva Bible. While I use/have used every one of these translations, I do not recommend them all equally. I would give greater caution to those that are more on the dynamic side of the translation spectrum.

I preach from the NKJV when at my home church. I read from multiple translations and usually do not stick too closely to any one translation. If I had to pick only one translation, I would choose the ESV for its balance between conformity to the donor original languages and its readability in the receptor English language. I memorize Scripture from the ESV. I will probably use the Elberfelder and Schlacter versions of the Bible in Germany. Both of these German Bibles are excellent conservative translations of the Bible and have benefited German speaking believers for many decades.

Having come from a KJV only background I am well acquainted with all sides of the argument on this issue. I have a good understanding of the nuances of positions and the contentious nature of this issue. I try to promote understanding of the issue with an irenic spirit. I pray that God would grant conservative churches unity on this issue.

#### F. Illumination

I believe illumination is that ministry of the Holy Spirit whereby He gives the believer certainty that the Scriptures are true and authoritative, removes the hostility toward Scripture due to depravity, and gives the capacity to grasp the significance of the Scriptures (1 Thess. 2:13; 1 John 2:20).

#### G. Interpretation

##### 1. Two Final Attributes of Scripture

###### a. Clarity/Perspicuity

I believe the Bible is clear to be understood by all who will read it seeking God's help (John 16:12-15; Deut. 6:6-7). The Bible is not esoteric, and it is the attribute of clarity which makes the correct interpretation or meaning of the Bible attainable. While the entire Bible is clear, and the central message of the Bible is unmistakably clear, the attribute of clarity does not mean that all verses and passages in the Bible are equally clear.

###### b. Sufficiency

I believe the Bible is sufficient for salvation, sanctification, every spiritual need, and for trusting and obeying God, and that we need not seek any special revelation outside of it (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

##### 2. Hermeneutics

### a. Interpretive Methodology

I believe that the meaning of the Bible can be ascertained as one applies the literal, grammatical, and historical method of interpretation to the text of Scripture coupled with the illumination of and humble reliance on the Holy Spirit (John 7:17; 1 Cor. 2:7-15; 1 John 2:20).

### b. The Biblical Covenants

I believe that a consistent application of a literal, grammatical, and historical hermeneutic to the Biblical Covenants leads one to a Dispensational framework between the Testaments of Scripture. Where I fall on the spectrum of continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments is more in the discontinuity region of Essentialist Dispensationalism as described by Ryrie in his book *Dispensationalism*.

I believe that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional (Gen. 17:7, 13, 19), and was later expanded into the Land Covenant (Deut. 27-30), the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:8-16; 1 Chron. 17:7-14), and the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34), each of which are unconditional and are to be literally fulfilled. The Church has not superseded Israel, nor is it the New Israel, but it has been graciously allowed to partake of the spiritual benefits and not the material benefits of the New Covenant which will be made with the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31-34).

I believe the Mosaic Covenant (Exo. 19-24) was annulled and the New Covenant was ratified by the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 8:11-28), and that the New Covenant was inaugurated with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit by Christ on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5; 2:33; Gal. 3:14). We are now living under the Law of Christ (Gal. 6:2) and not the Law of Moses (Rom. 6:14-15; Heb. 8:6-13). Because the Mosaic Law was a unit and cannot be divided (Gal. 5:3; Jam. 2:10), any laws we obey today that resemble laws in the Mosaic Law are merely the result of those laws transferring into the New Covenant and not due to any partial operation of the Mosaic Law.

## II. Theology Proper

### A. God the Trinity

I believe that within the one Being that is God (Deut. 6:4), there exists eternally three coequal and coeternal persons, namely the Father (John 17:1-26), the Son (John 1:1; 20:28), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). There are not three Gods (tri-theism), neither is there one God who reveals Himself in three different modes (modalism). The three Persons of the Trinity are ontologically equal (Matt. 28:19-20), but economically the three Persons have their unique roles (John 3:16; John 6:38; John 14:26).

### B. The Attributes of God

#### 1. The Attributes of Greatness

I believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is eternal (Ps. 90:2), infinite (1 Kings 8:27), immaterial (John 4:24), invisible (John 1:18), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-10), immanent (Jer. 23:23-24), immutable (Mal. 3:6), omniscient (1 John 3:20), incomprehensible (Isa. 55:9),

omnipotent (Gen. 17:1), all-wise (Rom. 11:33), perfect (Matt. 5:48), holy (Isa. 6:3), and sovereign (Eph. 1:11).

## 2. The Attributes of Goodness

I believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is love (1 John 4:8), good (Luke 18:19), righteous (Deut. 32:4), mercy (Eph. 2:4), justice (1 Pet. 1:17), and grace (Ps. 145:17).

## 3. Wrath

I believe that wrath is not an attribute of God but rather an outworking of His holiness. Because of His holiness, He must respond to sin; and that response is wrath or God's intense hatred of all sin (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 2:5).

## C. Sovereignty/Governance

I believe in soft determinism. God the Father decrees all things that happen according to His gracious purpose (Eph. 1:11-12) which is ultimately to bring Him maximum glory (Rev. 4:11). God is neither the author nor an approver of sin (John 8:38-47; Hab. 1:13), and He holds moral, intelligent creatures responsible for their sin (1 Pet. 1:17).

I believe that within the context of the economic Trinity, the Father directs the work of the Son (John 7:28-29) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26) to accomplish his plan and bring about His glory (Rom. 11:33-36).

## D. Creation

### 1. The Scope and Timing of the Creation

I believe that God created the universe and everything that is in it in six literal, 24-hour days (Gen. 1:1-2:3; Exo. 20:11). The creation is young (approximately 6,000-10,000 years old), because there was no gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, the six days of the creation week were literal 24-hour days as specified by the use of the words "evening and morning" (Gen. 1:5; Exo. 20:11), there were no gaps of time in between any of the seven days of creation (Exo. 20:11), the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is historical prose and not merely a literary framework that can accommodate deep time (14.5 billion years and/or 4.5 billion years), and the genealogies found in Genesis 5 and 11, although possibly containing some gaps, cannot be stretched whatsoever to accommodate deep time.

I believe that all life reproduces according to definite genetic laws, and although speciation among the Biblical kinds has been and is a reality, no life form can ever cross the genetic boundaries of the Biblical kind God set up during creation week (Gen. 1:11-12, 21-22, 24-25).

### 2. The Goodness and Fall of the Creation

I believe the original creation was intrinsically good, without sin and death (Gen. 1:31), but was subjected to futility and bondage because of the sin of the first humans, Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 8:20-22).

### 3. The Dominion Mandate

I believe man was given exhaustive dominion over everything on earth except other humans since humans were made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-29). Because activities such as slavery, abortion, human embryonic stem cell research, and artificial human cloning place man in dominion over other image bearers, they are evil. The dominion mandate given in Genesis 1:26-28 did not cease with the fall but continues despite the increased difficulty in carrying out the command (Rom. 8:20-22). The dominion mandate, far from being anti-environmentalism, is the only way humans can properly manage the earth and its resources because it gives the proper balance between worship of God and responsible use and care of His creation for mankind.

### III. Christology

#### A. The Pre-incarnate Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:1-2). All things were created by Him according to the plan of the Father (John 1:1-3), and He sustains all things (Col. 1:16-17).

#### B. The Deity of Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is the second person of the trinity and God. This is seen in the fact that the Scriptures explicitly state that Jesus is God at least seven times (John 1:1, 18; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:1). The Scriptures also evidence that Jesus possessed all the attributes of deity including eternality and self-existence (John 8:57-59), omnipotence (Matt. 8:26-27; 14:19), omniscience (Mark 2:8; John 1:48; 6:64), and omnipresence (Matt. 18:20; 28:20).

#### C. The Humanity of Christ

I believe that at Christ's incarnation He was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14/Matt. 1:23), and took on the nature of a man, (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-9) becoming God the Son incarnate. He is both 100% God and 100% man (John 1:1; Luke 2:52). In the Kenosis, Christ only surrendered the prerogatives of His deity to take on humanity and die but none of His divine essence (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).

#### D. The Impeccability of Christ

I believe that Christ did not sin, nor could He have sinned (*non-posse peccare*), and during His earthly life fulfilled the requirements of the Mosaic Law perfectly (Heb. 4:15). Christ's active obedience to the Mosaic Law is imputed to the account of a person when he believes on Christ and allows him to have the righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

#### E. The Cross Work of Christ

I believe Christ was crucified, buried, and resurrected on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Christ's passive obedience to the Father's will by staying on the cross and having the sins of the world imputed to him allows a person to have forgiveness of sins upon believing on Christ (1 Pet. 2:24). Christ's atonement was a vicarious substitution (Rom. 5:8). It was voluntary (John

10:15), propitiatory (Rom. 3:24-25), and unlimited in provision (1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:5-6) but limited in application (John 3:36). Christ's resurrection allows believers to have their own personal resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23).

#### F. The Current Work of Christ

I believe that after Christ ascended to His Father (Acts 1:9-10), He was exalted (Acts 2:33; Phil. 2:9), seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 12:2), made head of the Church (Col. 1:18), and intercedes for believers as a Great High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16).

#### G. The Second Coming of Christ

I believe that Christ will return to gather the Church to Himself at the Rapture (John 14:2-3; 1 Thess. 4:14-17) and seven years later will return with the Church to earth at His Second Coming to judge the earth (Rev. 19:11-21) and set up His kingdom where He will rule for 1,000 years from David's throne in Jerusalem (Rev. 20:1-6).

### IV. Pneumatology

#### A. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and possesses all the attributes of personality including speaking (Acts 8:38), creating (Gen. 1:2), interceding (Rom. 8:26), empowering (Zec. 4:6), commanding (Acts 13:2), guiding (Rom. 8:14), teaching (1 Cor. 2:13), praying (Rom. 8:26), testifying (John 15:26), comforting (John 14:26), and reproving (John 16:8).

#### B. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

I believe in the deity of the Holy Spirit because He is explicitly called God in Acts 5:1-4 and also because He possesses all the attributes of deity including omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10-11), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), eternality (Heb. 9:14), love (Rom. 15:30), holiness (Eph. 4:30), truth (1 John 5:6), and life (Rom. 8:2).

#### C. The Past Works of the Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit participated in creation (Gen. 1:2) and was active in the affairs of men and Israel (Gen. 6:3; Num. 11:17; Judg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 16:13). He revealed the words and will of God to humanity through both prophets and the human authors of Scripture (2 Sam. 23:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

#### D. The Current Works of the Holy Spirit

I believe that the current works of the Holy Spirit include conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11), regeneration or imparting spiritual life to the spiritually dead (Titus 3:5), indwelling believers (Rom. 8:9), baptizing believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13), anointing (1 John 2:20, 27), sealing (Eph. 4:30), giving gifts to the Church (1 Cor. 12:7-11), filling (Eph. 5:18), teaching (John 16:12-15), and producing fruit (Gal. 5:22-23).



## E. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

I believe in partial cessationism, that is, although the Holy Spirit is still actively gifting the Church. Some specific gifts, including the office of Apostle, as well as the gifts of prophecy, miracle working, healing, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues were given primarily as a sign to the unbelieving Jews as well as an aid to and authentication of the Church during its beginning stages in the first century (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 13:8-13). With the completion of the canon of the New Testament Scriptures, as well as the establishment of the Church, the sign gifts have ceased and are no longer operational nor are they to be sought after.

## V. Angelology

### A. Angels

I believe that angels were created by God (Col. 1:16). The Bible does not clearly reveal the exact time of their creation, however Job 38:4-7 indicates that they witnessed at least some if not all the creation week. I believe that their creation was sometime before Genesis 1:10. They minister to God by worshipping Him and by being in awe of God's activities (Isa. 6:1-4; Rev. 5:8-14). They also minister to man by announcing important events (Luke 1:34-35), acting as guardians (Matt. 18:10), and ministering to the needs of Christians (Heb. 1:14).

### B. Satan

I believe that Satan was created by God as an anointed cherub to minister to God around His throne (Eze. 28:11-15). He was perfect and beautiful until he became proud and rebelled against God (Isa. 14:12-15). He now roams the earth as a defeated enemy of Christ (Gen. 3:15; Matt. 4:1-11; John 12:31) seeking to destroy people (1 Pet. 5:8; Job 1:6-7; Rev. 12:10; 2 Cor. 4:4). At the Second Coming of Christ he will be bound and thrown into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3). After his release, he will deceive the nations once more, and be thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

### C. Demons

I believe that demons were created by God (Col. 1:16). They were originally good angels but followed Satan in his rebellion and became demons (2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:4). They roam the earth seeking to possess unbelievers (Matt. 17:18), oppress believers (Eph. 6:10-18), and twist the truth (1 Tim. 4:1). They will be judged with Satan and thrown into the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:7-10).

### D. Current Errors in Demonology

I do not believe that the Church needs to engage in deliverance evangelism or the exercising of demons in a particular geographical location for the gospel to be more effective. I also do not believe that demons can possess a believer in anyway, and that the Church should be engaging in deliverance sanctification or the idea that a person needs to have a particular demon exercised out of a particular area of his soul in order to continue in his spiritual growth. There is no hint of these ideas in the key passage of Ephesians 6:10-17.

## VI. Anthropology

### A. The Origin of Man

I believe that God created Adam and Eve as two literal humans in His own image (Gen. 1:26-27), which makes them totally separate and unique from all animals (Gen. 1:26-30), and in no way were they fashioned from previously existing animal species (Gen. 2:7, 18-24). God fashioned Adam from the dust of the ground and subsequently breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 2:7), then He fashioned Eve from a rib taken out of Adam's side and brought her to the man (Gen. 2:21-22).

### B. The Nature of Man

I believe that man is composed of an immaterial part (soul/spirit; John 12:27/13:21; Luke 1:46/47; Rev. 6:9/Heb. 12:23), and a material part (body; Mat. 10:28). The Bible uses many psychosomatic expressions including the following: heart, soul, mind, conscience, flesh, will, and spirit. The overlap in these expressions makes it difficult to splice up the immaterial part; therefore, I am a dichotomist.

### C. The Original State of Man and the Fall

I believe that Adam and Eve were created in a sinless state and able not to sin (Eccl. 7:29), but that they succumbed to the temptation of Satan and chose to sin against God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-7). This sinful action resulted in a curse upon the entire creation (Rom. 8:20-22), as well as the human race's total depravity/inability not to sin (Rom. 3:10, 23; Eph. 2:3), physical death (Rom. 5:12), and the just condemnation of God (Rom. 5:18-19). This condemnation of God results in all sinful humans deserving hell and the lake of fire as just punishment for their sins (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:11-15).

### D. Total Depravity and the Imputation of Sin

I believe that Satan was a perfect being until "iniquity was found in" him (Ezek. 28:14-19). Satan then tempted Eve causing Adam and Eve to sin bringing sin into the human race (Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12). Because of Adam's sin, all people are totally depraved. This means that sin has penetrated and affected the whole of man's being (Rom. 3:23). The unsaved have no possible means of salvation or recovery within themselves (Isa. 64:6) and are under condemnation and spiritually dead (John 3:36).

### E. Various Issues Related to Anthropology

#### 1. The Institution of Marriage

I believe that the marriage of Adam and Eve as described in Genesis 2:18-25 sets the precedent for all future marriage of men and women. This passage sets up the institution as a heterosexual, monogamous, sexually intimate ("one flesh"), and permanent ("leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife") relationship. Sexual intimacy outside of the marriage bond is morally unacceptable (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Heb. 13:4).

I believe that the exception clause (“except for sexual immorality”) for divorce found in Matthew 19:9 is linked only with divorce that comes before the exception clause, and not divorce and remarriage which come before and after the exception clause respectively. This means that if any kind of sexual immorality is going on relentlessly without repentance, it is grounds for divorce; however, it does not dissolve the marriage bond. Only death dissolves the marriage bond (Rom. 7:2-3). Therefore, I believe that one can get divorced for a spouse’s unrepentant ongoing sexual immorality but cannot get remarried because death is the only grounds for remarriage. This view seems to be the most consistent with Matthew 19:3-12, Romans 7:2-3, and 1 Corinthians 7.

## 2. LGBT+

I believe that all sexual sin is an attack on the image of God. Fornication treats the other person as an object, incest is trying to get too close to a similar image, bestiality is trying to have union with another image, and homosexuality is trying to have union with a mirror image. I believe that when preaching or teaching on homosexuality one should use caution with passages in the Mosaic Law that condemn the behavior, and instead major on the relevant New Testament passages (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). This is because the relevant passages in the Mosaic Law are closely connected with capital punishment which was supposed to be carried out under the theocracy of the nation of Israel. However, since the Church is not Israel and is under the New Covenant Scriptures, we should distance ourselves from the idea of carrying out capital punishment on sexual sin, and instead teach and preach against it with grace.

I deny that the Biblical writers were unaware of the complexities of same-sex attraction and transgenderism and that the Church over the past two millennia has misinterpreted the Biblical writers on this subject. I believe that these two recent ideas are an attack on Scripture’s sufficiency and clarity respectively (Klassen, “The Pauline Response to Today’s Sexual and Gender Confusion,” TMSJ Vol. 28, no. 2 (Fall 2017)).

## 3. Race and Racism

I believe that there is only one race of humans because we are all physically descended from Adam and Eve by procreation (Acts 17:26). The differences in the human race are the result of cultural and linguistic differences manifesting and taking root over time, as well as particular genetic traits that were present in the genetic makeup of Adam and Eve becoming dominant in different people groups. The differences have nothing to do with the pseudoscience of higher evolved human races becoming superior over lesser evolved ones. I believe that the Church is made up of everyone who has accepted Christ’s remedy for their sinful condition that they inherited from our parents Adam and Eve. We do not need to divide based on any genetic differences that we inherited from our first parents, but only based on our inheritance of sin and whether or not we have accepted the remedy for it in Christ.

## VII. Soteriology

### A. Scope of Salvation

I believe that salvation is available to all through the Gospel (John 3:16; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). Salvation is comprehensive in scope involving God’s deliverance of one from the penalty of sin

(justification, Rom. 5:1), the power of sin (sanctification, 2 Cor. 3:18), and the presence of sin (glorification, 1 Cor. 15:54-56). This threefold process is initiated by God's election of individuals for salvation (Eph. 1:3-6). Salvation is by grace through faith apart from any human works or merit (Eph. 2:8-10); however, it is man's responsibility to repent and believe the Gospel (Luke 24:45-47; Acts 16:31).

## B. Election

### 1. General Statement

I believe that God has sovereignly elected in Christ before the foundation of the world those whom He will regenerate, justify, and finally glorify (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11). Sovereign election will result in what God determines (John 6:37-40, 44; Acts 13:48; Eph. 1:11); however, this does not contradict nor negate the responsibility of man to repent and believe on Christ (John 3:18-19; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

### 2. The Unborn, Infants, Children, and Those Who Remain Mental Infants

I believe that human life begins at conception (Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5); therefore, induced abortion of a child in the womb is murder (Amos 1:13). Although all children inherit a sin nature from conception (Ps. 51:5), I believe that all children (including the unborn) who die before the age of accountability, as well as all humans who were never capable of being held accountable, go immediately to heaven to be with God (2 Sam. 12:23). It is apparently the mercy and goodness of God that moved Him in eternity past to sovereignly elect those people whom He determined would die before they reached the age of accountability (Luke 18:19; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 9:27).

## C. Regeneration

I believe that although regeneration is logically prior to faith in Jesus Christ, it is chronologically simultaneous. Therefore, when one is regenerated, he believes on Jesus Christ, and is given spiritual life by God and consequently salvation (Titus 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Bible (John 5:24). Regeneration is synonymous with the terms "born again," "born from above," and "born of the Spirit" (John 3:3-8).

## D. Justification

I believe that when one believes on Jesus Christ he is justified, that is, declared righteous. Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He forgives one's sins and imputes to him the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:20-5:1).

## E. Sanctification

### 1. Definitions

I believe sanctification is when God sets apart the believer for Himself. This is accomplished in three stages: 1) Positional sanctification when God sets apart the believer upon his initial salvation as a member of God's family (1 Cor. 6:11), 2) Progressive sanctification when God

continually makes the believer throughout his earthly life to become more like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), and 3) Ultimate sanctification when God takes us to heaven to be completely and eternally set apart to Him in holiness and righteousness (Eph. 5:26-27; Jude 24).

## 2. Personal Godliness and Conduct

### a. Personal Separation

I believe that the Holy Spirit will cause a believer to grow in godliness throughout his life. This godliness will manifest as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-26) as well as personal separation from sinful practices (2 Cor. 7:1), worldly associations (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:14-18), people who can hinder the believer's spiritual growth (1 Cor. 5:6-13), and false teachers/false doctrine (Rom. 16:17-18).

### b. Alcoholic Beverages

I believe that modern day wine and beer are comparable to what the Bible calls "strong drink" (Pro. 20:1; Isa. 5:11). I believe that references in the Bible to alcoholic beverages that were acceptable for believers to drink (John 2:1-11; 1 Tim. 3:3, 8; 5:23; etc.) were significantly lower in alcoholic content as compared to modern alcoholic beverages. Drunkenness is always a sin (1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10; Eph. 5:18), and in Biblical times one either became drunk by drinking large quantities of alcoholic beverages, or by drinking alcoholic beverages that were strong. Since every alcoholic beverage is strong today in the Biblical sense, every alcoholic beverage is wrong to drink. I believe that total abstinence from alcoholic beverages is the best policy in order to not offend other believers (Rom. 14:21), maintain a testimony for unbelievers (1 Pet. 2:11-12, 15-16; 4:3-4), guard against my own flesh's appetite (Rom. 13:14), and to glorify God in all that I do (1 Cor. 10:31).

### c. Personal Evangelism

I believe that it is every believer's responsibility and privilege to proclaim the Gospel to those unbelievers with whom that they are providentially placed in contact (Acts 1:8). This should be accomplished both through the testimony of a life of godliness (1 Pet. 2:11-3:2) as well as verbal proclamation and defense of the Gospel (Acts 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:15).

## F. Eternal Security and Assurance

I believe that the person who is justified is eternally secure, because God guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be reversed (John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:31-39; Eph. 1:13-14).

I believe that personal assurance of salvation comes to the believer when they are in fellowship with God, which includes actively seeking to please and obey Him in all matters of life (Eph. 4:30) and confessing sin on a daily basis (1 John 1:7-9). Also, the witness of the Holy Spirit enables the believer to know that they are a child of God (Rom. 8:16).

## G. Glorification

I believe that God will glorify all those that He has justified (Rom. 8:29-30). Glorification is the final step in salvation when God transforms both living and dead (1 Thess. 4:13-17) believers' physical, corruptible/mortal bodies into physical, incorruptible/immortal bodies at the resurrection to life (1 Cor. 15:42-43, 51-54).

## VIII. Ecclesiology

### A. The Universal Church

I believe that the universal, invisible Church is composed of all believers from Pentecost to the Rapture. Believers become members of the universal, invisible Church by Spirit Baptism (1 Cor. 12:12-13). Spirit Baptism began at Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5, 11:16) and will end at the Rapture (2 Thess. 2:6). Spirit Baptism is what makes the Church distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32).

### B. The Local Church

I believe that the universal, invisible Church is manifested in local churches. A local church is an assembly of professing, immersed believers, who are organized to teach and preach the Word of God, fellowship, observe the ordinances, worship God, continue in corporate prayer, practice church discipline, give to those in need, and evangelize the lost (Acts 2:41-47).

### C. The Officers of the Church

I believe that the Scriptural officers of the local New Testament church are elders and deacons. The titles pastor, elder, and overseer are all synonymous and refer to the same leadership role in the church (Acts 20:17, 28). The qualifications for the elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualifications for the deacon are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

I believe that only men are permitted to serve in the offices of elder and deacon according to the wording and use of the word *andros* in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 as well as 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

### D. The Ordinances of the Church

I believe that the ordinances of the local church are credo-baptism by immersion in water (Matt. 28:19-20) and communion which is a memorial of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and second coming (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:17-34).

### E. The Worship of the Church

I believe that the main point of the corporate gathering of the local church is for the purpose of worship of God. This is primarily carried out through the public reading of the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13), singing of songs (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16), corporate prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8), and the preaching of the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5).

### F. The Separation of the Church

I believe that the local church should seek to maintain its own purity by separating from other churches, associations, conventions, fellowships, councils, schools, colleges, universities,

seminaries, and any other organization that is apostate, worldly, liberal in doctrine and practice, or ecumenical (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Tim. 4:1-7, 16; 2 Tim. 2:14-19; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 John 9-11).

#### G. The Finances of the Church

I believe the work of the local church should be funded by members participating in grace giving and in faith promise missions (Rom. 15:22-29; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8-10; Gal. 6:6; Phi. 4:10-20; 1 Tim. 6:17-19).

#### H. The Mission of the Church

I believe that the local church's mission in the world is to evangelize the lost, baptize new converts, and make disciples out of the converts by teaching them the Bible (Matt. 28:18-20).

#### I. The Discipline of the Church

I believe that the process of church discipline is outlined in Matthew 18:15-20. This involves an individual going to a disorderly church member and confronting him privately about his conduct. If he will not listen, then the individual should get one or two more members to help him confront the disorderly member. If he will not listen to the two or three church members, then they are to take the matter to the entire church. If the disorderly member will not listen to the council of the entire church, then he should be dismissed from membership and treated like an unbeliever. The goal in this process is restoration of the sinning member to full standing in the church (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).

#### J. The Relationship between the Church and Civil Government

I believe that the state is a divinely ordained institute of God (Rom. 13:1-7). The Church is to pray for leaders of the state (1 Tim. 2:1-2), and to obey rules of the state unless to do so would be a clear violation of Scripture (Acts 4:18-20). Christ is the head of the Church (Eph. 5:23-24), and the Bible is the final authority of the Church in matters of faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Neither the Church nor the state have authority over each other, and should operate separately and in harmony, if possible, within their own spheres of authority.

### IX. Eschatology

#### A. General

I believe that the next event in the plan of God is the immanent Rapture/resurrection of the Church (Titus 2:13; Phil. 3:20-21, 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Soon after this event, the Antichrist will be revealed when he signs the agreement with Israel. This event will begin the Day of the Lord (Thess. 2:1-3; Dan. 9:27), as well as the seven-year Tribulation period (Rev. 6:19-10; Matt. 24:4-15; Dan. 9:27). The Tribulation period will be brought to an end by the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:11-16), when He will vanquish His enemies at the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:17-21), bind Satan for 1,000 years in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1-3), separate the sheep from the goats (Rev. 20:4-6; Matt. 25:31-46), and commence His Millennial Reign of unprecedented peace and prosperity over all the earth (Rev. 20:4-6). At the end of the 1,000 year period, Satan will be released from the bottomless pit and will gather all unbelievers to himself to make one

last stand against Christ; but they and Satan will be soundly defeated, judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, and thrown alive into the lake of fire where they will remain forever (Rev. 20:7-15). Then God will create the New Heaven and New Earth where believers will dwell forever in the blessed presence and fellowship of God (Rev. 21:1-22:5).

## B. Personal

### 1. Heaven

I believe that heaven is a literal place that is the location of God's throne (Isa. 6:1-7; Rev. 4:1-2). Jesus has prepared a dwelling place there for all believers where they will go upon their death or at the Rapture of the Church (John 14:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:8). Heaven is a place that has no sin, sinners, death, sorrow, crying, or pain in it (Rev. 21:4, 27), and is an unfathomably beautiful place (Rev. 21:9-22:5).

### 2. Hell/Lake of Fire

I believe that hell is a literal place of eternal conscious punishment for unbelievers (Matt. 25:41, 46; Luke 16:22-24). I believe that passages of Scripture that refer to the destruction of the unbeliever do not refer to annihilationism/cessation of existence, but to the harmful and destructive effects of final judgment on the unbeliever (Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 1:9).

I believe that the punishment of the unbeliever must be eternal, conscious punishment because that is the punishment that corresponds to sinning against an eternal, holy God (Mark 9:43; Rev. 20:10, 22:11). I believe that all unbelievers in hell will one day be cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).