

ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Bible is the God-breathed, inerrant, infallible Word of God and is the only authority for our faith practice. A succinct statement of the beliefs of this church is that found in "THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE," a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000. All civil and ecclesiastical members of the Journey must affirm the following doctrines:

4.1 About the Scriptures. We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. Men, moved by the Spirit of God, wrote the books of the Bible so that the Bible, while containing the words, styles, and the language of men, is still completely the Word of God, without error in fact or in doctrine. It will remain to the end of the world. It is the center of Christian unity, and the supreme standard by which all Christian conduct, creeds and opinions should be tested. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation, and by whom the Father is known.

4.2 About the Triune God. We believe in one God who eternally exists in three persons; that the persons of the Godhead are equal in every perfection, and that they execute distinct and harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. All creatures owe each person of the Godhead the highest love, reverence and obedience. God is an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present and future, including the future decisions of all people and the end of the world. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature; equal in essence and being.

4.3 About God the Father. We believe that God, as Father, reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures and all of human history, according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving and all wise. God is True Father to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is benevolent, giving gifts of grace to all men.

4.4 About God the Son. We believe in Jesus Christ, who is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in Him all things are held together by the Word of His power. He is the image of the invisible God, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. Jesus perfectly obeyed the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands, limitations and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind, yet without sin. He fulfilled the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead, His body arose glorified and He appeared to His disciples and others. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator between God

and man. He is fully God and fully man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to complete His work of redemption. He now dwells within all believers as the living and ever-present Lord. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, honored, obeyed and worshiped as God the Second Person of the Trinity.

4.5 About God the Holy Spirit. We believe in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Word of God. Through illumination He enables men in this day to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel He persuades men to repent of their sins and to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism and service. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son, who in turn came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be adored, honored, obeyed and worshiped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

4.6 About Mankind. We believe that mankind was created in the image of God to have fellowship with Him. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race and into all creation. Through the temptation of Satan man disobeyed the command of God, and fell from innocence. His nature and will are inclined to sin. Being estranged from his Maker, yet responsible to Him, he became the object of divine wrath; inwardly depraved and apart from a special work of grace, utterly incapable of returning to God. This depravity is radical—extending to every word, thought and deed—infesting the whole of human life so that no one is righteous. Unregenerate man lives under the rule of sin and Satan. He is at enmity with God; he is both hostile toward God, and hateful of God. Fallen, sinful man, is lost and without hope apart from salvation in Christ. Only the sovereign grace of God can restore man into fellowship with God and enable man to fulfill God's purpose for his life. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every man of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

4.7 About the Gospel. We believe Salvation comes solely by the grace of God. The Gospel is revealed to us in doctrines that faithfully exalt God's sovereign purpose to save sinners by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to His glory alone. The good news of the Gospel is revealed in Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the gospel, His resurrection is the power of the gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath against sin. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and

man. There is no other name by which men must be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have in glorifying God. Therefore, we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches and ministries to proceed from and be related to the cross. The church is commissioned to preach and teach this Gospel to all nations.

4.8 About Salvation. We believe that Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. The blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the cross, provides the only means for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed Mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law, suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. Those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life. Therefore, salvation occurs only by grace when people place their faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as sufficient payment for their sin. Salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. Regeneration is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness for all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

4.9 About Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience whereby baptized believers, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, remember His death until He comes again.

4.10 About the Church. We believe the New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a self-governing and independent local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges

invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation is subject to Christ and operates under the Lordship of Christ who is the Head. The church is led by elders whom God has called and gifted to pastor, teach, oversee and equip the church for the work of ministry. The church is served by Deacons whom God has called to care for the physical needs of God's people, work to maintain the unity of the body of believers, and support the ministers of the church who preach the Word. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of Elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. The ecclesiastical members of the church are those who have trusted by faith in the finished work of Christ and who worship together, minister together, encourage each other, equip each other, teach the Word of God together, bind together through covenant, and share their lives together. In such a congregation each ecclesiastical member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, people and nation.

4.11 About the Christian Life. We believe that every Christian should live for Christ and not for himself. A Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his fellow man. By obedience to the Word of God and daily yielding to the Spirit of God, every believer's conduct should be blameless before the world; be a faithful steward of his possessions; and seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ and being conformed into the image of Christ.

4.12 About the Family. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. In the first book of the Bible, God began the first and primary institution for discipleship by creating the family. In the first books of the New Testament, a second institution, the church, was established also with the job of disciplining. Families and the church must work hand-in-hand surrounding each other with truth and godly models to follow in order that we may glorify God. This calls for cooperation and partnership between the church and the family. The family is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. The family is the primary agent for discipleship in a child's life. The best way for children to be more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents involved in and serious about their faith communities. It is the parents' primary role to shepherd and teach their children to love God and to glorify Him. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. It is the church's role to equip parents to be the spiritual teachers of their children. Children are to honor and obey their parents.