

## **Preface to the theological principles of the Missionary Association**

Our time is characterized by theological, philosophical and political doctrines and convictions that run counter to the overall testimony of the Bible.

However, the following principles of faith are intended to set out the fundamental truths of the Word of God and make them the foundation of biblically oriented missionary work.

We are therefore convinced that a wholehearted acknowledgement of the Word of God and the corresponding implementation in the life and service of employees and believers results in God's personal and social blessing.

However, this exposition is not intended to be a formal profession of faith, because all human definitions and summaries always fall far short of the overall testimony of Holy Scripture. Like every exposition of the fundamentals of faith, this one can only be a human attempt to summarize the core statements of the infallible divine revelation of Holy Scripture and to derive practical applications from them. However, such an exposition must never assume the status of the infallible Word of God itself. And it can never claim to be complete and completely balanced, but it can certainly claim to be biblically correct and clear.

The verse references to the Bible given in the footnotes are therefore not comprehensive but are merely intended as representative references to motivate you to study the Bible in greater depth yourself, considering the context and other statements on the same topic.

In our responsibility before God, we therefore attempt to record in writing the foundations of what we believe and teach as a work. On the one hand, however, this is done in the awareness that we are fallible, that our knowledge is "piecemeal"<sup>1</sup> and that we therefore want to continue to grow in the knowledge of the Bible as the infallible Word of God and our sole and highest standard for our faith and our lives.

On the other hand, this is also done in the awareness that God has revealed His Word - the Bible - in an understandable way and that its central message is clearly comprehensible; so that every person is fully responsible to Him and any deviation from the central teachings of the Gospel has the most drastic consequences.<sup>2</sup>

In writing this compilation, we therefore submit ourselves to God's revealed word and follow His commission to "contend for the deposit of faith" that "*has been once for all delivered to the saints*"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor. 13:9.12

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 1:8-10

<sup>3</sup> Jud. 3

# Table of contents

|                                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Foreword.....                                         | 1  |
| Table of contents.....                                | 3  |
| 1. Holy Scriptures - the Bible.....                   | 5  |
| 1.1 Testimony of the Bible / God's Word.....          | 5  |
| 1.2 Understanding the Bible.....                      | 5  |
| 2. the triune God.....                                | 6  |
| 2.1 God - the Father.....                             | 6  |
| His essence.....                                      | 6  |
| His participation in salvation.....                   | 6  |
| 2.2 God - the Son.....                                | 7  |
| His essence.....                                      | 7  |
| His participation in salvation.....                   | 7  |
| 2.3 God - the Holy Spirit.....                        | 8  |
| His essence.....                                      | 8  |
| His participation in salvation.....                   | 9  |
| 3. the human being.....                               | 10 |
| 4. the redemption of man.....                         | 11 |
| 4.1 Election, predestination, vocation and faith..... | 11 |
| 4.2 New birth and faith.....                          | 12 |
| 4.3 Justification and faith.....                      | 12 |
| 4.4 Sanctification.....                               | 13 |
| Unique position.....                                  | 13 |
| Ongoing process.....                                  | 13 |
| 4.5 Certainty and assurance of salvation.....         | 13 |
| 4.6 Separation.....                                   | 14 |
| 5. The Church.....                                    | 14 |
| 5.1 The worldwide church of Jesus Christ.....         | 14 |
| The church and Israel.....                            | 14 |
| 5.2 The local church.....                             | 15 |
| Its essence.....                                      | 15 |
| Its purpose and task.....                             | 15 |
| Its service and position.....                         | 16 |
| Its management.....                                   | 16 |
| Its dependence and independence.....                  | 16 |
| The Church of Jesus and state authority.....          | 17 |
| 5.3 Gifts and abilities.....                          | 17 |
| Gifts of Service.....                                 | 17 |
| Sign gifts.....                                       | 17 |
| 5.4 Discipleship and Christ-likeness.....             | 18 |
| 5.5 Church discipline.....                            | 18 |

|                                                                                 |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 5.6 Man and woman, marriage and family.....                                     | 19 |
| Creation order and church.....                                                  | 19 |
| Marriage and family.....                                                        | 19 |
| 5.7 Symbolic Actions (Sacraments).....                                          | 20 |
| Baptismal.....                                                                  | 20 |
| The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).....                                         | 20 |
| 6. the Angels.....                                                              | 21 |
| 6.1 Holy Angels.....                                                            | 21 |
| 6.2 Fallen Angels.....                                                          | 21 |
| 7. the last things.....                                                         | 21 |
| 7.1 The final Death.....                                                        | 21 |
| 7.2 The Rapture of the Church.....                                              | 22 |
| 7.3 The time of Tribulation.....                                                | 22 |
| 7.4 The Second Coming of Christ and the Millennial Kingdom.....                 | 22 |
| 7.5. The Judgment of the Lost.....                                              | 23 |
| 7.6 Eternity.....                                                               | 23 |
| 8 Practical applications in the life of the church: Our goals and concerns..... | 24 |
| 8.1 Our central concerns.....                                                   | 24 |
| A life of worship.....                                                          | 24 |
| Mutual edification.....                                                         | 24 |
| Ministry of reconciliation.....                                                 | 24 |
| 8.2 Doctrinal issues and convictions.....                                       | 24 |
| 9. Concluding remarks.....                                                      | 25 |

## 1. Holy Scriptures - the Bible

### 1.1. Testimony of the Bible / God's Word

We believe, based on the example and authority of the Lord Jesus and His apostles, as well as the statements of Scripture itself, that the Bible - the Holy Scriptures - is God's written revelation to man. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments<sup>4</sup> represent the complete Word of God and are equally and in all parts inspired by the Holy Spirit: He guided the human authors in such a way that they, as individual personalities with the appropriate writing styles, compiled and wrote down God's Word for humanity accurately and without error - neither in part nor in its entirety.<sup>5</sup> This is referred to as dual authorship under the supervision of God. Changes to the Word of God are therefore to be rejected, for example any form of contextualization.

We therefore believe that the Bible in its original writings is the only infallible, inerrant, authoritative and sufficient guideline<sup>6</sup> for the Christian faith and its practical implementation in personal life as well as in church life. We have very reliable basic writings such as the *Textus Receptus*, which in turn enables very accurate translations into German and other languages. Through the Bible, God gives us everything we need for teaching, instruction, pastoral care, church building and ministry. It is also

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 15:4; 1Cor. 10:6,11; Lk. 24:25-27,43-48; 2Tim. 3:16-17

<sup>5</sup> 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1-2; Jn. 20:30-31; Mt. 5:18

<sup>6</sup> Mt. 4:3-11

sufficient and capable of leading people to eternal salvation<sup>7</sup>, as well as guiding and enabling them to lead a life that is pleasing to God and prompting other men to strive to be helping one another.<sup>8</sup> In this context, explicit reference is made to the Chicago Declaration.

## 1.2. Understanding the Bible

We therefore believe that the meaning of every part of Holy Scripture must be worked out in responsibility before God within the framework of a literal, grammatical -historical<sup>9,10</sup> understanding, within its overall context<sup>11</sup> and under the guidance and working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>12</sup> Scripture is usually interpreted through other scriptural passages.

We believe that there can be multiple applications for a biblical passage, but only one valid interpretation - each passage "will accomplish what I [God] please and carry out what I [God] have sent it to do".<sup>13</sup> We believe that a correct application is binding for all generations. A historical, cultural interpretation of Scripture is therefore to be rejected. We believe that the Word of God always questions man, but that it is never for man to question the Word of God.

We believe that God works in the believer through His revealed Word,<sup>14</sup> that it makes the seeker wise and judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. It cannot be understood by human wisdom alone; because it has been inspired by the Holy Spirit, it must also be revealed, communicated and judged by the Spirit.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. The triune God

We believe that there is only one living, true, eternal and sovereign God,<sup>16</sup> who is eternal and unlimited Spirit,<sup>17</sup> who has been fully revealed to us in Jesus Christ,<sup>18</sup> who is perfect in all his attributes and eternally exists in three persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are one in essence,<sup>19</sup> to whom worship and obedience are equally due.<sup>20</sup> The eternal God is omniscient,<sup>21</sup>

<sup>7</sup> 2Tim 3:15-17; 1Pet 1:23-25; Isa 55:11

<sup>8</sup> 2Tim 3:16-17; 1Thes. 2:13; 1Cor. 2:13; Mt. 4:3-11, 7:24-29; 22:29-32, 42-45; Lk. 16:29-31; Jn. 10:33-36; Col. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; Ps. 1; 119:11.105; Isa. 55:11

<sup>9</sup> Mt. 22:29-32; 22:41-46

<sup>10</sup> Mt. 12:1-8.40

<sup>11</sup> Mt. 4:3-11; Ps. 119:160

<sup>12</sup> 1Cor. 2:10-14; Jn. 16:12-13. This also includes the first chapters of Genesis, which are to be understood literally and teach a creation in 6 normal days (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 31:17; Ps. 33:9).

<sup>13</sup> Isa. 55:11

<sup>14</sup> Mt. 1:22-23, 4:4-7.10, 5:17-18; Lk. 24:25-27.44-46; Jn. 5:39, 10:35, 20:9 etc.; Rom. 16:26 ("prophetic writings" of the NT); 1Cor. 15:2-3, 2:13, 14:36-37; Gal. 3:8; 1Thes. 2:13; 2Tim. 3:14-17; 2Pet. 1:20-21, 3:16

<sup>15</sup> Ps. 19:7; Lk. 24:45; Jn. 6:45; 1Cor. 2:10-14; Heb. 4:12-13; 1Jn. 2:20.27

<sup>16</sup> Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5, 4:10

<sup>17</sup> Joh. 4:24; Ps. 115:3

<sup>18</sup> Joh. 1:18

<sup>19</sup> Mt. 3:16-17, 28:19; Jn. 5:19; 1Cor. 12:6; 2Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:18; Mark. 1:10-11; 1Cor. 12:4-6

<sup>20</sup> John 4:23, 5:23

<sup>21</sup> Heb. 4:14; Ps. 33:13-15; Spt. 15:13

omnipotent,<sup>22</sup> omnipresent<sup>23</sup> and himself the only standard of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.1 God - the Father

### His essence

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity of the one God, directs and accomplishes all things according to His will and according to His grace.<sup>25</sup> He created all things out of nothing.<sup>26</sup> As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence and redemption.<sup>27</sup>

His fatherhood includes both His position in the Trinity and His relationship to humanity.<sup>28</sup> However, He is only a spiritual Father for redeemed believers.<sup>29</sup>

He has ordained everything that happens to serve His glorification.<sup>30</sup> He continually sustains, guides and governs all creatures and events.<sup>31</sup> In His sovereignty and holiness, however, He is neither the author nor the promoter of sin,<sup>32</sup> nor does He limit the moral responsibility of His creatures.<sup>33</sup> Before God the Father, every human being bears sole responsibility for their actions.<sup>34</sup>

### His participation in salvation

In His grace He has providentially chosen from eternity those who are to be His own;<sup>35</sup> by grace He saves all and forgives the sins of those who come to Him. Through this adoption, the Father establishes the sonship of human beings.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.2 God - the Son

### His essence

We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity of the one God, as the eternal Son of the Father<sup>37</sup> possesses all divine attributes and is therefore eternally consubstantial with the Father.<sup>38</sup> We believe that God the Father, in accordance with His own will, created "the heavens and the

<sup>22</sup> Isa. 14:26-27, 40:28, 43:12

<sup>23</sup> Joh. 1:48; Ps. 139:7-12; 1Cor. 1:29

<sup>24</sup> Lk. 18:19; Joh. 14:6

<sup>25</sup> Ps. 145:9-10; 1Cor. 8:6

<sup>26</sup> Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9

<sup>27</sup> Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36

<sup>28</sup> Mal. 2:10; Eph. 4:6

<sup>29</sup> Rom. 8:14; 2Cor. 6:18

<sup>30</sup> Eph. 1:11-12

<sup>31</sup> 1Chr. 29:11

<sup>32</sup> Hab. 1:13; Joh. 8:38-47; Jam. 1:13-15

<sup>33</sup> 1Pet. 1:17; Rom. 1:18-20

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 14:12; Heb. 9:27

<sup>35</sup> Eph. 1:4-6; 1Petr. 1:1

<sup>36</sup> Joh. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9

<sup>37</sup> Mk. 2:5-12; Lk. 1:31-32; Jn. 1:1.14.18, 10:30-33; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:8

<sup>38</sup> John 10:30; 14:9

earth and all that is in them" through His Son Jesus Christ, who bears and sustains all things and created them with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup>

We believe that Jesus Christ is true man<sup>40</sup> (human nature) and true God (divine nature or deity) in inseparable unity.<sup>41</sup> We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary as true man and was born of her<sup>42</sup> and that He was the one and only God incarnate.<sup>43</sup> At His incarnation, and only during His earthly existence, He voluntarily took the place of a servant and renounced the independent exercise of His divine prerogatives, but without giving up anything of His divine nature, which continued to be in Him in all its fullness.<sup>44</sup> The Son of God<sup>45</sup> was, is and will forever remain God - in His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity took on all the important characteristics of being human and is therefore the only begotten God-man.<sup>46</sup>

### **His participation in salvation**

We believe that Jesus, i.e. "Yahweh the Savior",<sup>47</sup> as true God and true man led a completely sinless life.<sup>48</sup> In fulfillment of the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament<sup>49</sup> He gave His life for us on the cross vicariously and voluntarily<sup>50</sup> and shed His blood as a once-for-all reconciling, redeeming, God-pleasing sacrifice<sup>51</sup> and confirmed this through His resurrection from the dead<sup>52</sup> and His ascension into heaven.<sup>53</sup> We believe that He is thereby our righteousness before God.<sup>54</sup>

We believe that the sinner who has come to faith is or will be completely freed from the penalty, the curse, the power and in the future also from the presence of sin based on the effectiveness of the substitutionary death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, he has been declared righteous. He has been granted eternal life and has become part of the family of God.<sup>55</sup>

We believe that our justification was brought about by His actual, bodily resurrection from the dead<sup>56</sup> and secured by His subsequent bodily assumption into heaven<sup>57</sup> and that He is seated there at the right hand of the Father to represent us as our Advocate and High Priest.<sup>58</sup> With the

<sup>39</sup> Gen. 1:1-2; Job 26:13; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2

<sup>40</sup> Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14-17; 1Jn. 4:2; 2Jn. 7

<sup>41</sup> Mic. 5:2; Jn. 1:1.14, 5:23; 8:58, 14:9; 2Cor. 5:19-21; Phil. 2:6-10; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1 & 2; 1Jn. 2:23 - 3:3, 5:20 etc.

<sup>42</sup> Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-35; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:5-8

<sup>43</sup> John 1:1.14

<sup>44</sup> Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9

<sup>45</sup> John 1:18.34

<sup>46</sup> Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9; Joh. 1:14.18; 1Joh. 4:9

<sup>47</sup> Mt. 1:21 etc.

<sup>48</sup> Lk. 1:35; Jn. 8:46, 18:38, 19:4.6; 2Cor. 5:21; 1Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15; 1Jn. 3:5-6

<sup>49</sup> 1Cor. 15:1-4

<sup>50</sup> Rom. 3:25

<sup>51</sup> Joh. 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; 1Cor. 15:3; 1Pet. 2:24, 3:18; Heb. 9:26

<sup>52</sup> Mt. 28:6; Jn. 2:19; Acts 2:32-36, 3:15; Rom. 1:4, 6:4; 1Cor. 15:4.20; Eph. 1:19-20; Jn. 5:21

<sup>53</sup> Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:51; Eph. 1:20-21, 4:8-10; Heb. 1:3, 10:12

<sup>54</sup> 1Cor. 1:30; Heb. 9:24

<sup>55</sup> Joh. 5:24; Rom. 3:25, 5:8-9; 2Cor. 5:14-15; 1Pet. 2:24; 3:18

<sup>56</sup> Mt. 28:1-10; Jn. 20:1-19; Acts 2:22-24; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:1-23

<sup>57</sup> Acts 1:9-10

<sup>58</sup> Mt. 28:6; Lk. 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31, 7:55; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 4:14-16, 7:25; 9:24; 1Jn. 2:1

bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, God the Father has both confirmed the deity of His Son<sup>59</sup> and accepted His substitutionary work of reconciliation.<sup>60</sup> It is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all truly redeemed believers.<sup>61</sup>

We believe that Jesus Christ will return to take His church, i.e. the total number of all those redeemed by Him, to Himself and establish His millennial kingdom on earth.<sup>62</sup>

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind:<sup>63</sup>

- a) the truly redeemed believers in a prize court, <sup>64</sup>
- b) all those living on earth on the day of His return, <sup>65</sup>
- c) all unbelievers who died in the past centuries or will die before the judgment at the Great White Throne.<sup>66</sup>

As the only mediator between God and man,<sup>67</sup> as the only head of His church<sup>68</sup> and as the coming, all-embracing King and Regent,<sup>69</sup> He is the final judge of all those who do not truly place their faithful trust in Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior.<sup>70</sup>

## 2.3 God - the Holy Spirit

### His essence

We believe that the Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the one God.<sup>71</sup> He is eternal, without beginning and without end and possesses all the attributes of a divine person, in particular intellect,<sup>72</sup> emotion,<sup>73</sup> will,<sup>74</sup> eternity,<sup>75</sup> omnipresence,<sup>76</sup> omniscience,<sup>77</sup> omnipotence<sup>78</sup> and truth.<sup>79</sup> In all His divine attributes He is equal with the Father and the Son and is one in essence.<sup>80</sup>

We believe that the execution of God's will concerning mankind is the work of the Holy Spirit. We recognize His sovereign work in creation,<sup>81</sup> in

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<sup>59</sup> Rom. 1:4; Acts 13:33

<sup>60</sup> Acts 17:30-31; 1Tim 3:16

<sup>61</sup> Joh. 5:26-29; 14:1-9; Rom. 4:25; 6:5-11; 1Cor. 15:20-23

<sup>62</sup> Acts 1:9-11; 1Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 20

<sup>63</sup> Joh. 5:22-23

<sup>64</sup> 1Cor. 3:10-15; 2Cor. 5:10

<sup>65</sup> Mt. 25:31-46

<sup>66</sup> Rev. 20:11-15

<sup>67</sup> 1Tim. 2:5

<sup>68</sup> Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18

<sup>69</sup> Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 37:24-28; Lk. 1:31-33

<sup>70</sup> Mt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31

<sup>71</sup> Mt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4

<sup>72</sup> 1Cor. 2:10-13

<sup>73</sup> Eph. 4:30

<sup>74</sup> 1Cor. 12:11

<sup>75</sup> Heb. 9:14

<sup>76</sup> Ps. 139:7-10

<sup>77</sup> Isa. 40:13-14

<sup>78</sup> Rom. 15:13

<sup>79</sup> Joh. 16:13

<sup>80</sup> Mt. 28:19 "in the (one; singular) name"; Acts 5:3-4; 1Cor. 12:4-6; 2Cor. 13:13; cf. also Isa. 6:8-10 with Acts 28:25-26 and Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17

<sup>81</sup> Gen. 1:2

the incarnation of Jesus,<sup>82</sup> in the revelation and writing of the Word of God,<sup>83</sup> in the work of redemption,<sup>84</sup> and in true worship and service.<sup>85</sup>

### **His participation in salvation**

We believe that the Holy Spirit was sent to earth on Pentecost after Jesus' ascension to carry out His unique work in the present age of the church of Jesus, as previously promised by Jesus Christ,<sup>86</sup> namely the building of the "body of Christ", His worldwide church, until it is completed. Since then, He has dwelt in His church, both in each individual and in the catholic church, so that they are both the dwelling place and temple of God.<sup>87</sup>

His work includes convicting people of sin and righteousness<sup>88</sup> and the associated judgment, the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ and the transformation of believers into the image of Christ.<sup>89</sup>

We believe that it is the Holy Spirit who supernaturally and sovereignly brings about repentance, faith and the spiritual new birth of the redeemed<sup>90</sup> and incorporates them into the body of Christ, i.e. His church.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the Holy Spirit indwells,<sup>92</sup> fills,<sup>93</sup> sanctifies,<sup>94</sup> "anoints", teaches and empowers the redeemed believers for service<sup>95</sup> and seals and keeps<sup>96</sup> them safe until the day of final, full redemption.<sup>97</sup>

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets in writing God's revelation, the Bible, into all truth.<sup>98</sup> Every true believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. It is therefore the duty of all saints, i.e. all those who are born of the Spirit into eternal life, to live their daily practical lives filled with the Holy Spirit, i.e. controlled and guided by Him.<sup>99</sup>

We believe that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts for the church to each of its believers.<sup>100</sup> The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself, nor His gifts, nor the believers gifted with them through demonstrative display of the gifts. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ alone by carrying out His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the faith.<sup>101</sup>

In this regard, we believe that God, the Holy Spirit, acts sovereignly in giving all His gifts to equip the saints. In the early days of the Christian church, certain gifts such as speaking in tongues and signs and performing

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<sup>82</sup> Mt. 1:18

<sup>83</sup> 2Pet. 1:20-21; 2Tim. 3:16

<sup>84</sup> John 3:5-7

<sup>85</sup> Joh. 4:24

<sup>86</sup> John 14:16-17; 15:26

<sup>87</sup> Joh. 7:39, 16:7; Rom. 8:9; 1Cor. 3:16; 2Tim. 1:14; Gal. 4:6

<sup>88</sup> John 16:8-11

<sup>89</sup> Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22

<sup>90</sup> Joh. 16:7-11; Eph. 2:8; 2Tim. 2:25; Joh. 3:5-7; Rom. 8:15-16; Tit. 3:5-6

<sup>91</sup> 1Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Tit. 3:5

<sup>92</sup> Joh. 14:16-17; 1Cor. 6:19-20

<sup>93</sup> Acts 2:4, 4:8, 6:3; Rom. 8:14; Eph. 5:18

<sup>94</sup> 2Thes. 2:13; 1Pet. 1:2

<sup>95</sup> Acts 13:2-4; Rom. 12:6-8; 2Cor. 1:21; Eph. 4:11-16; 1Jn. 2:20,27

<sup>96</sup> 2Cor. 1:22, 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30

<sup>97</sup> Rom. 8:9; 2Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13; see: 7. last things

<sup>98</sup> 2Pet. 1:19-21; Joh. 14:26; 2Tim. 3:16

<sup>99</sup> Joh. 16:13; Rom. 8:9-11; Eph. 5:18; 1Joh. 2:20,27

<sup>100</sup> Rom. 12:4-10

<sup>101</sup> Joh. 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1Cor. 12:4-11; 2Cor. 3:18

miracles served to point to the apostles as messengers of Christ and revelators of divine truth and to authenticate them with such signs. However, speaking in tongues and performing miracles were never intended to be relevant features in the lives of believers at all times.<sup>102</sup>

### 3. The human being

We believe that man and woman<sup>103</sup> were created directly, immediately and literally by God in His image, i.e. in His likeness. Man and woman complement each other; only together are they "God's image".<sup>104</sup> Man was created free from sin, as a being with reason, intelligence, (free) will, self-determination and moral responsibility towards God.<sup>105</sup>

We believe that God's purpose and destiny for man is to love and worship God, to glorify Him, to enjoy Him and fellowship with Him eternally and to express this in a life according to His will.<sup>106</sup>

In practical terms, this means that our whole life, not just the church meetings or our personal time with God and His Word, is worship in the true sense of God's Word.<sup>107</sup>

We believe that man lost his innocence through Adam's sin of willful unbelief and disobedience to his Creator, His revealed will and His Word.<sup>108</sup> As a result, man fell under God's righteous judgment and incurred the just punishment of spiritual and physical death.<sup>109</sup> He became corrupt by nature. Although man is still responsible to his Creator-God to repent and believe in Him, he is both unwilling and unable to do so of his own accord.<sup>110</sup> He has since been dominated by the desires of his sinful nature and blinded by the devil,<sup>111</sup> loves darkness, i.e. distance from God, and therefore wants nothing to do with the true God.<sup>112</sup> Left to his own devices, man is therefore hopelessly lost and doomed to God's eternal, righteous judgment.<sup>113</sup> Man's salvation is therefore entirely and solely dependent on God's grace through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>114</sup>

We believe that all human beings are descended from Adam and are therefore, due to Adam's sin and its consequences, equally sinful, depraved beings who are doomed to the righteous judgment of the holy God.<sup>115</sup> The only exception to this is Jesus Christ as the only spirit-begotten Son of God.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, all human beings are sinners from birth due to their nature as

<sup>102</sup> 1Cor. 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; Heb. 2:1-4 - See also: 5:3 Gifts and qualifications

<sup>103</sup> Male and female in the biological sense

<sup>104</sup> See also: 5.6 Man and woman, marriage and family

<sup>105</sup> Gen. 1:26-27.31, 2:7.15-25; Ex. 2:7, 20:11; Mt. 19:4; Jas. 3:9; Isa. 29:16

<sup>106</sup> Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11

<sup>107</sup> Mt. 22:36-37; 1Cor. 1:9, 10:31; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 1:12.14

<sup>108</sup> Gen. 3:1-13; Rom. 5:12-14

<sup>109</sup> Gen. 2:16-17, 3:13-24; Ps. 51:7, 58:4; Rom. 5:12-19, 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:1-12

<sup>110</sup> Joh. 6:44.65; Deut. 29:1-5

<sup>111</sup> Tit. 3:3; 2Cor. 4:4

<sup>112</sup> Joh. 3:19, 8:41.44; Rom. 3:9-12; 1Joh. 3:8-10

<sup>113</sup> Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 5:12-19; Joh. 3:36; 1Joh. 1:8; Rev. 20:11-15

<sup>114</sup> Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-12; Jn. 10:9, 14:6; Acts 4:12

<sup>115</sup> Rom. 5:19; Gen. 6:5, 8:21

<sup>116</sup> Heb. 4:15

well as their own will, in whom no good core dwells and who do not seek God of their own accord.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18.23; 5:10-12

## 4. The redemption of man

We believe that salvation is solely and fully of God by His sovereign grace. As such, it is based solely and completely on the substitutionary sacrifice and redemptive work of Jesus Christ, not on human agency, merit or works of any kind.<sup>118</sup>

We believe that Jesus Christ bore and died the righteous judgment of God on the cross of Calvary on behalf of the faithful.<sup>119</sup> Only through repentance and trusting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His accomplished work is a person born to new eternal life.<sup>120</sup>

### 4.1 Election, predestination, vocation and faith

We believe that before the foundation of the world, i.e. before the beginning of time and creation, God chose in Jesus Christ those whom He makes willing by grace, contrary to their inherently sinful will, to come to Him and submit to Him, i.e. renews, saves and sanctifies them.<sup>121</sup> Based on the clear statements of the Word of God, this does not contradict man's responsibility to repent and believe and trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, nor does it abrogate man's responsibility.<sup>122</sup> Likewise, it remains the responsibility of Jesus' disciples to call people to repentance and conversion.

We believe that the undeserved kindness and grace that God shows to totally depraved sinners has nothing to do with any human initiative, since no human being seeks God on his own initiative.<sup>123</sup> Although election happens according to God's foreknowledge,<sup>124</sup> we do not want to tie man's election to God's knowledge of man's decision; rather, it is based exclusively on God's merciful will.<sup>125</sup>

However, we also believe that this election based on God's sovereign choice of grace is exercised in full harmony with God's other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace and love.<sup>126</sup> Thus the will of God is always emphasized in a way that is fully consistent with His entire nature as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, .<sup>127</sup>

We believe that God has destined those whom He has chosen to be His children even before the foundation of the world.<sup>128</sup> We also believe that with the Gospel proclamation, all people are called to repent and believe.

Although the gospel message is foolishness and is offensive to people,<sup>129</sup> those chosen by God respond to it with faith and are saved,<sup>130</sup> "for many are

<sup>118</sup> Joh. 1:12; Rom. 3:20-31; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; Gal. 2:16.21; 1Pet. 1:18-19

<sup>119</sup> Rom. 3:24; 2Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:7; 1Pet. 1:18-19, 2:21-25

<sup>120</sup> Joh. 1:12-13, 3:3-7; Rom. 3:24-25, 4:5; Eph. 2:8; Tit. 3:5-6; 1Pet. 1:2.23; Jam. 1:18

<sup>121</sup> Rom. 8:28-30, 9:6-29; Eph. 1:4-11, 2:1-10; 2Thes. 2:13; 2Tim. 1:9, 2:10; 1Pet. 1:1-2; Acts 13:48; Jam. 4:8; Rev. 13:8, 17:8

<sup>122</sup> Ezek. 18:23.32; 33:11; Jn. 3:18-19.36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2Thes. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17

<sup>123</sup> Rom. 3:11

<sup>124</sup> 1 Peter 1:1

<sup>125</sup> Rom. 8:29; Gal. 4:9; Eph. 1:4-7; Tit. 3:4-7; 1Pet. 1:2

<sup>126</sup> Rom. 9:11-16

<sup>127</sup> Mt. 11:25-28; 2Tim. 1:9

<sup>128</sup> Eph. 5:11

<sup>129</sup> 1Cor. 1:18.23

<sup>130</sup> 1Cor. 1:21; 2Thes. 2:13-14

called, but few are chosen."<sup>131</sup> All whom the Father calls come in faith; all who come in faith are accepted by the Father and saved.<sup>132</sup>

## 4.2. New birth and faith

We believe that the new birth is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, who gives the spiritually newborn new life and a new creation in Jesus Christ.<sup>133</sup> It happens immediately, solely through the power of the Holy Spirit and with the cooperation of the Word of God,<sup>134</sup> when the repentant sinner, empowered by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the demands of the gospel and the associated divine offer of salvation.

Genuine new birth is revealed through true repentance, which manifests itself in fruits or effects. The nature and actions of the believer are changed, which manifests itself in righteous attitudes and behavior. Good works will always be the result and hallmark of a genuine spiritual rebirth<sup>135</sup>. The believer is increasingly transformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, i.e. into the likeness of His nature, thinking and life.<sup>136</sup> This likeness will culminate in the glorification of the believer at the future return of Jesus Christ.<sup>137</sup>

## 4.3. Justification and faith

We believe that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son as a sacrifice so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life in fellowship with God<sup>138</sup> and that for this purpose, since God is a just and holy God, Jesus as a man had to suffer the death penalty on the cross for the believers.<sup>139</sup>

We believe that the justification of the believing sinner before God is entirely a work of God,<sup>140</sup> in which He declares righteous (sinless) those who repent of their sins through faith in Jesus Christ<sup>141</sup> and confess Him as sovereign Lord.<sup>142</sup> This righteousness is completely independent of any good qualities or works of man.<sup>143</sup> It means that Jesus Christ took the place of the believers in His sacrificial death on the cross and took their guilt of sin upon Himself<sup>144</sup> and His righteousness is imputed to the believers.<sup>145</sup> In this way, God can "*be just and justify the one who has faith in Jesus.*"<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Mt. 22:14

<sup>132</sup> 2 Tim. 1:9; Jn. 6:37-40, 44, 65, 10:27-29; Acts 13:48; 2 Tim. 1:9

<sup>133</sup> Joh. 3:3-7; Tit. 3:5; 1Cor. 6:11

<sup>134</sup> Joh. 5:24; Jam. 1:18; 2Pet. 1:23

<sup>135</sup> 1Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12b; Col. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:4-10

<sup>136</sup> 2Cor. 3:18

<sup>137</sup> Rom. 8:17, 22-30; 2Pet. 1:4; 1Jn. 3:2-3; 1Thes. 4:13-18

<sup>138</sup> Joh. 3:16; 1Joh. 3:16a

<sup>139</sup> Joh. 3:14-15

<sup>140</sup> Rom. 8:33

<sup>141</sup> Rom. 4:1-8; Gal. 2:14-16, 3:11; Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 11:18, 26:19-20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10; Isa. 55:6-7

<sup>142</sup> Rom. 10:9-10; 1Cor. 12:3; 2Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11

<sup>143</sup> Rom. 3:20; 4:6

<sup>144</sup> Col. 2:14; 1Pet. 2:24

<sup>145</sup> 1Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2Cor. 5:21

<sup>146</sup> Rom. 3:26; 2Cor. 5:21

We believe that Jesus Christ has thus created eternal redemption by atoning for and blotting out the sins of all those who believe in Him once and for all through His sacrifice,<sup>147</sup> so that God will never remember their sins and transgressions again.<sup>148</sup> Rather, all true believers in Jesus Christ receive direct and everlasting access to God because of His work.<sup>149</sup>

## 4.4. Sanctification

### Unique position

We believe that every true believer is set apart for God through justification, i.e. declared holy, and is therefore called a saint in Scripture. This sanctification is a position that a person receives through the work of the Holy Spirit when they repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

This *position* of holiness must not be confused with the ongoing *process* of sanctification. It has to do with the believer's position as a justified redeemed person, not with his present walk or life.<sup>150</sup>

### Ongoing process

We believe that these believers (saints) should live according to their new nature in a life of continual sanctification and separation from all evil.<sup>151</sup> They will follow their Lord and Savior with joy<sup>152</sup> and serve and live in joyful expectation of His return.<sup>153</sup>

We believe that the Holy Spirit also brings about this *process* of sanctification. The aim of ongoing sanctification is to bring the believer's state closer to Christlikeness through obedience to God's Word and through the equipping and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This means that the believer wants to live more and more according to God's will and increasingly leads a corresponding life.<sup>154</sup>

In this regard, Scripture teaches that every truly saved person is involved in a daily conflict. The new creation in Christ battles against the old, sinful nature. However, God also gives the necessary equipment and empowerment for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and through His Word. Nevertheless, the battle will accompany the believer throughout his entire earthly life, will never be completely over and will never lead to practical sinlessness. However, the Holy Spirit wants to equip us for a growing victory over sin so that we can increasingly live according to the gospel.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Heb. 1:3, 9:12.22, 10:2

<sup>148</sup> Heb. 10:17

<sup>149</sup> Heb. 10:14.17.19.20

<sup>150</sup> Acts 20:32; 1Cor. 1:2.30; 6:11; 2Thes. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10.14; 13:12; 1Pet. 1:2

<sup>151</sup> Rom. 6:12-19, 8:1-16; 1Cor. 5:11-13; 2Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:17-6:9; Phil. 4:8-9; Col. 3:1-25; 1Thes. 4:3; 2Thes. 3:6.14-15; 2Pet. 1:3-11; 1Jn. 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1.4.18; 2Jn. 7-11

<sup>152</sup> Rom. 7:4; 2Cor. 5:15; Eph. 2:8-10; 1Thes. 1:9; Tit. 2:14, 3:8; Jam. 2:14-26

<sup>153</sup> 1Cor. 11:26; 1Thes. 1:10, 2:19-20, 3:13; Tit. 2:12-13; Lk. 12:35-37

<sup>154</sup> Joh. 17:17.19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2Cor. 3:18; 1Thes. 4:3-4; 5:23

<sup>155</sup> Joh. 14:20; Rom. 8:1-14; 2Cor. 3:3, 4:10, 12:9; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; 1Pet. 1:14-16; 1Jn. 2:6, 3:5-9; Joh. 17:

## 4.5. Certainty and assurance of salvation

We believe that all the redeemed who have once been saved are kept safe by God's power and are therefore safe in Christ forever. Like the people of Israel, the believer can fall away but cannot be lost. In this respect, Christ can no longer be sacrificed for him (Heb. 6). God's goodness and grace will lead to repentance. Once truly saved, a born-again believer can neither ever lose salvation nor decide against it or give it up. Every truly born-again believer has passed once and for all from eternal judgment to eternal life.<sup>156</sup> What God has begun in the chosen believers, He will complete until perfection on the future day of Jesus Christ.<sup>157</sup> Through Holy Scripture, however, God forbids this Christian freedom to be used as an excuse for sinful living and sensual pleasure.<sup>158</sup>

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to know for certain, through the testimony of the Word of God, that they are saved because of their faith in the perfect work of Jesus Christ.<sup>159</sup> When the believer lives according to the Word of God as a result of his spiritual new birth, the Holy Spirit testifies in him that he is truly an eternal child of God.<sup>160</sup> However, anyone who confesses and bears the name of Jesus Christ but lives willfully and persistently in sin should seriously question their rebirth and salvation.<sup>161</sup>

## 4.6. Separation

We believe that separation from sin is clearly demanded throughout the Old and New Testaments and that, according to the testimony of Scripture, apostasy and worldliness will increase in the last days.<sup>162</sup>

Out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace received from God and in the knowledge that our glorious God is worthy of complete devotion, all believers should live in such a way that their adoring love for God becomes visible, and they bring no shame upon their Lord and Savior. We must assume that we are living in the time of the great apostasy and therefore organizational separation and segregation from all religious associations is required.<sup>163</sup>

We believe that believers should set themselves apart for their Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>164</sup> i.e. that they should be guided solely by God's values, principles and will, as revealed in the Bible. We believe that the life of the redeemed is therefore a life of obedient righteousness in the sense of the beatitudes<sup>165</sup> and a constant striving for sanctification.<sup>166</sup> The standards of the Word of God are to be given priority over any kind of man-made unity.

<sup>156</sup> Jn. 5:24; 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10, 8:1.10-11.28-39; 1Cor. 1:4-9; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25, 13:5; 1Pet. 1:4-5; Jud. 24

<sup>157</sup> Phil. 1:6; Heb. 12:2; cf. Lk. 22:31-32

<sup>158</sup> Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13,16-17+25-26; Tit. 2:11-14

<sup>159</sup> 1Jn 5:13

<sup>160</sup> Rom. 8:14-17; 1Jn. 4:13

<sup>161</sup> 1Jn. 2:3-6, 3:9-10; 2Cor. 13:5; Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:14

<sup>162</sup> 2Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2Tim. 3:1-5

<sup>163</sup> Rom. 12:1-2; 1Cor. 5:9-13; 2Cor. 6:14 - 7:1; 1Jn. 2:15-17; 2Jn. 9-11

<sup>164</sup> 2Thess 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2

<sup>165</sup> Mt. 5:2-12

<sup>166</sup> Rom. 12:1-2; 2Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Tit. 2:11-14; 1Jn. 3:1-10

## 5. The Church Assembly

### 5.1. The worldwide church of Jesus Christ

We believe that all those who place their existential trust in faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are immediately incorporated into the one, invisible spiritual body of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit at their new birth. This "*body*" is Christ's church<sup>167</sup> and Christ's bride,<sup>168</sup> whose head is only Jesus Christ himself.<sup>169</sup>

We believe that the New Testament church, the spiritual body of Christ, came into being on Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit<sup>170</sup> and will be completed at the return of Jesus Christ for His own and their rapture into heaven.<sup>171</sup> We believe that the church is a unique spiritual body and organism created by Jesus Christ.

#### The church and Israel

We believe that Israel is God's chosen people and that the divine promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants will still be fulfilled. The rejection or setting aside of the people of Israel that began with the rejection of the Lord Jesus as the promised Messiah is temporary and will come to an end when Jesus Christ returns to earth and establishes His Messianic kingdom of peace.<sup>172</sup> He does not regret His callings.

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ is not a replacement or successor of the ethnic people of Israel, but rather a "new body". The church of Jesus Christ consists of all newborn believers, regardless of their ethnic origin.<sup>173</sup> As the heavenly people of God, the church differs from Israel, the earthly people of God,<sup>174</sup> but both Jews or Israelites who believe in Christ and non-Jews or non-Israelites who believe in Christ are equally incorporated into the one body of Christ, his church.<sup>175</sup> This mystery was only revealed in the present New Testament age.<sup>176</sup>

### 5.2. The local Church / Assembly

#### Its essence

We believe that the one, universal and invisible church of Jesus is currently represented in many individual local churches. God has taught and laid down the origin, continued existence, life, tasks, principles and structures of these local churches, particularly in the writings of the New Testament

<sup>167</sup> 1Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 1:18.24

<sup>168</sup> 2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8

<sup>169</sup> Eph. 1:22; 4:15; Col. 1:18

<sup>170</sup> Acts 1:5; 2:1-21.38-47, 10:44-48, 11:15-17

<sup>171</sup> 1Cor. 15:51-52; 1Thes. 4:13-18

<sup>172</sup> Acts 15:14-18; Rom. 11:25-32 - see 7 Last things

<sup>173</sup> Eph. 2:11-22 (2:11 - 3:6); Gal. 3:26-29

<sup>174</sup> 1Cor. 10:32

<sup>175</sup> 1Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-16.19-21

<sup>176</sup> Eph. 3:1-6; 5,32

of the Bible.<sup>177</sup>

We believe that the members of the one spiritual body of Christ, as true believers, should gather in local churches around the Lord Jesus Christ as head and center.<sup>178</sup>

### **Its purpose and task**

We believe that it is the task and goal of every local church to worship and glorify God together,<sup>179</sup> to present all requests to Him in prayer and thus express our dependence,<sup>180</sup> to receive instruction and teaching from the Word of God,<sup>181</sup> to cultivate fellowship, mutual strengthening, encouragement and help,<sup>182</sup> to follow the instructions of the Lord Jesus regarding baptism and the celebration of the Lord's Supper,<sup>183</sup> to be built up in faith<sup>184</sup> and to contribute to proclaiming and promoting the Gospel throughout the world.<sup>185</sup>

We believe that it is one of the primary tasks of the entire church and each individual believer to share the message of the gospel according to the biblical witness.<sup>186</sup> Every believer should be encouraged and equipped in this.<sup>187</sup> Likewise, the local church should send out or support workers to proclaim the gospel and plant churches elsewhere.<sup>188</sup>

### **Its service and position**

We believe that there is no distinction between "*clergy*" and "*laity*" in the church, but that all saints are called to serve in the church within the framework of the New Testament church orders.<sup>189</sup> Consequently, we believe in a universal priesthood and reject any form of Nicolaitans. To this end, each church and its members are given special gifts or spiritual qualifications by God, as well as faithful men, who are able to teach, equip and assist others in ministry. This includes unity, servanthood, teamwork and the training of all believers.<sup>190</sup>

We believe that every aspect of church life should be permeated by loving relationships. Through active love, believers should learn to respect others more than themselves and be willing to bear with and forgive one another.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Acts 14:23-27; 20:17-28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; 1Thes. 1:1; 2Thes. 1:1

<sup>178</sup> 1Cor 11:18-20; Heb 10:25; Mt 18:20

<sup>179</sup> Eph. 3:21; Mt. 5:16; 1Pet. 2:5,9-12; Heb. 10:25

<sup>180</sup> Acts 2:42-47, 11:5; Rom. 12:12; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 2Tim. 2:1

<sup>181</sup> Acts 2:42-47; 2 Tim. 2:2,15; 3:16-17; Mt. 28:20; Eph. 4:12

<sup>182</sup> Acts 2:42-47; 1Jn 1:3

<sup>183</sup> Acts 2:40-42; Lk. 22:19; Mt. 28:19-20; 1Cor. 11:17-34 - See also: 5.6 Symbolic acts

<sup>184</sup> Eph. 4:13-16; Col. 1:28

<sup>185</sup> Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47 Acts 1:8

<sup>186</sup> Mt. 5:16, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 13:1-3; 2Cor. 5:17ff; Phil. 2:14-16; 1Pet. 2:11-12, 3:15-16

<sup>187</sup> Lk. 5:30-32; Mt. 5:16, 18:14; 1Cor. 9:19-23; Col. 4:5-6; Jn. 4:36-38

<sup>188</sup> Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:1-4, 14:21-23, 16:5; Tit. 1:5; 3Jn. 3-8; Ps. 118:8-9; Jer. 17:5; Mt. 6:33

<sup>189</sup> 1Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12; 1Pet. 2:5; Rev. 22:12

<sup>190</sup> Ps. 133:1; 1Cor. 12 & 14; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:11-16; 1Pet. 4:10-11; Acts 19:9-10 - See also: 5.3 *Gifts and abilities*

<sup>191</sup> 1Cor. 13; Jn. 13:34-35; 1Jn. 2:6; 4:7-11,21, 5:1; Phil. 2:1-11; Mt. 6:12-15; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13

## Its Leadership

We believe that Jesus Christ is the direct and highest authority for the church.<sup>192</sup> Through His sovereignty and with the help of the Holy Spirit, leadership, gifts and ordinances are established and church discipline is practiced.

We believe that Jesus Christ appoints *shepherds* (Greek: *poimen*) to each local church, who exercise the ministry of *overseers* (Greek: *episkopos*) or *elders* (Greek: *presbyteros*) and *leaders* (Greek: *hegeomai*).<sup>193</sup> This ministry can only be exercised by a plurality of faithful men who (exclusively) fulfill certain timelessly valid biblical qualifications.<sup>194</sup> These elders (shepherds, overseers, leaders) lead the local church as Christ's servants and are directly accountable to Him.<sup>195</sup> They have His authority to govern the church, to which the congregation is to submit.<sup>196</sup>

We believe that Jesus Christ also gives each local church *deacons* as servants of the church. These men must also fulfill the corresponding timelessly valid biblical qualifications.<sup>197</sup>

## Its dependence and independence

We believe that Jesus Christ, through His Word (Word of God), His presence and the Holy Spirit, is the sole and direct authority of both His universal, invisible church as a whole and of every local church.

Each local church as part and representation of His overall church is therefore free from any external authority, organization or control and is exclusively and directly responsible to the head of the overall church, the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>198</sup>

However, we also believe that Bible-believing churches work together to present, publicize and spread the common faith. However, local churches should make decisions about the extent and method of cooperation through their respective elders (pastors, leaders) and based on their responsible interpretation and application of Scripture.<sup>199</sup>

## The church of Jesus and state authority

We believe that every state government is instituted by God to preserve a certain order and that its laws and obligations, insofar as they do not expressly contradict obedience to God and His will revealed in the Holy Scriptures, must be complied with.<sup>200 201</sup>

The nature, function, goal and responsibility of the church and the state or government are different and must therefore not be confused. The visible establishment of the kingdom of God is future and is linked to the return of Jesus at the end of the tribulation period. Prayer for every state

<sup>192</sup> 1Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18

<sup>193</sup> Acts 20:23; Eph. 4:11

<sup>194</sup> 1Tim. 3:1-11; Tit. 1:5-9; 1Pet. 5:1-5

<sup>195</sup> Acts 20:28; 1Tim. 5:17-22; Heb. 13:17

<sup>196</sup> Heb 13:7,17

<sup>197</sup> 1Tim. 3:12-13; Acts 6:3

<sup>198</sup> Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18, 2:20; Tit. 1:5; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17

<sup>199</sup> Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; 1Cor. 5:4-7+13; Tit. 3:1; 1Pet. 5:1-4; Prov. 24:21

<sup>200</sup> Acts 4:19, 5:29

<sup>201</sup> Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-4; 1Pet. 2:13-17; Acts 5:29

authority is a serious duty of every Christian, precisely because our Savior wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.<sup>202</sup>

### 5.3. Gifts and abilities

We believe that God gives every believer spiritual gifts, that are necessary for ministry, for the fulfillment of their tasks and for the good of the local church.<sup>203</sup> For this reason, all saints are called to serve in the church.<sup>204</sup>

#### Gifts of service

On the one hand, He gives men who are chosen and gifted by Him to equip and instruct the saints or members of the church for the exercise of the various ministries, so that the ministries and tasks in the local church can be done by the entirety of its members.<sup>205</sup>

On the other hand, He gives each individual believer, as a member of the body of Christ, individual and special spiritual abilities as He wills. Their responsible use is intended for the common good and the edification of the church and its members<sup>206</sup> and is subject to the regulations of the New Testament, particularly the gender-specific task assignments, especially in the context of church meetings.<sup>207</sup>

We believe that these two groups of ministry gifts are given to the church of Jesus Christ at all times of its earthly existence, i.e. from Pentecost until its rapture into heaven.

#### Sign gifts

We believe that the church of Jesus Christ was given special gifts of divine revelation and healing in addition to the above-mentioned ministry gifts in its initial phase. These were limited to the time of the apostles, primarily to confirm the credibility of the gospel.<sup>208</sup> This is in no way intended to limit the omnipotence and greatness of God and God's sovereign action in the present.

With the complete revelation of the New Testament as the final part of Holy Scripture, the Word of God (Bible) is the sole source, exclusive standard and serves to authenticate the credibility of a person's message, so that special symbolic gifts of divine confirmation are no longer necessary.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, the Scriptures are aware of the deception of believers in the end times by satanic machinations.<sup>210</sup> Today, it is customary to give gifts of service for edification and equipping.<sup>211</sup> This does not exclude the possibility of the Lord intervening supernaturally and sovereignly in a person's life, but this is not tied to the exercise of spiritual gifts. Likewise, God hears the prayer of faith, which He will answer in

<sup>202</sup> 1Tim. 2:1-4

<sup>203</sup> Rom. 12:4-10; 1Cor. 12:4-31; 1Ptr. 4:10-11

<sup>204</sup> 1Cor. 1:7, 15:58; Eph. 4:12

<sup>205</sup> Eph. 4:7-13; 2Tim. 2:2

<sup>206</sup> Rom. 12:5-8; 1Cor. 12:4-31; 14:5-12; 1Pet. 4:10-11

<sup>207</sup> 1Cor. 14:34-25; 1Tim. 2:11-12; Tit. 2:4-5 - See also: 5.6 Husband and wife, marriage and family

<sup>208</sup> Heb. 2:3-4; 2Cor. 12:12

<sup>209</sup> Heb. 2:3-4; 1Cor. 12:12, 13:8-12

<sup>210</sup> Mt. 24:24; 2Thes. 2:7-12; Rev. 13:13-14

<sup>211</sup> Rom. 12:6-8

accordance with His perfect, good and sovereign will for the sick, suffering and afflicted.<sup>212</sup>

## 5.4. Discipleship and Christ-likeness

We believe that every true believer is a disciple of the Lord Jesus, i.e. follows Him in obedience, longs for Jesus to take shape in him and therefore cultivates a close personal relationship with Him. This discipleship or following is based on feeding on the Word of God and leading a fruitful life of prayer.<sup>213</sup> Devotion to Jesus Christ and His work, encompassing all areas of life, is a hallmark of every saved person.<sup>214</sup> It is a lifelong process of learning and obedience.<sup>215</sup> The believer strives and learns to live in the fullness of His Spirit and to allow Him to take shape more and more.<sup>216</sup> All believers are responsible for one another to become more Christ-like in this way.<sup>217</sup>

We believe that within the framework of this mutual responsibility and care, the rebuke of sinning church members according to the standards and principles of Scripture is required and necessary to help believers who have fallen into sin to repent, be forgiven and continue to grow.<sup>218</sup>

## 5.5. Church discipline

We believe that all believers in a local church live in the context of a loving and caring relationship with one another that is intended by God.<sup>219</sup> Rebuking sinning church members in accordance with the standard and instructions of the Holy Scriptures is therefore a necessary means of helping them to return to a godly life of discipleship<sup>220</sup> and to do justice to the nature of the church as the body of the Lord Jesus and the temple of God with sound doctrine and godly living.<sup>221</sup>

Neglecting this principle, which is also exercised by God in His love for His own, would invariably mean disregarding the commandment to love and care.<sup>222</sup>

## 5.6. Man and woman, marriage and family

### Creation order and church

We believe that man and woman are completely equal and of equal rank in the eyes of God and as the redeemed, which is revealed in the bestowed sonship.<sup>223</sup> However, they have been assigned different tasks and ministries on earth in order to reveal divine truths and God's manifold wisdom to both

<sup>212</sup> Lk. 18:1-8; Joh. 5:7-9; 2Cor. 12:6-10; Jam. 5:13-16; 1Joh. 5:14-15

<sup>213</sup> Joh. 8:31-32, 15:7; Jer. 33:3

<sup>214</sup> 2Chr 16:9; 2Cor 8:7; Rom 12:1-2; Mt 6:33

<sup>215</sup> Mt. 28:19-20; 2Tim. 2:2

<sup>216</sup> Joh. 15:1-11; Gal. 2:20, 4:19; Eph. 5:18

<sup>217</sup> Mt. 18:5-14; Heb. 10:25

<sup>218</sup> Mt. 18:15-22; Acts 5:1-11; 1Cor. 5:1-13; 2Thes. 3:6-15; 1Tim. 1:19-20; Tit. 1:10-16

<sup>219</sup> Col. 3:15-16

<sup>220</sup> Mt. 18:15-22; 2Ti. 3:16-17; 1Co. 5:1-13; 2Thes. 3:6-15; Tit. 1:10-16; 1Pet. 1:15-16

<sup>221</sup> Joh. 17:19; 1Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:21-22; Tit. 3:10-11; Heb. 12:15-17; 1Pet. 2:5.9

<sup>222</sup> Heb. 12:6-13

<sup>223</sup> Gal. 3:28; 1Pet. 3:7

the visible and the invisible world.<sup>224</sup> Based on the order of creation, the fall of man and the position of the Lord Jesus Christ as the head and loving bridegroom of His redeemed church, the woman is therefore to submit to her own husband and not exercise any leadership or teaching activities in the church. She should remain silent in public church meetings and distinguish herself from the man in prayer by covering her head for the sake of the angels, while the man prays with his head uncovered.<sup>225</sup>

## Marriage and family

We believe that marriage and family is a loving divine institution from the beginning of creation. We believe that marriage between a man and a woman is the only legitimate framework for the exercise of the divine gift of sexuality.<sup>226</sup> It is entered into between a single man and a single woman and lasts as long as both spouses are alive. The divorce of a marriage is a very rare and exceptional situation precisely regulated in the Word of God.<sup>227</sup> Remarriage is not permitted by the Word of God.

We believe that the **husband** is the responsible head of the family before God,<sup>228</sup> should love his wife as himself, support her and commit and give his life for her and her well-being just as selflessly as Jesus Christ gave His life for His redeemed.<sup>229</sup> He should understand his wife and her weaknesses, honor her as a co-redeemed equal before God and meet her legitimate needs.<sup>230</sup>

We believe that the **wife** is the husband's helper and should therefore assist him in his God-given tasks, submit to him and fulfill his legitimate needs.<sup>231</sup> The preferred sphere of activity of the wife and mother is at home in the home and family.<sup>232</sup>

We believe that **father and mother** should love their children as a blessing from God<sup>233</sup>.<sup>234</sup> God has given parents the task and responsibility<sup>235</sup> to bring them up in mutual agreement<sup>236</sup> lovingly in the love and fear of God and focused on Jesus Christ and His gospel<sup>237</sup> and to observe the various instructions and advice of the Word of God to this end.<sup>238</sup>

We believe that **children** should obey their parents<sup>239</sup> and respect them.<sup>240</sup>

<sup>224</sup> Eph. 3:10

<sup>225</sup> 1Cor. 11:3-15; 14:34; 1Tim. 2:12-14; Eph. 5:23-32, 1:22-23

<sup>226</sup> Gen. 2:24; Lev. 18:1-30; Deut. 23:17; Rom. 1:26-29; 1Cor. 5:1, 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5-6; 1Thes. 4:1-8; 1Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4; Prov. 18:22, 19:14

<sup>227</sup> Eph. 5:5,31; Mt. 19:3-12; Mk. 10:7-9; Rom. 7:1-3; 1Cor. 5:11,7:10-11; 1Tim. 1:10, 3:2,12; Tit. 1:6; Rev. 22:15

<sup>228</sup> Eph. 5:22-24

<sup>229</sup> Eph. 5:25-33; 1Cor. 7:3-5

<sup>230</sup> Col. 3:19; 1Pet. 3:7; 1Cor. 7:3-5

<sup>231</sup> Gen. 2:18-24, 3:16; Eph. 5:22-24,33; Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:4-5; 1Pet. 3:1-6; 1Cor. 7:3-5

<sup>232</sup> Tit. 2:4-5; 1Tim. 5:14; Prov. 31:10-31

<sup>233</sup> Prov. 127:3-5, 128:1-4

<sup>234</sup> Tit. 2:4

<sup>235</sup> 1Sam. 3:13;

<sup>236</sup> Mt. 12:25

<sup>237</sup> Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:6-9; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 4:9-10; 1Thes. 2:11; 2Tim. 3:15

<sup>238</sup> Heb. 12:5-11; Prov. 13:24, 19:18,27, 22:6, 23:13-14; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Jas. 2:9, 5:12; Lk. 15:20-24; Deut. 6:6-25

<sup>239</sup> Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; Prov. 1:8; 6:20-23; 15:5; Lk. 2:51 (2 Tim. 3:1-2; Rom. 1:30,32)

<sup>240</sup> Eph. 6:2-3; Mt. 15:4

We believe that **human life** is given by God at conception and that any form of abortion is therefore murder in God's eyes.<sup>241</sup>

## 5.7. Symbolic actions or Sacraments

We believe that the local church was charged with two symbolic acts, the baptism of believers by immersion<sup>242</sup> and the breaking of bread (Lord's Supper).<sup>243</sup>

### Baptism

We believe that **Christian baptism** by immersion<sup>244</sup> is a public testimony of the newly converted believer both before people and before the beings of the invisible world.<sup>245</sup> He thereby testifies to his redemption and his faith in the crucified, buried and risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his fellowship with Him in His death on the cross for sin and in His resurrection, whereby he has received new, eternal life and has become a new man.<sup>246</sup> However, this baptism is also a sign of communion and identification with the visible body of Christ, His church. At the same time, baptism establishes entry into the church.<sup>247</sup>

### The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion

We believe that the **Lord's Supper** (*breaking of bread*) was instituted by the Lord Himself in remembrance, proclamation and thanksgiving for the substitutionary redemptive death of the Lord Jesus and His accomplished work of redemption. The faithful gather around the "Lord's Table" to worship Jesus Christ.<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, it is given for the hopeful expectation of His return for the believers<sup>249</sup> and as a representation and proclamation of the unity of His body, the church of His redeemed.<sup>250</sup> It should always be celebrated when the entire local community comes together in one place,<sup>251</sup> so usually every Sunday.

Although bread and wine are only symbols of the body and blood of Christ, Christ is uniquely present in the gathering of the congregation and has communion with His own.<sup>252</sup> In addition, the celebration of the meal, like baptism, is a proclamation of spiritual truths both to people and to the invisible world.<sup>253</sup> Participation in the meal should therefore always be preceded by serious self-examination on the part of those taking part.<sup>254</sup> The local congregation also bears responsibility with regard to the instruction and admission of guests and visitors.

<sup>241</sup> Ex. 21:22-23, 23:7; Hi. 3:16; Ps. 51:5, 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24, 49:1.5; Jer. 1:5, 20:15-18; Lk. 1:44

<sup>242</sup> Mt. 28:19; Acts 2:38.41

<sup>243</sup> Mt. 26:26-28; Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1Cor. 11:17-34

<sup>244</sup> Acts 8:36-39

<sup>245</sup> Eph. 3:8-10; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:12

<sup>246</sup> Rom. 6:1-11; Acts 8:35-39, 10:47; 1Pet. 3:21

<sup>247</sup> Acts 2:41-42

<sup>248</sup> Mt. 26:23-28; 1Cor. 11:28-32; 1Cor. 10:16

<sup>249</sup> 1Cor. 11:26

<sup>250</sup> 1Cor. 10:16-17 (10:14-22)

<sup>251</sup> 1Cor. 11:20 (ElbÜ)

<sup>252</sup> Mt. 18:20; 1Cor. 10:16

<sup>253</sup> Eph. 3:10; 1Cor. 11:26

<sup>254</sup> 1Cor. 11:28-32, 10:16.21; 2Cor. 6:15-17

## 6. The angels

### 6.1. Holy angels

We believe that angels are created beings and therefore must not be worshipped. Although they have a higher rank in creation than humans, they were created to serve God, to worship Him and as "ministering spirits" for the redeemed believers.<sup>255</sup>

### 6.2. Fallen angels

We believe that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He brought God's judgment upon himself by rebelling against his Creator<sup>256</sup> and dragging numerous angels with him in his fall.<sup>257</sup> As a result, he tempted and seduced Eve and thus brought sin into humanity.<sup>258</sup>

We believe that Satan is the obvious and declared enemy of God and mankind.<sup>259</sup> He is the prince of this sinful world, who was defeated by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ<sup>260</sup> and who will be punished eternally in the lake of fire.<sup>261</sup>

## 7. The last things

### 7.1. Death

We believe that physical death is not the loss of our immaterial consciousness,<sup>262</sup> but that a separation of the immortal soul from the earthly body takes place, while the God-given spirit returns to Jesus.<sup>263</sup> The soul of every redeemed person immediately enters the presence of Jesus.<sup>264</sup> The separation of soul and body will continue for the redeemed until the Rapture.<sup>265</sup> At the Rapture of the redeemed into heaven, the so-called "first resurrection",<sup>266</sup> the souls of the redeemed will be united with a new, incorruptible body in order to be glorified with the Lord forever.<sup>267</sup> Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ will remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>268</sup>

We believe in the physical resurrection of all people: Those saved by faith in Jesus Christ will be resurrected to eternal life,<sup>269</sup> all other people to

<sup>255</sup> Lk. 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7.14; 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9

<sup>256</sup> Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19

<sup>257</sup> Mt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14; Isa. 14:3ff

<sup>258</sup> Gen. 3:1-15

<sup>259</sup> Isa. 14:13-14; Mt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10

<sup>260</sup> Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14

<sup>261</sup> Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10

<sup>262</sup> Rev. 6:9-11

<sup>263</sup> Acts 7:59

<sup>264</sup> Lk. 23:43; 2Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23

<sup>265</sup> 1Thes. 4:13-17

<sup>266</sup> Rev. 20:4-6

<sup>267</sup> 1Cor. 15:35-44.50-54; Phil. 3:21

<sup>268</sup> 2Cor. 5:8

<sup>269</sup> Joh. 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11.19-23; 2Cor. 4:14

judgment and eternal punishment.<sup>270</sup>

We believe that the souls of the unsaved are kept in a place of punishment at their death until the so-called "second resurrection",<sup>271</sup> when they are resurrected for judgment,<sup>272</sup> to be judged before the Great White Throne<sup>273</sup> and then thrown into hell or the so-called "lake of fire",<sup>274</sup> where they will be separated from God and punished forever.<sup>275</sup>

## 7.2. The rapture of the church

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and physically to take His entire congregation of the redeemed from the earth<sup>276</sup> The believers who have already died are already in communion with the Lord, but<sup>277</sup> will also be physically resurrected for this purpose,<sup>278</sup> i.e. they will receive a glorified body together with the believers who are still alive in order to be with the Lord at all times.<sup>279</sup> All true believers will be rewarded according to their works.<sup>280,281</sup>

Since we believe that this can happen at any time, believers should live daily in this joyful expectation, orient their practical lives towards meeting the Lord Jesus soon and encourage themselves and other believers with it.<sup>282</sup>

## 7.3. The time of tribulation

We believe that at the end<sup>283</sup> the righteous judgments of God will be poured out on an unbelieving world.<sup>284</sup> These judgments will reach their climax at the majestic return of Christ to earth, visible to all.<sup>285</sup> At that time, the saints (believers) of the Old Testament and those of the tribulation period will be resurrected and judged.<sup>286</sup> This period covers the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.<sup>287</sup>

## 7.4. The return of Christ and the Millennial Kingdom

We believe that Jesus Christ will return in person after the tribulation period to take the "throne of David"<sup>288</sup> and establish His Messianic kingdom

<sup>270</sup> Dan. 12:2; Joh. 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15

<sup>271</sup> Lk. 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15

<sup>272</sup> Joh. 5:28-29

<sup>273</sup> Rev. 20:11-15

<sup>274</sup> Mt. 25:41-46

<sup>275</sup> Dan. 12:2; Mt. 25:41-46; 2Thes. 1:7-9

<sup>276</sup> Joh. 14:1-3; 1Cor. 15:51-58; 1Thes. 4:13 - 5:11; Rev. 3:10

<sup>277</sup> Lk. 23:43; Acts 7:59; 2Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23

<sup>278</sup> 1Cor. 15:52; 1Thes. 4:16

<sup>279</sup> 1Cor. 15:23,51,52; Phil. 3:20-21; 1Thes. 4:17

<sup>280</sup> Cor. 3:11-15; 2Cor. 5:10

<sup>281</sup> 1Thes. 4:16, 5:9; Tit. 2:13

<sup>282</sup> 1Jn. 3:2-3; 1Pet. 1:13; 2Pet. 3:8-14; Lk. 21:28; Heb. 10:25; 1Thes. 4:18

<sup>283</sup> Joh. 14:1-3; 1Thess 4:13-18

<sup>284</sup> Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 1Thes. 5:2-3; 2Thes. 2:7-12; 2Ptr. 3:3-11; Rev. 6 - 16

<sup>285</sup> Mt. 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2Thes. 2:7-12

<sup>286</sup> Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6

<sup>287</sup> Dan. 9:24-27; Mt. 24:15-31; 25:31-46

<sup>288</sup> Ps. 2; Mt. 25:31; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30

of peace on earth for a thousand years.<sup>289</sup> During this time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all nations on earth.<sup>290</sup> This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the false prophet and the removal of Satan from the world.<sup>291</sup>

We believe that this kingdom will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel,<sup>292</sup> to bring them back to the land they had lost through their disobedience.<sup>293</sup> The consequence of their disobedience was that Israel was set aside for a time,<sup>294</sup> but at a certain time will be awakened again through repentance to return to the Promised Land.<sup>295</sup> The Jews have always hoped for this.<sup>296</sup>

We believe that this period of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness and long life.<sup>297</sup> The thousand years will end with Satan being temporarily released.<sup>298</sup>

## 7.5. The judgment of the lost

We believe that Satan, having been temporarily released once again after the thousand-year reign of Christ,<sup>299</sup> will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them together to fight against the saints and against Jerusalem. At that time, Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven.<sup>300</sup> After that, Satan will be thrown into the "lake of fire and brimstone".<sup>301</sup>

<sup>302</sup>We believe that Jesus Christ as the resurrected perfect man<sup>303</sup> will subsequently raise all the unredeemed bodily from the dead on a day already determined by God<sup>304</sup> and judge them before the Great White Throne,<sup>305</sup> where they will be irrevocably condemned and handed over to eternal, i.e. endless, conscious punishment of damnation in the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels.<sup>306</sup>

## 7.6. Eternity

We believe that immediately afterwards the elements of this earth will be dissolved<sup>307</sup> and replaced by a new earth in which only complete righteousness will reign.<sup>308</sup> The saved saints will enter into an eternal state of glory with God and will forever enjoy direct fellowship with the triune

<sup>289</sup> 2Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:5-6; Zech. 12:10, 14:4-11; Lk. 1:32-33; Acts 15:55-17; Rev. 20:1-7

<sup>290</sup> Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16

<sup>291</sup> Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7

<sup>292</sup> Isa. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17

<sup>293</sup> Deut. 28:15-68; 2 Chron. 36:15-23

<sup>294</sup> Mt. 21:43; Lk. 19:41-44; Rom. 11:1-26

<sup>295</sup> Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29

<sup>296</sup> Mt. 16:21-23; Jn. 6:14-15; Lk. 24:21; Acts 1:6

<sup>297</sup> Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:33-38

<sup>298</sup> Rev. 20:7

<sup>299</sup> Rev. 20:7

<sup>300</sup> Rev. 20:9

<sup>301</sup> Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10

<sup>302</sup> John 5:22; Acts 17:31

<sup>303</sup> Acts 17:31

<sup>304</sup> Acts 17:31

<sup>305</sup> Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:5.11-15

<sup>306</sup> Mt. 25:41.46; 2Thes. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:7-15

<sup>307</sup> 2Pet. 3:10

<sup>308</sup> Isa. 65:17; Eph. 5:5; 2Pet. 3:13; Rev. 20:15.21-22

God and with one another.<sup>309</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ will then hand everything over to God the Father,<sup>310</sup> so that the triune God may reign in everything and for all eternity.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Joh. 17:3; Rev. 21:22 (21:1-22:5)

<sup>310</sup> 1Cor. 15:24-28

<sup>311</sup> 1Cor. 15:28

## 8. Practical application in the life of the church: Our goals and concerns

### 8.1. Our central concerns

#### A life of worship

We believe that God is looking for true worshippers.<sup>312</sup> Since true worship of believers includes both the "sacrifice of praise" as the "fruit of the lips",<sup>313</sup> and the "sacrifice of the body"<sup>314</sup>, the entire life of believers is to be understood as consecrated to God. We therefore want to lead a personal life of worship daily as individuals and gather weekly as a church in His name to remember Him with bread and wine, worship Him, pray together and study His Word as He has instructed us to do.

#### Mutual edification

We believe that God's goal with every believer is to make them like Jesus Christ,<sup>315</sup> by contemplating, studying and fellowshiping with Him, trusting in the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>316</sup> Therefore, through systematic Bible teaching and mutual support, we want to help believers to be trained as followers of the Lord Jesus, who constantly become more like Him.<sup>317</sup>

#### Ministry of reconciliation

We believe that believers are called to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus and His gospel "salt" and "light" in the world.<sup>318</sup> We want to do this in our sphere of influence in word and deed in order to make the message of the gospel known to people personally and to call them with Jesus Christ: "Repent and believe in the gospel!"<sup>319</sup> Since this is the Lord's commission to all His believers, we want to encourage, equip and assist every believer to do so. As far as it is in our power, we want to contribute through prayer, support and by sending out believers so that the gospel is proclaimed in other places of the world.

### 8.2. Doctrinal issues and beliefs

We believe we have a duty to proclaim "*the whole counsel of God*".<sup>320</sup> "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be*

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<sup>312</sup> Joh. 4:23

<sup>313</sup> Heb. 13:15

<sup>314</sup> Rom. 12:1-2; 1Cor. 6:19-20

<sup>315</sup> Rom. 8:29

<sup>316</sup> 2Cor. 3:18

<sup>317</sup> Col. 1:28-29

<sup>318</sup> Acts 1:8-9; Matthew 5:13-16

<sup>319</sup> Mark 1:15

<sup>320</sup> Acts 20:27

*fully prepared, fully equipped for every good work.*"<sup>321</sup> We therefore want to study, teach, apply and pass on the whole of Holy Scripture<sup>322</sup> as an inerrant, timeless and fully sufficient foundation for all areas of our faith and life.

Where God speaks through His revealed word, we want to speak; where God is silent, we want to remain silent. Doctrinal opinions of secondary importance must not hinder responsible cooperation with brothers and sisters from other churches and ministries

Every believer who works in our ministry must agree with the church on the fundamental doctrines of our beliefs. There is personal freedom on secondary or subordinate issues that have no moral impact. However, we expect that those who do not share the beliefs of the church or ministry on secondary or subordinate issues will refrain from teaching or propagating their differing views publicly or privately, and especially from promoting or causing division.<sup>323</sup>

## 9. Concluding remarks

Although these explanations are extensive, they do not touch on all doctrinal topics. Here the dependence of each person on the teaching of the revealed Word of God is given, which has supreme teaching authority.

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<sup>321</sup> 2Tim. 3:16-17; 2Pet. 1:21

<sup>322</sup> Ezr. 7:10

<sup>323</sup> Tit. 3:10-11; Gal. 5:20