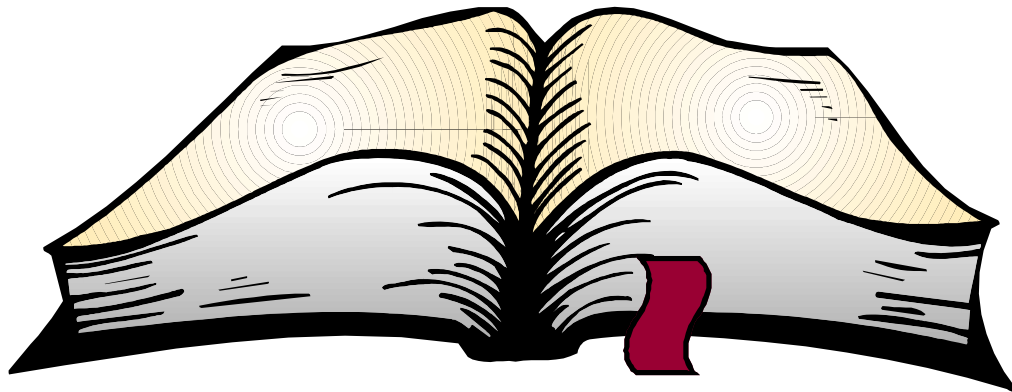

WE BELIEVE!



The Doctrinal Statement
of the
Merrill Evangelistic Team

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I. The Doctrine of the Scriptures

A. Their Inspiration

The Bible is both a divine book and a human book. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are entirely divine in their origin (2 Pet. 1:20-21), being the product of the creative breath of God (2 Tim 3:16), yet God chose to make use of the human instrument in order to communicate His Word to man. "Holy men of God" did indeed speak in their own vocabulary, from their own experience, and under the historical circumstances of their respective times. The Holy Spirit, however, superintended both the thoughts and the verbal expressions of the original writers, enabling them to record accurately the very words of God. Since they are the very words of One who cannot lie (Tit. 1:2), the Scriptures are authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in every issue that they address (Mt. 5:17-18; Jn. 10:35; 17:17; Ps. 19:7-11; 119:1-176).

B. Their Preservation

Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the sixty-six books of Scripture came to be recognized early in the history of the church as divinely inspired and were thus received as the church's sole authority for doctrine and practice (2 Pet. 3:15,16). Throughout the centuries, both before and after A.D. 1611, God has providentially preserved the wording of the original text in a multitude of manuscript copies. (Ps. 12:6-7; 1 Pet.1:22-25)

C. Their Translation

All translations of the Scripture derive their authority from the inspiration of the original autographs and thus can be considered authoritative and divinely inspired only to the extent that they accurately reflect the wording of the original. Attached is a copy of an excerpt from the book "Which Greek Text?" by Dr. Charles Surret – Executive Vice President of Ambassador Baptist College. Simply stated, we agree with his balanced view.

D. Their Interpretation

We believe in the literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of the scriptures. Of course, there are times within the text that the Bible uses symbolism, typology or other literary figures, but each of these must be understood in the context from the literal understanding that "The Bible says what it means and means what it says!"

E. Their Application

The Merrill Evangelistic Team has always used the King James Version (1769) for preaching, public reading, publications, memorization and soul-winning. While some pastors or theologians choose to make this a divisive issue, our goal in evangelism is to use God's Word to impact souls for eternity. (Heb. 4:12)

“Readable Translations,” a song written by Randy Merrill and published in the Family Fav’rites Undercover Investigation Book capsulates the view of the Merrill Evangelistic Team concerning the Bible.

“We believe God’s Revelation
Put in print by Inspiration
Will produce Illumination
in our hearts when read and heard.
Then by good Interpretation
We must make the Application
To be READABLE TRANSLATIONS
of God’s Holy Word.” (2 Cor. 3:2,3)

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F. Their Division

Because God worked throughout history with different people in different places at different times in different ways, we must be extremely careful in “rightly dividing the Word of God” (2 Tim. 2:15). Understanding the text and the context promotes Berean-like Bible study (Acts 17:11) and dissipates confusion. This dispensational approach not only clarifies the past, but also the present age and the future. Thus, we cannot espouse a covenant theology or the current “charismatic doctrines” which often neglect these biblical distinctions.

II. The Doctrine of God

A. His Nature

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the three divine Persons of the Godhead, have eternally existed in one infinite and unchangeable divine essence. The Scriptures refer to each member of the Trinity as God (Rom. 1:7; Jn. 1:1; Acts 5:4). Thus each member possesses the divine essence, not in part, but in its entirety (e.g. Col. 2:9). Yet the Trinity is not comprised of three gods, but one God in three clearly distinct Persons. That the divine essence is an indivisible unity is clearly taught throughout Scripture (Dt. 6:4; Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor.8:4). That the Godhead is a tri-personality is suggested in the Old Testament by the interaction between the divine Persons (Gen. 1:26; 11:7; Isa. 6:8; 48:16) and by the three-fold structure of both the priestly blessing (Num. 6:24-26) and the angelic ascription of praise (Isa. 6:3). The New Testament clearly reveals the tri-personality of the Godhead throughout the earthly ministry of Christ (Mt. 3:1, 17; Jn. 14:16; 1 Pet. 3:18) and by means of certain formulas that closely associate the ministries of the three divine Persons (Mt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2).

B. His Names

Elohim: Power and might. Adonai: Master, Lord. God owns all his creation. Jehovah: God's most common name. It occurs 6,823 times. The self-existent One, the God of the covenant (Gen. 2:4).

C. His Nurture

Besides God's sovereign control over the universe, people and things, He daily demonstrates His divine protection (Ps. 91), provision (Phil. 4:19), and presence (Ps. 139:1-12) on behalf of "His people" (Jews, Joel 2:26,27) and those who trust in His Son, Jesus. Although "He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil" (Lk. 6:36), His faithfulness (1 Cor. 1:9), fellowship (1 Jn. 1:3) and fatherhood (Lk. 15:11-32; Gal. 4:6) provide essential care for every believer (1 Pet. 5:7; Mt. 6:25-34).

III. The Doctrine of Christ

A. His Person

The second person of the Trinity has existed from all eternity as the Son of God (Jn. 17:5; Heb. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9), co-equal in divine essence and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:1,2; Col. 1:15; 2:9; Heb. 1:3). In the incarnation, the eternal divine nature of Christ was united with a perfect human nature (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16). Thus Jesus Christ is the God-man, a single personality, forever possessing two complete, yet distinct natures (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 13:8). In teaching the genuine humanity of Christ, the Scriptures assert that He possessed both a true physical body (Heb. 2:14) and a rational soul (e.g. Mt. 26:38; Jn. 13:21). The Scriptures also give abundant testimony to the full deity of Christ by applying divine names to Him.

God - Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:1,18; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:1

Jehovah - Mt. 3:3; Jn. 12:41; Heb. 1:10-12

I Am - Jn. 8:24, 28; 18:5-8

Almighty - Rev. 1:8

The scriptures also ascribe divine works and attributes to Jesus Christ.

Creation - Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17

Preservation - Heb. 1:3

Forgiveness of sins - Mk. 2:5-10

Eternality - Micah 5:2; Rev. 1:6

Immortality - Heb. 13:8

Omniscience - Jn. 2:24-25

Worthy of divine worship Jn. 5:23; Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:10-11

B. His Purpose (1 Tim. 1:15)

1. His Virgin Birth

The Virgin birth of Christ was the means by which the eternal Son of God took upon Himself a genuine human nature (Gal. 4:4), without experiencing

anything of the natural human depravity. In addition to the Old Testament prophecies of this miraculous birth (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14), the Gospel writers expressly state that Mary gave birth to Jesus apart from any kind of natural or supernatural intercourse (Mt. 1:16,20,23,25; Lk. 1:27,34,35). Biblical references to the brothers and sisters of Jesus, however, indicate that Mary's virginity was not maintained throughout her subsequent marriage to Joseph (Mt. 13:54-56; Mk. 6:3; Ps. 69:8). The Virgin Mary was the mother of Jesus only in regard to His humanity; thus the modern usage of the description "Mother of God" is dangerously misleading.

2. His Virtuous Life

Christ in His genuine humanity was susceptible to real temptation (Heb. 2:17-18); in His full deity, however, He was incapable of succumbing to temptation (Jas. 1:13). Since the human nature of the God-man had no existence apart from His divine nature, the Scriptures assert both the reality of Christ's temptations and His absolute sinlessness (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22,23).

3. His Vicarious Atonement

Jesus Christ, as the sinless God-man, "became sin for us" and took our place on the cross of Calvary thus providing salvation for all who will call upon Him. (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:2)

4. His Verifiable Resurrection

The foundational truth of Christianity is the literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:14). The Scripture states that on numerous occasions following His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:348), Christ appeared in a glorified body comprised of flesh and bones (Lk. 24:39; Jn. 20:27). The resurrection demonstrates the divine power of Christ (Rom. 1:4) and guarantees the salvation (Rom. 4:25) and future resurrection of all believers (1 Cor. 15:20). The hallucination, conspiracy, myth or swoon theory have no historical or biblical basis.

4. His Visible Ascension

After demonstrating the reality of His resurrection for forty days (Acts 1:3), Christ, in His glorified body, visibly ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Having completed His work of atonement, Christ is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:21.22), making intercession for His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) and preparing for them a dwelling place (Jn. 14:2).

IV. The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

A. His Identity

The Holy Spirit has existed from all eternity as the third Person of the trinity, coequal in divine substance with the Father and the Son. That He is truly a Person and not an abstract influence is evident from the scriptural references to the personal characteristics that He possesses (intellect - Rom. 8:27 1 Cor. 2:11; will - 1 Cor. 12:11; sensibility - Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30; speech - Mk. 13:11; Acts 13:2) and the personal relationship that He maintains with others (Jn 14:17; Rom. 8:14-16; 2 Cor. 13:14). The Scriptures clearly affirm the deity of the Holy Spirit by giving divine names to Him (Acts 5:4; 2 Cor. 3:17), by ascribing divine attributes to Him (eternality - Heb. 9:14; omnipresence - Ps. 139:7; omniscience - 1 Cor. 2:10; omnipotence - Lk. 1:35), and by portraying His direct participation in the work of the Godhead (creation - Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30; inspiration - 2 Pet 1:21; the resurrection of Christ - Rom. 1:4; 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18). The eternal consequences of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit also demonstrate that He is truly God (Mt. 12:31-32).

B. His Industry

The supreme work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and glorify Jesus Christ (Jn. 16:13-14). The Holy Spirit works among men to convict men of their sinful condition (Jn. 16:8-11), and He is the divine agent in man's regeneration (Jn. 3:5-8; Tit. 3:5). At the moment of regeneration, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer (Rom. 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 6:19) and baptizes him into a vital union with Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). All believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30) and are thus assured of their eternal salvation (Rom. 8:16; Eph. 1:14). The Holy Spirit ministers to the believer as the Comforter (Jn. 14:16,26), providing direction (Rom. 8:14; Acts 13:4) and instruction (Jn. 14:26; 16:13), while assisting the believer in his prayer life (Rom. 8:26) and development of Christian character (Gal. 5:22,23).

C. His Indwelling

The Scriptures distinguish between the baptism and the filling of the Holy Spirit. The once-for-all baptism of the Spirit has been the experience of every believer (1 Cor. 12:13, Eph. 4:4-6; Gal. 3:27,28; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:11) since the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost. This baptism is not some second work of grace for which the believer must earnestly seek. By contrast, however, the believer is commanded to be filled continually, that is, repeatedly, with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18; e.g. Acts 2:4; 4:31). This filling empowers the believer for spiritual service and comes only as he is completely yielded to the control of the Spirit. Since several of the gifts distributed to the church by the Holy Spirit were miraculous signs unique to the apostolic, foundational period (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4), neither the baptism nor the filling of the Holy Spirit is evidenced today by speaking in tongues.

V. The Doctrine of Angels

A. Their Characteristics

Angels are created (Ps. 148:2, 5), spiritual beings (Heb. 1:13,14), capable of revealing themselves in bodily form (Heb. 13:2). They are distinct from man in their order of creation (Ps. 8:5) and their possession of superhuman strength (Ps. 103:20), intelligence (2 Sam. 14:20), and movement (Dan. 9:21).

B. Their Classification

1. Evil Angels

Before his willful rebellion against the authority of God (Isa. 14:12-14), the anointed cherub, Lucifer was one of the wisest and most beautiful of God's creatures (Eze. 28:12-15). When Lucifer succeeded in persuading a great number of angelic beings to join his revolt, he and they were cast out from heaven (Rev. 12:4-8; Lk. 10:18). Some of the fallen angels are awaiting the final judgment in confinement (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6) while many of them remain free to assist Satan in opposing the plan of God. Satan, a real personality, is the greatest adversary of God and His people (1 Pet. 5:8). He played a prominent role in the fall of man (Gen. 3) and attempted to abort the earthly ministry of Christ (Mt. 4:1-11; 16:23). He and his diabolic cohorts are presently occupied with deceiving mankind (2 Cor. 4:4), promoting false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1), and accusing believers before the Lord (Rev. 12:10). The ultimate doom of the fallen angelic host is the lake of fire (Mt. 15:41).

2. Good Angels

The angels who confirmed their loyalty to God by refusing to participate in Satan's rebellion are ministering spirits, serving both God and man (Heb. 1:14). Many of these angels minister before the heavenly throne, participating in the worship and praise of God (Isa. 6:1-7; Dan. 7:10). Other angels are directly involved in the affairs of mankind, protecting and encouraging believers (Acts 27:23,24) and eventually taking part in the final judgment of the wicked (Mt. 13:49).

VI. The Doctrine of Man

A. Man's Form

God created man in His own image and thus imparted to man a spiritual, moral, and rational awareness that distinguishes him from the rest of God's creatures (Gen. 1:27). Considered in its most basic sense, man's constitution is comprised of that which is material, relating to the body, and that which is immaterial, relating to the soul and spirit. Man's physical, material make-up is subject to decay throughout his lifetime (2 Cor. 4:16; 5:4) and is ultimately separated from his material constitution

at death. The scriptures describe death as "sleep" only in regard to man's physical body (Dan. 12:2). The soul of the believer survives death in a conscious, blissful experience in the very presence of the Lord (Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) and is reunited with the believer's incorruptible resurrection body at the return of Christ (1 Cor. 15:49-54; 1 Thes. 4:13-16). The soul of the unbeliever also survives death but in a conscious experience of the torments of hell (Lk. 12:4,5; 16:22,23). At the Great White Throne Judgment, the body of the unbeliever will be resurrected and reunited with his soul. All unbelievers will then be cast body and soul into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:13-15).

B. Man's Fall

By definition, sin is any failure to conform to the law of God (1 Jn. 3:4). Man falls short of God's righteous standard not only on account of his actions (Jas. 1:15), but also on account of his sinful disposition (Pro. 24:9; Rom. 8:7) and natural state (Lk. 6:45; Eph. 2:3). Genesis 3 provides a literal account of sin's entrance into the world through the willful disobedience (1 Tim. 2:14) of the first man, Adam. Since Adam was both the natural head and the legal representative of the human race, all mankind participated with him in his sin (Rom. 5:12; e.g. Heb. 7:9-10). As a result of Adam's fall, all of his descendants are born in a state of sinful depravity (Job 15:14; Ps. 51:5; 58:3) and, on account of their own sinfulness (Dt. 24:16; Eze. 18:4), are subject to the penalty of sin, which is physical, spiritual, and eternal death (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 6:23).

VII. The Doctrines of Salvation

A. Atonement

The Lord Jesus Christ, by means of His sinless life and sacrificial death, not only merited eternal life on behalf of the believer by fulfilling the law's requirements (Rom. 5:19; 10:4), but also suffered the penalty of the law in the believer's stead (Isa. 53:5,6; Rom. 5:6-8). Christ's work of atonement is thus a substitutionary satisfaction (1 Pet. 3:18). The atonement is also portrayed in Scripture as a literal, once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:26,28; 10:10), serving as an expiation, to remove the guilt of the sinner (Jn. 1:29), as a propitiation, to appease God's wrath against the sinner (Rom. 3:15; 1 Jn. 2:2); and as a reconciliation, to restore the sinner to divine favor (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18,19). The blood which Jesus Christ shed in His work of atonement is the basis upon which the believing sinner is redeemed from his enslavement to sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6). The Scriptures describe Christ's work on the cross as benefiting not only God's elect people (Jn. 10:15; Acts 20:28; Rom. 8:32-33; Eph. 5:25) but also the entire world (Jn. 1:29; 1 Tim. 4:10; Tit. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:2). In regard to humanity in general, Christ's atonement provides the basis and the possibility for salvation by removing every divine barrier for man's restoration. Yet as the savior of the elect, Christ in His atonement actually secures the salvation of His own people.

B. Election

Election is the sovereign and gracious act of God by which He, on the basis of His foreknowledge, chooses certain men for salvation. As a sovereign act, election is unexplainable; as a gracious act, it is unmerited. God's election is extended to sinful men who are utterly unworthy of salvation. God's foreknowledge, the basis of His election (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Pet. 1:2), involves God's appointment of the believer for a purpose, more so than His previous awareness of the believer's obedience (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4; Jn. 15:16). Man's faith is not the cause of God's election; it is the result of it (Acts 13:48). A proper view of divine election must also account for the Scriptural teaching that God desires the salvation of all men (Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9) and has extended his offer of salvation to all mankind (Acts 17:30; Mk. 16:15). The unbeliever will experience eternal damnation not because God has thus predestinated him (Mt. 25:41) but because God permits him to persist in his willful rejection of the truth. ("The elect are whosoever will; the non-elect are whosoever won't.")

C. Regeneration

Regeneration is the instantaneous act of God's Holy Spirit by which He imparts spiritual life to those who were previously dead in sins. Since every fallen man is by nature a child of disobedience (Eph. 2:2-3), such a new birth is necessary in order to become one of God's children (Jn. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:23). Regeneration makes the believer a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Eze. 36:26) and implants within him the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Regeneration, however, does not eradicate the believer's sinful nature (Rom. 7:1-25; Gal. 5:17), but, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, it does make provisions for his new nature to be victorious over the old (Eph. 4:22-24).

D. Repentance

Repentance is that element of conversion that describes man's turning away from sin. It is literally a "change of mind," particularly in regard to sin, which manifests itself in a change of behavior (1 Jn. 1:9; Mt. 21:28-29). True repentance involves acknowledgment of sin (Ps. 51:3-4), sorrow for sin (Ps. 38:18; 2 Cor. 7:9-10), and forsaking of sin (Jer. 25:5). Since genuine repentance is necessary for salvation (Lk. 13:3, 5), this doctrine is an essential part of the gospel message (Lk. 24:46; Acts 2:38).

E. Faith

Faith is that element of conversion that describes man's turning unto God. Saving faith is a genuine belief in God and His revealed word that causes the sinner to trust in Christ alone for salvation. This faith is more than an intellectual acknowledgment of the facts of the gospel (Jas. 2:19; Acts 8:13); it involves also a personal appropriation of the work of Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:12). Although faith alone is necessary for salvation, genuine faith always produces good works in the life of the believer (Jas. 2:17-26).

F. Justification

Justification is the judicial act of God by which He removes the guilt of sin and declares the believing sinner to be righteous in His sight (Rom. 5:1-2). Justification does not make the believer righteous, but it does make him acceptable on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is imputed to him (Rom. 4:5-6; Phil. 3:9). Faith alone is the necessary means of justification (Rom. 3:22-28; Gal. 2:16).

G. Sanctification

Sanctification is the work of God by which He sets the believer apart from unrighteousness and unto Himself. From the divine perspective, sanctification is an accomplished fact for all who have been united with Christ in salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 3:3). From the human perspective, however, sanctification is a progressive work by which the believer becomes increasingly separated from sin and increasingly conformed to the righteousness of Christ. In this sense, sanctification is a continuous process which does not reach completion in this life (Phil. 3:12-14; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 12:23). Sanctification is not only a divine work but also a divine command enjoined upon every believer (1 Pet. 1:15).

H. Eternal Security

The doctrine of eternal security is founded upon the Scriptural teaching that man's salvation is totally dependent upon God's activity, specifically Christ's once-for-all death on the cross. Even as man's good works do not merit salvation, so also his sins do not cause him to forfeit salvation. The salvation of the believer is eternally secure on the basis of the omnipotence (Jn. 10:28, 29; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:4-5) and immutability of God (Rom. 11:29; Phil. 1:6; Tit. 1:2), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14; 2 Pet. 1:4), and the intercession of Christ (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34). Divine warnings to professing believers (e.g. Eze. 18:24; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26) should not be misinterpreted as indicating that a true believer can forfeit his salvation.

VIII. The Doctrine of the Church

The word "church" (Greek - "ecclesia") means simply "called out ones, a religious congregation or assembly." Ecclesia describes several distinct groups in the Scriptures including the Israelites in the wilderness (Acts 7:38), the Jews in their synagogues (Jms. 2:2, 5:14), the local assemblies to which Paul wrote his epistles (1 Thes. 1:1; Phm. 1:2) and even an unruly mob in Acts 19:32,39-41. Since it is obvious that these "churches" certainly functioned in very diverse ways, a clear understanding of the uniqueness of "the Church, which is [Christ's] body" (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18-24; Eph. 5:23) and all other delineations of this word is essential. Therefore, we will confine our discussion to the church, universal and local, which concerns us in this dispensation (Eph. 3:2).

A. Universal

The invisible body of Christ (Eph. 3:14,15), a cohesive spiritual organism comprised of both Jewish and Gentilian believers (Acts 11:19; Eph. 2:16) exists in this age of Grace. The Church (which is His Body) was a mystery “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26; Eph. 3:4-6) and revealed to the Apostle Paul (Eph. 3:1-10) who laid the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10) upon the Rock, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). All believers have been purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25) and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

B. Local

The visible, local church is an organized assembly of believers in Christ. To proclaim the truth, God gave to the church apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. Once the foundation of the Body was laid, the need for apostles and prophets and their miraculous signs of confirmation ceased. A chronological study of the Scriptures and understanding of the distinctions of this dispensation will reveal the fallacies of the current Charismatic Movement. In addition to many other biblical responsibilities, the members of each local assembly should, as ambassadors of Christ, persuade men of their need to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:11-21), edify the saints (Eph. 4:11,12), defend the faith (1 Tim. 3:15), exercise discipline within the body (1 Cor. 5:1-17), encourage the use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:3-21), observe the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:24-31), and elect spiritually qualified officers (1 Tim. 3:1-11; Tit. 1). In commemoration of the Lord's resurrection, the New Testament church assembled for worship on the first day of the week, rather than on the Jewish Sabbath (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

IX. The Doctrine of Creation

The Scripture describes all three Persons of the Godhead as actively involved in the creation of the universe (Gen. 1:1-2; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). The recurring phrase of the Genesis account, "and God said," indicates that in creation God directly spoke the universe into existence without the use of any pre-existing material (Ps. 33:9; Heb. 11:3). Since the six days of creation are best interpreted as literal 24-hour periods (cf. Ex. 20:11), and since God created all life to produce after its own kind (Gen. 1:24; 1 Cor. 15:39), the Biblical account of creation leaves no room for the fantasies of evolution, theistic or otherwise. (1 Tim. 6:20,21) We reject the “Gap” and “Big Bang” theories since there is no valid justification for such contrivances of man in the biblical record. Of all God's creatures, man alone is a rational, spiritual being, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27).

X. The Doctrine of the Christian Family

Though often overlooked, this doctrine (Tit. 2:1-7) is essential for every believer from every race and culture. The first institution established – the family – consisted of one man, one woman, and children. The leaving, cleaving and weaving God commanded in Gen. 2:23-25 was confirmed by Jesus (Mt. 19:5) and reiterated for the Body of Christ by Paul in Eph. 5:31

providing a picture of the marriage relationship between Christ and the Church. Marriage (for life - 1 Cor. 7:39 "only in the Lord") is honorable in all (Heb. 13:4), but all perversions (fornication - 1 Cor. 6:13-18, adultery - Gal. 5:19, homosexuality - Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 2 Tim. 3:3) of God's design will be judged.

A. The Husband/Father

The Husband/Father, as patriarch (Gen. 3:16), protector (Ps. 128:3), provider (1 Tim. 5:8), and pedagogue (Pro. 22:6) must, under the authority of Christ (1 Cor. 11:3), rule his family (1 Tim. 3:4,5), love his wife sacrificially (Eph. 5:25) and rear his children well (Eph. 6:4). His example (Pro. 23:26) and exhortation (Col. 3:20-21) should lead his family to believe in Christ and behave for Christ's sake (Tit. 1:6). Realizing his spiritual equality (Gal. 3:26-28), he strives happily (Pro. 10:1) and diligently for personal and familial character development through prayer and the regular practice of interpreting and applying God's Word (Dt. 6:6,7; Eph. 5:26; 6:4; 1 Pet. 3:7).

B. The Wife/Mother

The Wife/Mother, in scriptural submission to her "own husband" (Tit. 2:5; Col. 3:20; Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5), is to reverence (Eph. 5:33) and to love him (Tit. 2:5) and their children joyfully (Ps. 113:9). Like a fruitful vine (Ps. 128:3), as child-bearer, character developer and contributor to the well-being of the family, she is to be, among other qualities, sober, discreet, chaste, and industrious at home (Tit. 2:4-5; 1 Tim. 5:14). A woman, who fears the Lord will be praised by her progeny, partner, people, and products. (Pro. 31:27-31).

C. The Children

As gifts (Ps. 127:3) needing devotion, as arrows (Ps. 127:4) needing direction (concerning ministry, mates, money, meals, morals, models, modesty, music, and manners), and as olive plants (Ps. 128:3) needing development physically, spiritually, mentally, socially (Luke 2:51,52), children must be obedient to parents (Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20; Pro. 23:22-25) honoring Father and Mother.

D. The Grandparents

As "aged men" and "aged women," (Tit. 2:2-3) full of wisdom gained by exhortation, experience, and/or education, they must, by testimony and teaching, encourage the younger people to love and serve God faithfully (Josh. 24:15; Ps. 128:6). Knowing that "children's children are the glory of old men" (Pro. 17:6), grandparents conscientiously rectify sins rather than pass them on to future generations (Ex. 20:5; 34:7) bringing shame to the family name. Grandparents also recognize the value of leaving an inheritance for their grandchildren (Pro. 13:22).

E. The Widows

Though Paul encouraged widows to remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:39-40), remarriage is permissible, but only to a believer. "Desolate" widows over 60 years of age, who have been full of good works may be put on "the list." Young widows are encouraged to refrain from gossip and idleness, to marry, bear children, guide the house and live uprightly. The family is responsible to provide for a widow. If no family members exist, the church is to care for those who are "widows indeed" (1 Tim. 5:3-16).

XI. The Doctrine of Separation

The Scriptural teaching that is most basic to the doctrine of separation is the holiness of God and the reproduction of that holiness in the life of the believer (1 Pet. 1:15). Separation is the essence of sanctification, that divine process by which God sets apart a peculiar people unto Himself and away from all that is unrighteous (1 Kg. 8:53; 1 Pet. 2:9). The Lord commands the believer to maintain this separation both in his personal lifestyle and in his ecclesiastical affiliations.

A. Personal Separation

The believer is to avoid all participation in the evil practices and attitudes of the world (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Jn. 2:15-16; Eph. 5:11). Personal separation also involves the withdrawal from a Christian brother who is living in worldliness and disobedience (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11).

B. Ecclesiastical Separation

The believer is not to support or fellowship with any individual or organization that denies essential Christian doctrine (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Jn. 9-11). Fellowship with an apostate organization in an attempt to purify it from within (2 Cor. 6:14-18; Rev. 18:4) must be avoided. A church should admonish and discipline those within its membership (1 Cor. 5:9-13). It is evident, therefore, that any movement, (such as ecumenism, or new evangelicalism) that preaches unity at the expense of purity, that practices infiltration rather than separation, and that prefers the toleration of evil to the renouncing of it, violates clear Scriptural teaching.

XII. The Doctrine of End Times

The system of interpretation which best explains the Scriptural data is pretribulational premillennialism. This system interprets prophecy according to its literal sense and maintains a proper distinction between Israel and the Church. The following is a description of key events in the Biblical scheme of eschatology.

A. The Rapture

This is an imminent, instantaneous event involving both the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the translation of all living believers (1 Cor. 15:51-52). The Lord's descent from heaven will be a glorious appearing for the believers as they are caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-17; Tit. 2:13). The Scriptures promise that in this manner the Church is to be delivered from the tribulation period (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:4,9; Rev. 3:10).

B. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Following the translation of the church to heaven, each believer will give to the Lord an individual account of his works (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). This judgment is not to determine salvation, but rather eternal rewards. Only those works which are of permanent value will become the basis for reward (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

C. The Tribulation Period

This seven-year period of unprecedented, worldwide calamity (Mt. 24:21) is intended both to prepare Israel for the coming of her Messiah (Jer. 30:7) and to pour out divine judgment upon the unbelievers (Isa. 26:20-21; Rev. 6:15-17). At the beginning of this period, the world's most powerful political ruler will make a treaty with the nation of Israel (Dan. 9:27). At the midpoint of the tribulation, this ruler breaks his covenant and reveals himself as the Antichrist, desecrating the worship of the Lord and intensifying his persecution of God's people (2 Thess. 2:3,4; Mt. 24:15). Although many of earth's inhabitants will reject God's truth and fall prey to the deception of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:9-12), there will be those who call upon the Lord for salvation (Joel 2:32). In addition to the 12,000 Jews from each of the twelve tribes (Rev. 7:4; 14:1-5), a great multitude of Gentiles will also be converted during the tribulation (Rev. 7:9-14).

D. The Second Coming of Christ

This glorious event marks the end of the tribulation period and is accompanied by signs both in the heavens (Mt. 24:29) and on the earth (Zech. 14:4-10), resulting in significant changes in the geography of the land of Palestine. Christ Himself will literally return to the earth (Acts 1:11; Zech. 14:4), and His coming will be visible to all of earth's inhabitants (Rev. 1:7). Accompanied by the armies of heaven, Christ returns as the conquering King of kings and defeats the armies of the world powers that have come against the city of Jerusalem (Zech. 14: 2,3; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:11-21). At His return, the Lord will sit in judgment upon both the individual Gentiles (Joel 3:1-2, 12) and the Jews (Eze. 20:33-38). The Lord will judge the Gentiles on the basis of their treatment of His people during the tribulation period, such treatment being a true indication of their inner spiritual condition (Mt. 25:31-46). Only the righteous Jews and Gentiles living at the time of Christ's return will be permitted to enter the millennial kingdom (Eze. 20:38; Mt. 25:34).

E. The Millennial Reign of Christ

During this 1000-year period, Christ will rule the earth in absolute authority and righteousness (Ps. 2:6-12; Isa. 11:4). The effects of the curse will be lifted from the earth (Isa. 35:1-2), and this period is to be characterized by universal peace (Isa. 2:4), economic prosperity (Joel 2:21-26), and physical well-being (Isa. 35:5-6; 65:20). The nation of Israel will turn to Jesus as her Savior and Messiah (Jer. 31:34; Rom. 11:25-27) and will enjoy the complete fulfillment of the Lord's promises to her. A millennial temple will be established in Jerusalem as the worldwide center of true worship (Isa. 2:2-3; 66:23).

F. The Great White Throne Judgment

The unbelieving dead of all time will be gathered before God's throne to be judged according to their works. Since their names are not recorded in the book of life, these unbelievers are thrown body and soul into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

G. The Eternal state

The fate of all unbelievers is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, a place of conscious, never-ending torment (Lk. 16:28; Rev. 14:11; Mk. 9:44), a destiny already prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41). For the believers, however, Jesus Christ is preparing an eternal dwelling place in the heavenly city (Jn. 14:1-3), a place in which the redeemed of all time will enjoy never-ending worship and service in the presence of the Lord (Rev. 7:9-12; 22:3-4).

XIII. Closing Thoughts

Though some have touted the philosophy that doctrine is cold, dry and unessential, we believe that it (doctrine) is vital to every aspect of life. What we believe determines what we do. Our actions and reactions, preparations and performances are dictated by our beliefs. Therefore, an unchanging foundation must be sought out and secured. Only the Word of God meets that criterion. Therefore it is our duty and delight to live in accordance with Its teachings derived from a proper hermeneutic principle which recognizes the authority, authenticity and accuracy of the Bible. Our doctrine is more than a page of hard facts, but a *modus operandum* for daily living.

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God,
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,
for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God may be perfect,
thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

2 Timothy 3:16-17