

Detailed Articles of Faith and Practice with Scripture Proofs

I. Scripture as Our Sufficient Authority

We believe in the inspiration¹ and authority² of Scripture (the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments)—the infallible and inerrant³ foundation of our faith and practice⁴, a sufficient⁵ and necessary⁶ revelation for us to know the Triune God, his will for our salvation and our danger of judgment for disregarding his Word. The power of God's Spirit to change lives works together with the Word of God. Our mutual commitment to Scripture is the foundation of our unity in the truth.⁷ As such we shall give due honor to the Word of God by preaching Bible-centered expository sermons⁸, worship with songs which are faithful to Scripture⁹ (both older hymns and modern songs), lead Bible-centered studies, offer biblical counseling, lead prayer meetings guided by Scripture, evangelize by declaring God's Word among the nations, and teach Scripture-centered Sunday School classes for children that we might help people to know the Triune God and his will for our salvation. We will come to church gatherings with prepared and eager hearts to hear the Word of God and submit to Him.¹⁰ We will read the Bible devotionally that

¹ **2 Timothy 3:16-7** All Scripture is *God-breathed* and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly equipped* for every good work. **2 Peter 1:20-1** Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*.

² **Hebrews 2:1-3** *We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard*, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, *how shall we escape* if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, *which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him*.

³ **Hebrews 6:17-8** Because God wanted to make the *unchanging nature of his purpose* very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he *confirmed it with an oath*. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which *it is impossible for God to lie*, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.

⁴ **Romans 15:4** For everything that was written in the past *was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope*. See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 above.

⁵ See 2 Timothy 3:16-7 above. **Hebrews 4:12** For the *word of God is living and active*. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; *it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*.

⁶ **James 1:22-5** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says*. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and *continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does*.

Matthew 7:24-5 Therefore *everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet *it did not fall*, because it had its foundation on the rock. **John 12:47-50** As for the person who *hears my words* but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; *that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day*. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that *his command leads to eternal life*. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say. **Romans 10:17** Consequently, *faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ*. **John 6:63** The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. *The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life*.

⁷ **John 17:17-23** *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for *those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one*, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. *May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me*. **Ephesians 4:3-6** Make every effort to keep the *unity of the Spirit* through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, *one faith*, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. **Ephesians 4:13** until we all reach *unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God* and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

⁸ **1 Timothy 4:13** Until I come, devote yourself to the *public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching*.

⁹ **Ephesians 5:19-20** Speak to one another with *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. See footnote 6 above.

¹⁰ **Psalms 42:1-2** As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

we might know God and memorize God's Word to guard our hearts from sin.¹¹ We will not mix the teachings of Scripture with the theories of psychology, science, astronomy, geology, archaeology, etc., but rather Scripture will judge these sciences and take every thought and show how it must submit to Christ.¹² We will not be contentious over interpretive matters of no profit for our growth into the image of Christ.¹³ We believe the Sunday School curriculum from Great Commission Publications (PCA publishing arm in Atlanta GA) or from Desiring God Ministries both do an excellent job of expressing this Scripture focused, God-centered teaching method.

II. Our Knowledge of God as Trinity

We believe in the Triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,¹⁴ all sharing in the same attributes of deity,¹⁵ mutually acting in election, creation, redemption and consummation to reveal his perfect attributes,¹⁶ creating us to image aspects of these attributes,¹⁷ and condemning us as sinners for failure to image these attributes.¹⁸ The Triune God fulfills different roles in completing every particular aspect of the sovereign will of God¹⁹ through his covenants²⁰ to the praise of his own glory.²¹ We believe that knowing God AS Trinity in his

¹¹ **Psalms 119:10-11** *I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.* **Psalms 119:104-7** I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; *preserve my life, O LORD, according to your word.*

¹² **2 Corinthians 10:5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. **Colossians 2:8** *See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.* **Jude 1:3** Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to *contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

¹³ **1 Timothy 1:3-5** As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. *These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith.* The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. **1 Timothy 4:7** *Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.*

¹⁴ **Matthew 28:18-20** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the *name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

¹⁵ **Psalms 118:1-2** Give thanks to the LORD, for *he is good*; his love endures forever. Let Israel say: "His love endures forever." **Matthew 19:17** "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "*There is only One who is good.* If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." **Galatians 5:22-3** But the fruit of the *Spirit* is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, *goodness*, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

¹⁶ **1 Timothy 4:4** For *everything God created is good*, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. **1 Timothy 6:13** In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the *good* confession.

¹⁷ **1 Timothy 6:18** *Command them to do good*, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. **Titus 1:8** Rather he must be hospitable, *one who loves what is good*, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined.

¹⁸ **Romans 3:12** All have turned away, they have together become worthless; *there is no one who does good, not even one.* **2 Timothy 3:3** [People will be] without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, *not lovers of the good.*

¹⁹ **John 17:2** For you [the Father] *granted him [Jesus] authority over all people that he [Jesus] might give eternal life to all those you [the Father] have given him [Jesus].* **Romans 10:9** That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and *believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead*, you will be saved. **Ephesians 2:18** For *through [Christ] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.* **1 Timothy 2:5-6** For there is *one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men*—the testimony given in its proper time.

²⁰ **Hebrews 8:8-12** But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.* No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because *they will all know me*, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." **Hebrews 10:5-10** Therefore, *when Christ came into the world, he said:* "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but *a body you prepared for me*; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.'" First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required

internal relations is foundational to Christian living,²² since every motive, thought or action which God requires of man is first demonstrated by Christ²³ (with the exception of man repenting and seeking God's mercy and forgiveness for his own sins).

III. Imaging Christ's Relations within the Trinity and to Creation

The Triune God desires to conform us to the image of Christ—an image which is like Christ in Christ's relations to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and like Christ in Christ's relation to the written Word, the ten commandments, creation, angels, his enemies and his church. Some themes we image which are like Christ in Christ's relations to the Father and the Holy Spirit are mutual loving, knowing, delighting, possessing, giving, glorifying, indwelling (in you), co-inhabiting (with you), testifying, praising, hearing, honoring and working (almost all of these themes are developed in John's Gospel). We also image the attributes of Christ (usually nouns/adjectives), though these could also be defined as verbs: one, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, self-existent, everlasting, holy, unchangeable. Some themes we image which are like Christ in Christ's relations to men and the created world are wrath, anger, hatred, justice, judgment, patience, gentleness, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, truthfulness, holy jealousy, self-control, perseverance, authority, faithfulness and stewardship. Our preaching, teaching and counseling ministry will try to develop and clarify this foundational truth of our communion with the Triune God, showing people how to image Jesus Christ within his relations within the Trinity and image Jesus in his relations to righteous and wicked creatures (man & angels) and image Jesus in his attitude to created things. If God commands us to do something, we will try to show how Christ already does this and calls us to a communion-partnership with him through faith, a partnership that transforms us into his likeness. Eph 4:13, 24; Rom 8:29; Col 1:28; 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; John 17:1-6; 16:8-15; 14:26; 10:15; 14:10, 20; 3:35; 5:20; 6:27; 5:37-8; 8:16, 18, 26; 8:29; 14:16; 5:23; 11:41-2; John 12:47-50; Heb 2:13, 17; 4:14-16; 10:5-10, 38; Matt 4:4-11; 5:19, 43-8; 16:18-28; Mark 3:5; Luke 19:41; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Cor 15:49

IV. Creation

We believe that the Triune God created the universe out of nothing in six days and made living species separately according to their kinds by the word of his command directly, not through some intermediate biological process of species evolution over millions of years. We believe that the Triune God created the universe to reveal his eternal power and divine nature. Man was formed from the dust of the ground, and woman from the rib of man. We must imitate Christ as he relates to this created world—as stewards over it, content with what we have, thankfully enjoying its pleasures as a gift from God, seeing aspects of his image (especially his goodness and inseparable love) reflected in every earthly situation to draw us into communion with himself, freely sharing with those in need, but

them to be made). Then he said, "*Here I am, I have come to do your will.*" *He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

²¹ **Ephesians 1:3-12** *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

²² **John 17:3** *Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 1*

John 1:3 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 13:14* *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Revelation 1:4-6* *John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the Seven Spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

²³ **2 Corinthians 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. Hebrews 2:17* *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.*

not loving the world, worshiping it, coveting more of its temporary treasures, being enslaved to it, or legalistically regulating the use of it. Heb 11:3; Gen 1-2; Col 1:16; 1 Cor 8:6; Psalm 33:6; 104:30; Exod 20:11; Rom 1:20; Gen 1:26-8; 1 Tim 6:6-10; 1 Tim 4:4-5; Rom 8:28-38; Matt 6:33; Acts 20:33-5; 1 Cor 7:31; 1 John 2:15-17; Rom 1:25; Matt 4:4-10; 5; 1 Cor 6:12; Phil 3:19; Col 2:20-23; Matt 15:10-14 ; 23:23-4

V. Satan and His Defeat

We believe in the existence of a God-limited arch-angel named Satan along with all his evil angel followers, and see all his attacks and temptations as trying to conform us to his self-seeking, proud, flesh-pleasing, God-hating, church-attacking, Christian-persecuting image. Christ has defeated him, and in Christ we can stand against Satan's trickery. The Triune God willed the rebellion and fall of a beautiful angel, Satan, from heaven together with all his demon hosts. Satan refused to humble himself to serve people in accomplishing salvation since he viewed mankind as lesser creatures. Through displaying his power, patience and judgment over Satan's plans, demon hosts and enslaved people, the Triune God glorifies his mercy, love and salvation to his chosen people. Now Satan torments the saints and persecutes the church knowing that his time is short. Satan is divided against himself and he surely will fall. He looks for weak and lonely saints to devour and tempt. Satan also possesses the bodies of people and afflicts their bodies with physical ailments and loss of control and on one occasion demons possessed a herd of pigs by the Lord's command, but apparently could not abide for long in the pigs, and wanted to dwell elsewhere. We reject efforts to focus on "power encounters" and warring with, binding or casting out territorial demons or cleansing buildings from demons as unnecessary. In the Bible, demonic influence and possession is associated with people, not places, and demon possession exhibits itself in physical torments in people's bodies. We also deny that the process of sanctification parallels a method of exorcism whereby the believer tries to identify different spirits and demons which are leading him to sin (the demon of lust or the evil spirit of the love of money) and have them cast out or try to cast these demons out of himself. Believers mature by admitting these temptations come from desires within, by renewing their minds in Christ Jesus to have a faith-view of His truth and his world and by repenting in humility before the Lord.

VI. Sin, the Curses and the Ministry of our High Priest

We believe that the first man and woman, Adam & Eve, though created "good", disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and so brought upon themselves and all their descendents the curses of spiritual blindness to the glory of God, physical death, unproductive labor, painful child-bearing, and conflict between male and female over authority issues. Because of his sin in the garden of Eden, we believe that the curse on Adam, as representative head of the human race, means that every one of his descendents is under the curse of sin and they all could justly be punished by God for this "original sin" as well as for their own sins. Through the sin of man, God reveals his grace, mercy, love, patience, power, justice and wrath and commands us to be humbled because of our many offenses against God, repent and seek God's grace and mercy. We believe we experience the effects of the curse daily by our own sin, other's sins against us, sickness, sorrow, deprivation, disaster, not knowing the best time to act for successful results, and death. These effects of the curse will never be completely removed until the Second Coming of Christ and often lead us to cry out, "Meaningless!" Until then, the normal result of the curse in the lives of believers is reversed. Formerly, as unbelievers, we experienced of the effects of the curse confirming our separation from God. Now, as believers, the effects of God's curse draw us closer to God and help us imitate Christ during his earthly ministry. Christ our High Priest ministers grace and mercy to us because of what he already learned through suffering: *sending* his comforting presence by the Holy Spirit, *sending* elect angels to help us, *giving grace* to continue to witness for God in physical weakness, *strengthening faith* in God's promises as we are tested by persecution and loneliness and deprivation, *increasing our desire* to glorify and worship God, *helping us gladly submit* to God's will while suffering, *helping us repent and hate sin* more than suffering, *leading us* to diligent use of the means of grace (the Bible, prayer, sacraments, fellowship, fatherly discipline of suffering), *reminding us* of Christ's own sufferings, *delivering us* from evil (physical affliction, mental deception and pleasurable temptations), *strengthening patience*, *enabling us* to entrust our enemies to God's just judgment and rejoice when they are justly punished, *assuring us* of God's love and of our pure faith, and *fixing our hope* on God-centered joy as our inheritance, on our heavenly ministry as kings and priests, and on the complete removal of the curse and its effects. As Christ's sufferings flow over into our lives, so the comfort of the Father of all compassion comforts us. In the process, we are able to comfort others with the comfort we have received from God. Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Hosea 6:7; Rom 3:10-18, 23; 5:12-19; 8:20; 1 Cor 15:56; Heb 9:27; Rom 3:25-6; 5:8; 9:14-23; 1 Tim 1:12-17; Titus 2:11; James 4:6-10; Ecclesiastes; Rom 8:18-39; Heb 4:14-16; 2:17; 5:7-10; John 14:16-18; Heb 1:13; Luke 22:43; 2 Cor 12:7-10; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:3-9; John 16:32; John 17:1-5; Matt 26:42; Heb 12:2-4; 2 Cor 8:9; 2 Tim 4:17-18; Matt 6:13; Rom 5:1-5; 1 Pet 2:23; Rev 18:20; 19:1-3; Rom 8:39; Rev 20:4-6; 2:26; 3:21; 21:3-7; 22:3; Phil 3:10-11; 2 Cor 1:3-11

VII. Miracles

We believe that the Triune God sustains the world and all life by his miraculous power each moment to reveal his glory so that people might seek him. We believe God in the past did, and still does many unusual, miraculous things. These unusual miracles are not against "nature," but rather against the effects of sin and God's curse on the sinful

world—miracles pointing to promises of both salvation and judgment. These miracles are representative of what the Triune God is doing all the time. God does miraculous things, not to make faith unnecessary because our eyes have just seen, but to require a faith-response in the true God because our eyes have just seen what the Triune God has done in faithfulness to his saving and judging promises. As we observe daily “usual” or “unusual” miracles with faith in the Triune God, we rejoice that the kingdom rule of Christ is extending and defeating the effects of the curse on man and the world. We praise God for the reality of unusual miracles through God’s people and through elect angels in the world today, and humbly pray that God would show the power of his glory through even more miracles done in Jesus’ name. Since Jesus’ perfect obedience to the Father has earned all the promised blessings of the gospel, curse-reversing miracles in a sinful world can only be accomplished in Jesus’ name. Yet we do not seek more miracles as a requirement for saving faith or the extension God’s kingdom. Ordinarily, God’s messengers preaching and teaching about the miracle of Christ’s resurrection with the anointing of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to bring the new life of faith to sinners. Rom 1:20; Acts 17:24-27; 14:17; Col 1:17; John 9:3-5; Psalm 104-106; Heb 1:13; John 17:1; Matt 6:9-10; Acts 3:6, 11-16; Acts 4:30; Matt 16:1-4; Rom 10:9-10, 15-17

IX. Sin and Repentance

We believe that every person inherits a sin nature which is blind to the glory of Christ in the gospel, refuses to glorify God AS God or give him thanks for all his wonderful mercies, seeks glory for himself rather than giving glory to God and worships and serves created things rather than the Creator. Every person who has not been changed by the Holy Spirit has a heart of unbelief, and a mixture of selfish fears of everything but God, selfish lusts and pride. The Bible teaches these common roots for all sinful behaviors in order to show us our common hope in the gospel for our salvation. Natural man has a will that can choose according to what he loves, but he cannot change his affections (what he loves and hates). Man’s natural affections control his will and keep his will in bondage to loving sin, disobedience to God’s commands and hating God. Man is unable to repent of these sins or be disgusted with his own evil in God’s sight nor is he able to love God as God does and take delight in his holiness unless the Holy Spirit works powerfully through the preaching of the Word to impart his own nature, bringing new spiritual life, faith in the promises of the gospel, new love for God and his holiness and a new hatred for sin as God hates sin. In the preaching of the Word, we command everyone to repent of their sins and believe the good news of Christ’s resurrection, knowing that those who are appointed to eternal life will repent and believe by the power of the Holy Spirit.

X. The Grace of the Trinitarian Gospel

We believe in the grace of the Gospel: Whatever God commands us to do, our Triune God fulfills for us (the work of Christ), credits to us (justification: Jesus’ representative righteousness declared as our righteousness), imparts in us (regeneration & sanctification: Jesus send the Holy Spirit to change us into his image), preserves from the Devil’s destruction, and completes into perfection when Christ returns. We believe that in salvation the Triune God graciously imparts to man what is already evident in Jesus Christ. Salvation does not originate from human free will. The Father decrees our salvation through the work of the Son and Spirit; in his incarnation and exaltation the Son submits to the Father and the leading of the Spirit by fulfilling the redemptive requirements of salvation; the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and Son by applying salvation to us by regenerating us to new life that we might believe in the Triune God. Each person of the Trinity works together with the other persons in every aspect of salvation in every age of history, from Old Testament to New Testament until Jesus the Son comes again, raises the dead, judges the world and hands over the kingdom to the Father at the end of the age.

We reject simplistic “God commands—I obey” or “try hard to follow Jesus’ example” models of Bible/gospel application. We deny that grace is *merely* an impersonal force, a sacrificial example, or a theological idea of getting something we don’t deserve. Grace and mercy are revealed as *the dynamic life of Christ dwells in us* in the person of the Holy Spirit. The heavenly life of Christ is realized in our present experience: We participate in Christ’s communion with the Father and Holy Spirit!

Our teaching ministry at Friendship will develop this Triune-God-centered salvation. Every week, from the lens of a variety of Bible texts, we will seek to demonstrate the grace of the Gospel: Whatever God commands us to do, our Triune God enables us to do by graciously imparting faith, hope and love to us.

XI. Salvation through Faith in our Triune God

We believe people are saved by faith in our Triune God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, with respect to each *person* AND the particular *work* that each person of the Trinity does for our salvation. Faith is the gift of the Triune God because of his grace. By the will of the Father (Eph 2:8; Matt 11:25; John 1:13), Christ, our High Priest (Phil 1:29; 2 Pet 1:3-5; Luke 17:5; Eph 1:3; Heb 4:14-16; 2:14, 17; 10:38; 12:2), imparts faith to us by sending the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11; Eph 1:19-20) to work faith in us. Jesus is able to do this because he exercised faith in his incarnate state and became the author and finisher of our faith. The Triune God is the object/focus of

our faith, the enabler/giver of our faith, the sustainer/strengthener of our faith, and the perfecter/finisher of our faith.

- A. *Salvation through faith in the Father:* The Father, as the first person of the Trinity, decrees and ordains all things according to his will and seeks in all things to bring glory to his own name. Faith in the person and work of the Father means believing that he appointed Christ as High Priest and Savior by his incarnation, life of perfect righteousness, and death on a cross (Gal 1:4; Acts 2:23; 4:28), believing that he raised Christ from the dead (Col 2:12; Rom 4:24-5; 10:9-10) and exalted him to his former kingly glory at his right hand (John 17:5; Phil 2:9-11), until every enemy submits to Christ. The Father credits righteousness to those who believe he raised Jesus from the dead. Faith in the Father means submitting to his decrees, obeying his commands, communing with him in love through prayer, seeking his Fatherly blessing on us according to his will, asking him to fulfil his promises to us (Rom 4:21-3; John 14:1, 6; 1 Pet 1:21; 2 Pet 1:3-4).
- B. *Salvation through faith in the Son, Jesus Christ:* Faith in the person and work of Jesus, as the second person of the Trinity—executor of the demands of the covenant on our behalf, gains the declared righteousness of his names, titles and his law-fulfilled righteousness, as well as declaration of pardon, the forgiveness of sins through his blood, which is our justification. Faith communes with Jesus our High Priest to receive grace and mercy to help in time of need. We believe that faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation, for there is no other name given among men to save us (Acts 4:12; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 John 3:23). Jesus Christ was eternally with God the Father before creation, the “I am”, the self-existent, omnipotent one. A person cannot be saved unless he/she believes this (Heb 11:6; John 8:24). We believe in the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ since the point of his incarnation in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, not subtracting from his deity to become man, not changing into some third type of creature, not becoming man for a while then changing back into God. Taking the additional nature of man to his deity, Christ voluntarily limited the use of his divine powers during his earthly ministry to show us how to live in faith, love and hope in the power of the Spirit, and so became the author and finisher of our faith. He died on a cross as the curse and wrath-bearer for the sins of all who believe in him, yet was himself without sin, and God the Father raised him from death for our justification three days later by the power of the Spirit, and installed as Lord at the Father’s right hand. The Father and Christ send the Holy Spirit to be with his people until Christ returns. Christ also sends his holy angels to judge his enemies, exalt his own name, strengthen his elect, and guard his holiness. Knowing these historical truths, it is necessary that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. It is necessary that we confess with our mouths that “Jesus is Lord” and believe in our heart that the Father raised him from the dead by the power of the Spirit in order to be saved. Through faith in the person of Jesus, the “I am,” the second Adam, our representative head, and through faith in the work of Jesus through his death on a cursed cross, resurrection and heavenly High Priest mediation, the Father judicially declares sinners righteous in his sight, which is called our justification. Further, the Father adopts us as his sons and daughters and makes us joint-heirs with Jesus because we trust in Jesus, the only perfect Son. It is necessary that we fix our thoughts on Jesus and look to him (Heb 3:1). It is necessary that we preach and teach Christ and him crucified and raised from death in order to be faithful to our calling as a church. As an application to marriage, parenting, work and ministry, we seek to imitate the attitude of Christ’s incarnate humility in humble service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- C. *Salvation through faith in the Holy Spirit:* Faith in the Holy Spirit means believing in him as the third person of the Trinity, receiving him as the Comforter and Counselor, and believing his Word spoken through Scripture. We believe that the Spirit raised Christ from the dead. He applies all the righteousness of Christ to us, regenerates us to new life and faith, testifies with us that we are God’s children, preserves us from Satan’s destruction, leads us in worship and completes unto perfection at the return of Christ. It also means we follow his leading, commune with him, and do not grieve, quench or blaspheme him.
- D. *Defining Faith:* Faith’s definition also includes hope in and love for God himself, and a spiritual delight in the beauty of God’s holiness, not merely an agreement that certain things are true about God or his work, which demons also believe but find no delight in such knowledge. There is no salvation without active, continuing faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, since failing to exercise faith on any one person of the Trinity would deny God’s revealed plan of salvation and would dishonor of the Triune name of God by which we are baptized. If we would seek to know and worship the Father, we must go through the High Priestly work of Christ and intercession of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way or religion by which to know God properly and reach the heavenly kingdom.
- E. *Faith’s Mutual Trinitarian Dependence:* Also there is a mutually dependent order to the acts of faith: No one comes to faith in the Father except through faith in the Son (John 14:6; Eph 2:18; 2 Pet 1:21). No one comes to faith in the Son except through faith in the Father, asking him to send the Spirit of life that we might believe in the Son. No one can come to faith in the Holy Spirit except through faith in Jesus as the teacher who reveals the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit to us. Thus we would be correct to command people to believe in any particular person of the Trinity in evangelism, but would immediately find it necessary to present the other

persons and command faith in the Triune God, since the command to believe is mutually dependant on each person of the Trinity.

In worship, we will publicly and regularly recite the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed as an expression of the necessity of Trinitarian faith in the separate persons and respective works of the Trinity to be saved. We will make the offer salvation to all people, knowing that all the Father has appointed to eternal life will believe through our message. We will call them to faith in our Triune God, call them to repentance from sin, and call them to image Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In evangelism, we will declare this full trinitarian salvation and seek to publish and distribute tracts and appropriate literature and provide training in presenting a gospel message faithful to Scripture which exalts the Triune God to his rightful place. We believe that evangelism is spiritual participation in the mission of Jesus himself, "The Apostle" (Heb 3:1), who is spreading his glory by the Spirit's anointing that all might know the Triune God.

XII. The Goal of the Christian Life

We believe that that goal of the Christian life is to glorify our Triune God primarily by a living spiritual union with the life of Christ (past, present, and future Col 1:25-27), imaging the faith, hope and love of Christ (and the many details of the affections and actions of Christ in his relations noted above), and, for the praise of God's glory, imaging Christ to mankind by loving our neighbor as ourselves, and imaging Christ to the created world of angels, living and non-living things. We image Christ's attitude to suffering under the curse of the cross, submitting willingly, despising its shame, rejoicing that we are counted worthy to suffer for his name, boasting in the cross as the power of God to crucify our human sinful nature to the world (Phil 2:10-11; Matt 26:42; Heb 12:2; Matt 5:11-2; Acts 5:41; Gal 6:14). Another way to describe our duty to image Christ is by obeying the ten commandments, commandments, which Jesus also obeyed. We also image the history of Christ in his humiliation and exaltation, both spiritually and physically. We image Jesus in his relationship to the Father's appointed times in the future, waiting patiently, preparing diligently, faithfully administering the tasks we are entrusted with. We are called to image Christ in times of abundance, blessing and comfort and times of sorrow, suffering and trouble. The circumstances do not change the goal, or diminish the grace and mercy Christ will supply in our time of need to enable us to image him. The grace we seek from Christ is the fullness of the Spirit indwelling us, enabling us to enter into full Trinitarian communion with God and be changed into the likeness of Christ.

We are also called to image the "divine nature" and specifically the Father and the Holy Spirit, but ordinarily the theme of imaging Christ encompasses all of these attributes which we are told to image in the Father or the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:3; Matt 5:48; 1 Pet 1:15-16). However, we do find some specific differences in this aspect of imaging: we are told to image the Father's affections for Christ by regarding him as precious (1 Pet 2:4, 7), exalting Jesus to the highest place, honoring his name above all names. We are told to image the Holy Spirit's work by testifying about Jesus (John 16:14; 15:26).

XIII. The Fellowship of Believers

We believe that Christian fellowship images fellowship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The persons of the Trinity *assist each other* in a communion of mutual delight and enjoyment, giving glory and pleasing each other. Christ, *by the Spirit*, offered himself to God (Heb 9:14). Jesus, *full of joy through the Holy Spirit*, said "I praise you Father . . ." (Luke 10:21). We urge (Rom 12:1), warn & help (1 Thess 5:14), instruct (2 Tim 4:2), model (1 John 1:3-4), encourage (Heb 3:12), and pray for (Eph 1:17ff; 3:14ff) fellow believers, that each person might share in this same Trinitarian enjoyment of God even as God enjoys each believer.

We believe in the fellowship of believers in communion with the Triune God, and will make it a priority to fellowship at Friendship Presbyterian Church, men with men, women with women, families with families, parents with children, husbands with wives, in small groups, and regular attendance at the stated weekly worship services, in such a way as to reflect Christ's image to each other in speech and actions. We seek to do this daily, lest any one of us becomes hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We must study the present work of Christ in the world so we can actively work as partners with him in his work. In this fellowship we will *establish the unity of the Spirit* in this particular congregation through our individual and public profession of faith in the Triune God, joining the church as members by our promise to submit to what the Scriptures teach. In order to *keep the unity of the Spirit*, we will regularly join this congregation in the public worship of God, submit to fellow members, the elders, the church constitution and statement of faith as they faithfully represent God and his will revealed in Scripture, confess our sins to each other, encourage each other to repent of all sins, define each other as new creatures in Christ (rather than define according to the old sin nature), be humbly thankful for each other because we all need God's grace equally, reflect Christ's likeness to each other in speech and actions and enhance Christ's likeness in each other through the use of our spiritual gifts, accept those with weaker consciences on disputable matters, give honor and sympathy to all parts of the body as needed, rejoice when one member is honored, and be prayerfully hopeful that God will complete the work He has begun in each of us. We believe fellowship means helping each other in

physical and material needs as the occasion demands. We believe that any persons over 16 years of age who are willing to mutually submit to this ministry of fellowship with our particular body should join Friendship Presbyterian Church as members without delay, and contribute their individual gifts for the growth of the body into the image of Christ. We believe that communing fellowship of believers is normally essential for growth in the grace and the knowledge of Christ, and those who refuse to join a local body of evangelical believers as baptized, submitted members are neglecting a necessary means of grace which Christ has given his church. Such people are disobedient to the command to individually and publicly confess with their mouths that "Jesus is Lord," to their own danger of eternal condemnation. Such people deny a fundamental principle of the *Apostles Creed* "I believe in the holy church universal." We believe that fellowship, as defined above, helps to maintain the purity of the church. Those who fall out of regular fellowship for several months, excepting those who must be away for reasons of health, work, family, relocation or request for transfer of membership, will be subject to the discipline of the church. We believe the corporate worship of God is appointed by God, enabled by Christ our mediator and advocate, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

We deny that there is an on-going office of apostle in the church, since the New Testament apostles and Old Testament prophets are the foundation for the church's received revelation in Scripture. Some of the more miraculous or mysterious gifts (such as prophesy, tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, healing, discerning spirits, exorcism) since they are more controversial, should be an area for accepting different views without disputing and division. However, we must together safe-guard the sufficiency of the Bible to direct us into all we need to know for our salvation and maturity in Christ. We do not expect new revelation suitable for the worldwide church, but rather these gifts in the church should be both tested by and also illuminating the already written word of God. Further, we deny that these more spectacular gifts are essential for evangelism in unreached areas in order to show that God is more powerful than local folk religions or idols. The anointed preaching of the Word of God and the powerful work of the Spirit in men's hearts is sufficient to bring revival and change. We also deny that the use of these more spectacular gifts should be encouraged as a regular, unstructured part of every Christian meeting as a "ministry time," when believers "wait for God to do something spectacular." God is revealing his power and glory through all events in history and through all the gifts he gives his people.

XIV. Imaging Christ's Authority & Submission

We believe that there is an unchanging authority/submission pattern modeled for us in the Trinity (Father/Christ the Son & Holy Spirit, Father & Christ/Holy Spirit 1 Cor 11:3; 15:24-28) and by Christ and creation (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 10:4-5—Christ/church, Christ/creation, Christ/angels, Christ/enemies, Christ/effects of sin & curse) which we are called to image in various human relationships, according to our positions and gender: government/citizens, boss/employees, denominational assemblies/regional presbyteries/individual churches, male church elders/church members (household of God 1 Tim 3:15, parallels male authority in the home), husband/wife, parents/children, believers/enemies, teacher/students, man/creation, believers/angels, believers/effects of sin & curse. At Friendship Presbyterian Church we see the male church elders/church members authority/submission pattern as requiring elders to maintain godly lives and correct doctrine, that their authority might not be discredited and shepherd the flock of God in their care by ministering the Word of God to them publicly and privately, praying for them regularly, speaking positively about members in public, and recommending diaconal assistance to any members in material or physical need. Members are required submission to the elders as unto the Lord in all Scriptural and spiritual matters as can be clearly proven from the Bible. Members are required to bear patiently with the elders, humbly considering their counsel or direction on any matters that may be open to a variety of interpretations, speaking positively in public about their elders. When elder(s) motives may have been misinterpreted, members ought to go and seek clarification by asking questions. When necessary, members must privately and gently confront any elder who may have erred or sinned. Where elders command us to disobey the Word of God, we are to refuse to submit to them, and gently instruct them in the truth of Scripture. If they refuse to repent, we may need to separate if reconciliation is not possible.

A husband is the authority of his family and of his wife, and must rule by self-sacrifice, loving, nourishing, cherishing his wife, supplying her physical needs as the wage earner or caring for the children at (in any case neither being lazy, nor a work-a-holic), that his wife might be drawn to admire the image of Christ in his example, and so be drawn to Christ himself. The husband and wife both must set acceptable limits on working hours which normally allows daily time together, and if there are children, to give them adequate daily attention. A husband a wife cannot properly fulfill their marital duties to each other in a long-term, long distance relationship and all such tendencies in the culture need to be rejected by church members in their own family decision-making and by elders in their counseling. The husband is responsible to guard the marriage by not making choices or allowing his wife to make choices that pull the marriage apart, or place one spouse within temptation contexts that are unnecessary in pursuit of money, fame or career at the expense of the marriage or the family. The husband requires submission of his wife as unto Christ, that is, where the teachings of Scripture are clear the husband can require submission of his wife as representing Christ. In matters of daily life where Scripture allows a variety of applications of truth, the husband

may not require submission, but must work for peace and mutual understanding of his wife's needs and desires and try to reach a mutually acceptable decision, without binding her conscience on matters which she feels are Christian liberties. The wife should honor her husband, submitting to him in all things that Scripture clearly reveals, and showing great patience with his views on particular applications of truth that bear on the marriage, work or the family. Where disagreements arise, a wife ought to humbly petition her husband for his thorough understanding that he might make a decision that is mutually acceptable and considers the good of the marriage, the family and their involvement in church fellowship. When a husband sins, the wife should confront at a time appropriate to her doing so with gentleness and he listening with humility, communicating her partnership and support in resolving the problem. Friendship Presbyterian Church is committed to building strong marriages and families and will periodically offer classes on marriage and parenting, focus on marriage and family issues in fellowship groups, and offer marriage and family counseling as needed.

As in the patterns noted above, the same kinds of principles apply to government officials and citizens. While the Word of God is the judge and authority over all men, the church must not become consumed with the affairs of the government or the nation, or try to dictate government policies as a church body. The church has a sphere of sovereignty in the spread of the gospel of Christ's resurrection to non-Christians and the shepherding of the souls of men in their communion with God and love for neighbors within her own membership. We urge the government to allow the church to operate freely in this sphere, not interfering in these matters. The government has a sphere of sovereignty over its citizens, promoting mutual peace and social order among people of many religions and cultural diversities. We encourage all citizens to exercise their private judgment and civic duties in civil matters, but the church must not invest her energies as a church in government affairs or preach political opinions in Sunday sermons. Preaching related to civil government is primarily the task of declaring God's glory and sovereignty over all the nations and political establishments, calling government leaders to respect and permit the sphere of sovereignty given by God to the church, warning a government of God's impending judgment if it would try to actively persecute the church, calling church members to submit to the civil rulers as unto God, unless commanded to disobey God, and giving Christians hope that no matter what the government or economic situation, God is accomplishing his purpose to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

XV. Christian Liberty of Conscience

We believe in the liberty of our Christian consciences, that each person's conscience should be free from the commands of men, tradition or legalistic forms of outward righteousness as a standard for church membership or remaining in full communing status as a member. We instead submit ourselves to the Word of God alone and ordinarily to the biblical teaching and counsel of our elders as those who speak for God, unless they err in their understanding and application of the Word. We believe that exercising our true Christian freedoms should always be within the boundaries of God's commands. We believe that our exercise of Christian freedoms should not cause a weaker Christian to stumble. Whatever Christian liberties we might exercise, they must be done in faith that this behavior is acceptable to God, not violating our own conscience by creating guilt feelings in the process. We deny that a person's busyness in church affairs is equivalent to the godliness that God requires.

XVI. The Dignity of Man

We believe that men and women were created by the Triune God in his own image. Due to sin, this image is now lacking in the desire to love and glorify God, but still retains much of its original dignity and God-reflective capacity. God's creative work continues today in each person's life from the point of conception. We believe we are commanded not to murder, and therefore we should respect, protect and defend the lives of unborn children at any age in the womb, and by all legal and pastoral means, try to persuade the ruling authorities and families not to command or permit abortions, and persuade women not to have abortions (except on danger to her own life for ectopic pregnancy or rH factor immunities) or use abortifacient birth control methods. We believe we are also called to supply diaconal help to women in a crisis pregnancy and counsel women facing post-abortion trauma. To that end we encourage members to cooperate with Christian Salvation Services (Taipei), Ray of Hope (Tainan) and other such pro-life groups in Taiwan.

XVII. Prayer

In our worship and prayer meetings, we believe we can pray to all the persons of the Trinity, though we recognize that because Christ and the Spirit submit to the Father, we usually pray to the Father in Jesus name (because of his merits) for the quickening, reviving, and renewing work of the Holy Spirit. We worship our Triune God in prayer, but not as an individual act: we join with all the saints on earth and the spirits of departed saints as the elect angels offer our prayers before God's throne. The Spirit translates and the Son mediates our prayers to the Father. We pray, but as we pray, Christ prays with us & for us for his Father's kingdom to come and his Father's will to be done, crediting the perfections of his prayers to us, changes us into his praying image, protects us by our prayers & his, and he will perfect us unto eternal delight in the practice of prayer. We seek grace and mercy from Christ our

high priest in time of need: we especially seek the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit to draw us into communion with God. This images the way Jesus prays to the Father for the sending of the Spirit.

We believe we should regularly gather together to pray in informal contexts, appointed church meetings, and set aside individual days of prayer and fasting. In prayer we believe we should confess our sins, praise God's glory, pray for his kingdom to come by fresh outpourings of his Spirit and his will to be done on earth and in his church, as it is in heaven, intercede for the physical and spiritual needs of ourselves and others, asking according to what he promises to give, with a motive to glorify and hallow his name by the answers God gives. We believe public prayers ought to be made in a known language unless a translator is present. We believe every Christian, including children, may pray in public FPC meetings or worship services, though we also want to encourage mature believers to pray publicly as regular prayer models.

XVIII. The Sacraments

We believe that receiving the sacraments (The Lord's Supper and baptism) is a visible union/participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ to his followers: Jesus distributes his body and blood to his disciples, and washes them from their sins & anoints them with his grace. We participate in the sacraments, but Christ participates with us & for us, crediting the perfections of his own Last Supper and baptism to us, changes us into his exodus-prepared/baptized image, protects us by his Supper and baptism as we get grace from these signs, and he will perfect us unto eternal delight in complete holiness and unto the complete removal of the curse of sin from our bodies and souls.

We will celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly as a way of drawing humble, believing sinners to communion with the Triune God, that is, receiving the ministry promised by each person of the Trinity in a spiritual eating and drinking, using the words of the Lord's Supper given in Scripture at the time of partaking. People who have not publicly professed faith in Jesus Christ and have not been baptized, or who are under church discipline are excluded from taking this sacramental meal. The elements are consecrated for a holy purpose by the words from Scripture on the Lord's Supper being read or summarized, prayer, and the table fenced from all who would try to take the elements without faith-discernment of the Lord's glorious body.

We reject the teaching that the elements are changed into Christ's real body or blood, or that the Lord's Supper repeats the sacrifice of Christ, but we believe Christ is spiritually present, giving spiritual refreshment through visible promises, reflecting his glory through the weakness of plain bread and wine (or juice), as Christ administers the elements through his ministers. Those involved in scandalous living, without repentance, are to be fenced from the Lord's Supper as an act of discipline, by the elders, to protect the sinner and the congregation from the physical judgments of our holy God. We reject the teaching that the sacraments have any value to save by their administration alone. We believe any value of a sacrament comes through the faith of the recipient to discern the glory of the Lord, to discern the communal need of his grace (humbling us) and to discern our common union with Christ. All these discernments prevent us from boasting or comparing ourselves with others since all gifts are by his grace.

As needed (for those who have never before been baptized in the Triune name of God), we will practice baptism of believers by a method suitable for a public worship service (either sprinkling or pouring, or immersion if the church worship location is so suited), instructing the people on the visible symbolism of our Triune God working for our salvation inherent in each respective method, teaching the God-given covenant promises connected with baptism, and declaring name of our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, concurrent with the act of baptism. The covenant children of believers may also be baptized, if parents are individually convinced of this practice, yet the infant so baptized must show diligence to make his/her calling and election sure by showing the evidences of faith, hope and love at an age of understanding. These are the only two sacraments we recognize as commanded by Christ. Foot washing is not to be understood as a sacrament, but a 1st century, mid-eastern, culturally significant visible example of serving others, given by Jesus Christ prior to his death.

XIX. Fellowship with Other Groups and Churches

We believe that Christ has just one body, his church, but represented in many different localized forms with both varieties of gifts and some variations in doctrinal beliefs and practice, but each part is called to work together for the growth of the body of believers into the image of Christ. Each localized form will have some emphases that may sharpen the understanding or practice of the other localized forms. We do not expect all members of Friendship to immediately accept every point of this doctrinal statement. We expect members to carefully search the Scriptures to see if these things are true. We expect members to submit to pastors and elders who do subscribe to these doctrinal views. Friendship Presbyterian Church will seek to co-operate with other evangelical church groups, parachurch ministries and seminaries in reaching Taiwan, China and the world for Christ, but only in such a way as we are allowed to maintain our distinctive testimony to the teachings of Scripture (as in these articles of faith) without being silenced on any teaching we can demonstrate from Scripture, or forced to reduce the Gospel to a "lowest common denominator". Particularly, we agree to cooperate with Grace Baptist Church, Taipei International

Church, Taiwan Missionary Fellowship missionaries and their churches, China Evangelical Seminary, TaoSheng Seminary and China Reformed Theological Seminary, Christ's College, OMF, TEAM, YWAM, China Ministries International, Christian Salvation Services, Ray of Hope (pro-life ministry), and other church groups or parachurch groups on a case by case basis. FPC (as a church) will not work together with any groups who deny the deity of Christ, participate in the World Council of Churches, deny the necessity, inerrancy or sufficiency of Scripture for all that pertains to our duty to God and man, deny the necessity of faith in our Triune God as the only way of salvation, promote legalism or some behavioral practice as a basis of salvation, or groups/churches/denominations who, as a regular approach to Bible teaching, mix psychological theories with the sufficiency of the Scriptural Gospel of Christ. Members of FPC may feel called to occasional participation with some non-evangelical churches as a witness or to gain some insight into the group, but regular fellowship is discouraged by the session of FPC. FPC is not in fellowship with the Taiwan Presbyterian Church denomination, nor does FPC have any historical connection with the TPC or its seminaries.

XX. Christians as Reformers of Cultures and Nations

We believe that every area of life and society, and all subjects of academic study, are governed by general principles of Scripture, and in whatever we do we must do it for the glory of God, in faith, with love, hoping in God for grace to honor him and his commands in our public and private witness, not afraid of what people can do to us for obeying God, prepared for the return of Christ as diligent servants. We encourage Christians to participate in all kinds of vocations and all types of academic study. Rather than being changed by the vocation or study into conforming to the world, Christians instead seek to influence people (both Christians and non-Christians) in all areas of life by speaking the relevant truths of God's Word to them in the vocation or field of study, and personally demonstrate to non-Christians and Christians how biblical ways of thought and behavior offer the best patterns for productive contribution to healthy government, stable society, work ethics, family, and all parts of society. We deny that all the Old Testament laws, or even the ten commandments ought to be enforced in any civil government, but rather see the general equity of the Old Testament laws, and the abiding force of the ten commandments as relevant for Christians with the church as a standard of behavior and discipline. Civil governments can take advice from the church in forming just laws which protect its citizens from harming each other and contribute to stable families and stable methods of financial self-support.

XXI. Assurance of Salvation

We believe that assurance of salvation is possible and desirable, and that every believer should seek for full assurance based on his/her continuous, balanced expression of the full range of Scriptural evidences. While faith in the heart is the foundation of a true assurance, this is more like a seed of assurance which must grow up visibly through proper and diligent use of the Word of God, prayer, fellowship, and participating in the sacraments. No full assurance should be gained without also demonstrating that faith working through love and hope. Furthermore, faith, hope and love have both internal (in-the-heart expressions) and external (in-the-church and in-the-world expressions). For example, faith in the heart must be confessed in the church for membership (and the sacrament of baptism received) and declared to the world in evangelical witness in order to have balanced expressions of faith. Faith must be based on accurate Scriptural knowledge of the Triune God and his work to have true and full assurance. Faith must continue even during persecution and suffering to have true and full assurance. Love must be felt in the heart and motives to God and man, shown in fellowship in the body of Christ and expressed to those without Christ in the world. Love must continue in order to have true and full assurance. Repentance and humility must be felt in the heart and shown in actions. Likeness to Jesus must be felt in the affections (such as, I love what Jesus loves and hate what Jesus hates) and seen in the actions to have true and full assurance. Imaging Jesus' attitude and obedience to the ten commandments is necessary for full assurance. Without some consistent evidences of all of these elements of faith, hope and love, assurance correspondingly should be weak. Level of assurance is a variable experience in each of the saints, weakened by fleshly lusts, unbelief, fear and pride in the heart, made visible by lifestyle choices in the church and the world, but strengthened by greater conformity to the likeness of Christ in the heart, made visible by lifestyle choices in the church and the world, and by the testimony of the Holy Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are God's children. We deny and reject any so-called evangelical counseling techniques which grant the full rights to certain assurance that all the names and titles of the new-identity in Christ belong to anyone who professes to believe a few correct doctrinal statements. In nearly every Pauline use of the new-identity statements in his epistles to the churches, he first affirms that he has seen faith, hope and love expressed by that church body, then declares that they have rights to assurance of having a new-identity in Christ (see Ephesians and First Thessalonians for evidences). We reject those who teach that tongues speaking or crying in repentance or believing the five points of Calvinism are by themselves infallible signs of conversion and grounds for assurance of salvation. Conversely, we reject the view that those who lack these expressions are not saved or are not entitled to assurance of salvation.

XXII. Marriage

We believe in the holy institution of marriage between one man and one woman as God's only legitimate means of expressing one's human sexuality. We believe that divorce is permitted (though not required, if reconciliation and forgiveness is possible) only on the grounds of desertion (and for desertion type behaviors of physical and/or sexual neglect, abuse, or violence) and on the grounds of adultery.

XXIII. Our Hope in the Future Promises

We believe that at death, the Christian's soul passes immediately into the presence of God, while the unbeliever's soul is eternally separated from God unto condemnation. Jesus Christ will return to earth, visibly and bodily, at a time when He is not expected, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. All people will be raised bodily from death at the Second Coming of Christ and the soul and body will be re-united for eternity. All people will be judged by Christ according to whether they are known by God as his own children of faith and according to what they have done. The believers will dwell in the joy of the Lord for eternity while the unbelievers will be cast into outer darkness and burning torment for eternity. Believers will rejoice in the judgments of God on the wicked and magnify the Lord that they have seen the riches of God's glory as the objects of his mercy. While eternity following the Last Judgment shows the prominence of God the Father, he will not act independently while the Son and the Holy Spirit observe. The Triune God will be mutually glorifying his own name by all the person of the Trinity working together in the eternal dwelling of heaven, even as he has mutually glorified himself throughout human history. Through our ministries at FPC, we will constantly remind the believers not to be discouraged in suffering; the Lord will return to judge all his enemies. We will encourage the believers not to become lazy and negligent, assuming they have much more time before Christ returns. We will warn the unbelievers to repent and believe now for the opportunity of salvation will soon be past. Hoping in these promises, we ought to make every effort to be found ready when he returns, living godly, sober and self-controlled lives, purifying ourselves through confession of sins and exercising faith in our Triune God, seeking closer conformity to the image of Christ as the only way to be prepared for his coming.