

# What we believe and Why we believe it

## Our major beliefs and their theological foundations

God's people throughout the Scriptural revelation answered God's call to wrestle with life's problems in the light of God's graceful provision of wisdom, knowledge and most of all, Himself, to them. They did not start with a Bible. They started with God, responded to His Spirit, followed His direction and God taught them about walking with Him. They grew in their understanding of God and His ways and they formulated the beliefs He gave them—we call this collection the BIBLE today—and they grew in understanding of His ways, applied His wisdom to life and shared these truths with others as they worshipped, followed and sought Him and His leadership in life.

This was a healthy spiritual growth process. It changed their lives, created a culture and bound them together in spiritual community. It was not perfect; they messed up and failed often in their quest to walk with the Living God. But God was faithful as He led them, revealed Himself to them and enlarged their understanding of His wisdom and ways throughout their history until His ultimate self-revelation through His incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

We affirm the process of healthy spiritual growth as revealed throughout the Scriptures. God's people mature spiritually as they grow in their understanding of God, formulate biblical beliefs and convictions, apply these to life and share God's Good News. Formulating, understanding, applying and sharing the truths of God's Word are foundational disciplines to walking with Jesus and His people in Kingdom Mission.

### Major Beliefs

**About the Scriptures**--**The entire Bible is the uniquely God-given inspired Word of God.** The Bible is authoritative in its wisdom, redemptive in its purpose and restorative in its message. The Bible culminates in revealing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of the world.

**About God**--**God is one God who eternally exists in unity as the perfect love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** The triune God is the only uncreated being; He is the Creator of the world and the creatures in it. God has revealed Himself in Scripture as

- \*God the Eternal Father who desires all people to be restored to Him through His Son's atoning death on the cross and His life-giving resurrection.
- \*Jesus Christ who as Son of God is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary and reveals God to the world. He died and rose again to reconcile the world to God and to defeat the power of sin and the works of the devil. He will certainly return one day and consummate the coming of the New Heavens and Earth and the judgment of evil.
- \*The Holy Spirit of God who actively works to awaken people of their need of forgiveness and reconciliation to God, activates (quickens) their spirit to God resulting in their being born again, indwells them and empowers them with spiritual gifts to join God's mission of restoring the world to His purposes.

**About Humanity**--**People are God's highest creation, created in the image of God to have relationship and fellowship with Him.** Humanity's relationship with God was catastrophically ruptured through the sinful disobedience of Adam and Eve. Consequently the human race was alienated from God and rendered incapable of regaining a right relationship with God apart from God's gracious intervention. This spiritual alienation negatively affected every aspect of creation as the harmony God intended for the world was disrupted by the introduction of sin.

**About Salvation**--**The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the sole basis for the forgiveness of sin and restoration of relationship with God.** Through Jesus' atoning death on the cross and His life-giving resurrection, God reconciled the world to Himself. Jesus freely offers salvation to anyone who places their faith in His death and resurrection as the only sufficient offering for their sin. Our salvation affects life today in this age and will continue in the New Heavens and Earth when Jesus returns.

**About the Christian Life**—**Life as a Christian begins when a person responds to the grace of God and confesses Jesus as Lord.** The Christian life is what people who belong to Jesus and identify with Him experience as they follow Jesus in everyday life. In that sense, it is like a journey with Jesus in which He lives through

His people as they live for Him, not for themselves. Obedience to God's leadership through His Word and yielding to the Spirit of God as one navigates life should mature faith and conform His followers to the image of Christ as they express His love to their neighbors.

However, it is not only possible, it is inevitable, that followers of Jesus fall into temptation, resist His leadership or refuse to obey God's Word for their lives. When this occurs, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin and God disciplines His child to bring them back to His ways. God's goal is always correction and restoration, not condemnation and judgment.

Life as a Christian will transcend this lifetime and God's people will serve Him in the glory of the New Heavens and Earth as God's Kingdom Purposes are fully realized.

**About the Church--The church is not a building or institution. The church is composed of the people God has intersected with His grace and brought into right relationship with Himself.** The Church has the Lord Jesus Christ as its head and those who have placed their trust in Christ's atoning death and life-giving resurrection are interdependent parts of His Body. Jesus commissioned His Church to join Him in His Kingdom mission of sharing His Love and the Good News of His Kingdom. The Church brings glory to God by loving Him, obeying Him, serving our neighbors and making Him known to our neighbors and world through our worship, service and loving community.