

BETHESDA CHURCH [SHORTER] STATEMENT OF DOCTRINAL FAITH

(Adopted by the Bethesda Church congregation in Annual General Meeting on May 23rd, 2018, in dependence upon and correspondence to its longer, more detailed, authoritative counterpart.)

PREAMBLE

Since our formation in July 1944, Bethesda Church has stood in the tradition of historic Christian orthodoxy. Our statement of doctrinal faith expresses a positive case for the fundamentals of what we believe the Bible teaches, what we are committed to teaching, and how we are committed to living in our time and place. Doctrinal statements do not ensure unity of love, fellowship, or purpose; we must choose unity. We do hope our statement serves to protect Bethesda from false teaching and false practice.

1. GOD'S REVELATION, THE BIBLE

God reveals Himself through creation, Jesus Christ, and the Bible. The Bible is God's inspired Word, and it teaches us everything we need to know to be saved and to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. GOD THE TRINITY

There is only one true and living God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is perfect, loving, and holy in every way.

3. CREATION

God made the universe and all that is in it, culminating in humankind, and it was very good.

4. HUMANITY

God created humanity, male and female, in His image to represent Him on the earth. God designed people to be in relationship with Him, to reflect His love to each other, and to steward His creation.

5. SIN

Every desire, thought, word, and action contrary to God's will is sin, displeasing to God, harmful to ourselves and others, and a corrupting influence on creation and culture. All sin impairs our relationship with God and others, and Jesus came to reconcile us to God and to each other.

6. GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is eternal and infinite in His sovereign goodness and holiness, justice and mercy, righteousness and wrath against sin, and great love and compassion for the world.

7. GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. He lived a sinless life on earth, died for our sins, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. He is the one true Mediator between God and humanity, and He will come again as Saviour, Lord, and Judge.

8. GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God, third Person of the Trinity, Lord and Giver of life, and He was sent after the ascension of Jesus to indwell God's people. He makes us aware of our sin and our need for a Saviour. The Holy Spirit convicts us, saves us, empowers us, leads us, and makes us new persons in Christ.

9. THE GOSPEL, REPENTANCE AND FAITH

The good news of the Gospel is God's message of love that Jesus Christ fulfilled God's Law, died for our sins, and rose from the dead, and that we are reconciled to God through repentance and faith in Christ.

10. SALVATION

God saves us from our sins freely by His grace through faith and not on the basis of what we earn or deserve. God causes us to be born again by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. All who believe in Jesus Christ are forgiven of our sins, justified in relationship to God, and promised eternal life.

11. THE CHURCH

The Church is the community of believers in Jesus Christ from all peoples who have been adopted into God's family and who love God and one another because He first loved us.

12. ULTIMATE EXPECTATIONS: JUDGMENT, GRACE, AND GLORY

The risen Lord Jesus Christ will return from heaven to render final judgment upon all people. God in Christ Jesus will separate from Himself and His grace forever all who have not believed in Him, and He will gather to Himself for eternity all who have believed in Him.